



Market update



Global credit markets adopted a "wait and see" stance in April and into May, with prices and spreads barely moving. Both investors in credit and commentators sit uncertain as to whether the post-COVID "reopening" phase in the major G10 economies will bring just a temporary spike in inflation or a longer-lasting surge in producer and consumer prices. What is certain is that the large price jumps seen in the April inflation data releases will be repeated in May and June. Investors must now wait until the summer before receiving a firm signal on the direction of government bond yields and interest rates. G10 credit markets are at levels which are not pricing in much of a cushion if those bond yields start to rise.

Czech government bond prices and yields also steadied in the last few weeks, even in the face of CPI inflation jumping to 3.1% and producer price inflation ("PPI") leaping 4.6% year-on-year in April. Pass-through of producer price rises and general supply-side tightness looks likely to propel consumer price pressures into H2 2021 and 2022. AS a result, there is an outside chance of an interest rate hike from the CNB in June, with a higher chance of that hike happening by August. Commentators now expect between 2 to 3 upward interest rate moves from the CNB in 2021. As such, further upward pressure on government bond yields is likely to unfold.

Mark Robinson, Member of the Investment Committee

Portfolio update



Any rise in government bond yields will result in "mark-to-market" losses for holders of those bonds. The same applies to corporate bonds and we thus continue with a "short duration" strategy, avoiding large positions in bonds with very long maturity profiles. We hold no government bonds in the portfolio. Short-term liquidity in the Fund remains well above our present 15% limit and we have sought to invest recent inflows into the Fund.

We increased the portfolio's positions in the 2022 bonds of lottery operator Saaka Group and the 2025 issue of power player EPH. We added to the very short term reverse repurchase agreement secured by the Wood Office Fund, while increasing our smaller position in the very short term reverse repo backed by Wood & Company Financial Services. The short-term bridge loan to the real estate developer Satpo Group matured with full payment in April. Further diversifying investments are expected in May.

Lubor Žalman, Founder of the fund

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