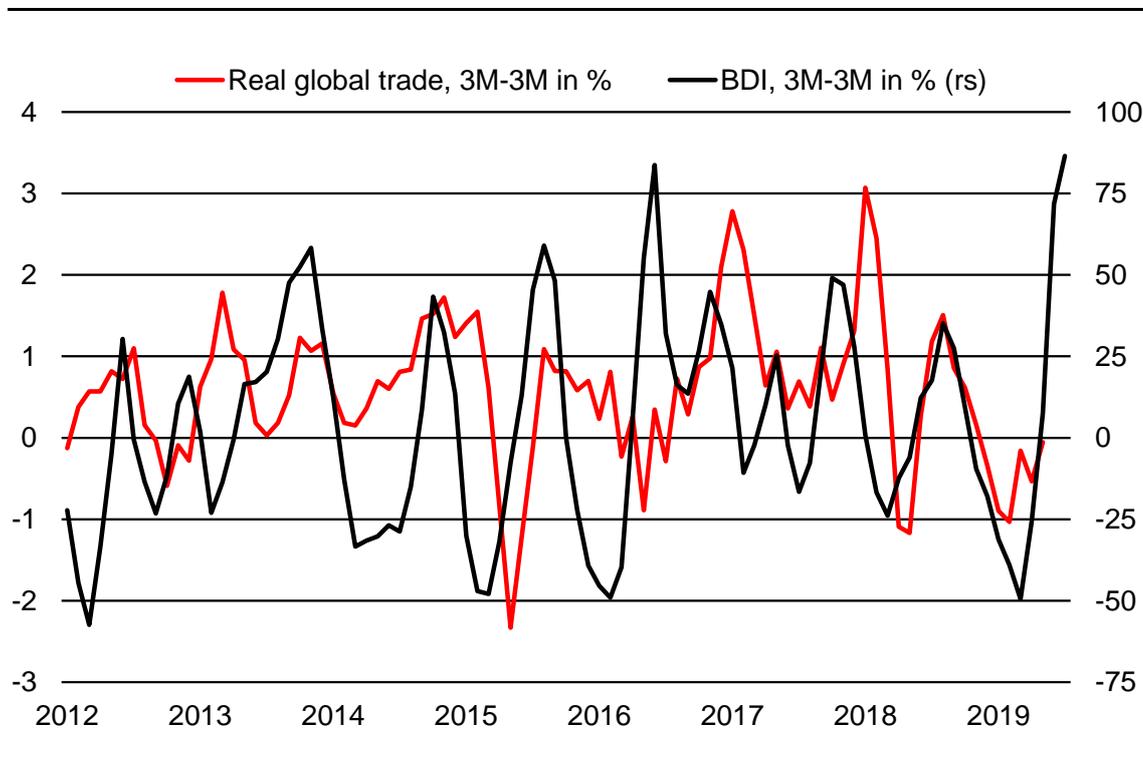


Baltic Dry Index: A (mis)leading indicator?



Source: Bloomberg, UniCredit Research

- We are currently facing a range of very different messages concerning the global economic outlook coming from a number of indicators. While the eurozone manufacturing PMI and the Ifo index recently delivered very negative readings, our own proprietary indicator, as well as other leading indicators, are more constructive. The latest signals from the Baltic Dry Index (BDI) are even at the optimistic end of the spectrum.
- The BDI, which measures shipping costs for raw materials (such as steel, coal, etc.), has surged to its highest level in more than five and a half years, increasing by almost 90% on a 3M-3M basis in July (see chart). However, despite formerly being considered a bellwether of global economic activity, it is often considered an unreliable predictor as its correlation with the global economy has shifted out of sync since the financial crisis. Moreover, the index is affected by special circumstances.
- Indeed, the recent rapid increase in the BDI suggests it has been considerably affected by idiosyncratic factors. Firstly, Chinese demand for iron ore has risen significantly since the start of the year due to an easing of some Chinese environmental restrictions. Secondly, the Chinese demand effect has intensified due to a change in the methodology used to calculate the index – a higher weight is now assigned to the largest ship category “capesize” in the average cost index (Chinese iron ore shipments mainly use capesize vessels). Thirdly, the surge in the index since June reflects a catch-up effect in the demand for vessels that ship iron ore from Brazil, as global iron ore supply experienced a temporary disruption due to an environmental disaster in Brazil in February.
- The latest surge may also contain some indication that global economic activity has picked up slightly, driven by Chinese stimulus. As shown in the chart, while the earlier lead-lag structure of the BDI and global trade has resumed over the past few years, the index has more recently displayed a coincidental pattern. However, there is still the informational advantage in terms of frequency. Adding to the mixed messages from other indicators of global economic activity, the signal from the BDI, while eye-catching, is also unclear right now because of temporary factors. But, once these factors unwind in the coming months, it could once again become a beacon.

Dr. Thomas Strobel,
Economist
(UniCredit Bank, Munich)
+49 89 378-13013
thomas.strobel@unicredit.de

Legal Notices

Glossary

A comprehensive glossary for many of the terms used in the report is available on our website: [link](#)

Disclaimer

Our recommendations are based on information obtained from or are based upon public information sources that we consider to be reliable, but for the completeness and accuracy of which we assume no liability. All information, estimates, opinions, projections and forecasts included in this report represent the independent judgment of the analysts as of the date of the issue unless stated otherwise. We reserve the right to modify the views expressed herein at any time without notice. Moreover, we reserve the right not to update this information or to discontinue it altogether without notice. This report may contain links to websites of third parties, the content of which is not controlled by UniCredit Bank. No liability is assumed for the content of these third-party websites.

This report is for information purposes only and (i) does not constitute or form part of any offer for sale or subscription of or solicitation of any offer to buy or subscribe for any financial, money market or investment instrument or any security, (ii) is neither intended as such an offer for sale or subscription of or solicitation of an offer to buy or subscribe for any financial, money market or investment instrument or any security nor (iii) as marketing material within the meaning of applicable prospectus law. The investment possibilities discussed in this report may not be suitable for certain investors depending on their specific investment objectives and time horizon or in the context of their overall financial situation. The investments discussed may fluctuate in price or value. Investors may get back less than they invested. Fluctuations in exchange rates may have an adverse effect on the value of investments. Furthermore, past performance is not necessarily indicative of future results. In particular, the risks associated with an investment in the financial, money market or investment instrument or security under discussion are not explained in their entirety.

This information is given without any warranty on an "as is" basis and should not be regarded as a substitute for obtaining individual advice. Investors must make their own determination of the appropriateness of an investment in any instruments referred to herein based on the merits and risks involved, their own investment strategy and their legal, fiscal and financial position. As this document does not qualify as an investment recommendation or as a direct investment recommendation, neither this document nor any part of it shall form the basis of, or be relied on in connection with or act as an inducement to enter into, any contract or commitment whatsoever. Investors are urged to contact their bank's investment advisor for individual explanations and advice.

Neither UniCredit Bank AG, UniCredit Bank AG London Branch, UniCredit Bank AG Milan Branch, UniCredit Bank AG Vienna Branch, UniCredit Bank Austria AG, UniCredit Bulbank, Zagrebačka banka d.d., UniCredit Bank Czech Republic and Slovakia, ZAO UniCredit Bank Russia, UniCredit Bank Czech Republic and Slovakia Slovakia Branch, UniCredit Bank Romania, UniCredit Bank AG New York Branch nor any of their respective directors, officers or employees nor any other person accepts any liability whatsoever (in negligence or otherwise) for any loss howsoever arising from any use of this document or its contents or otherwise arising in connection therewith.

This report is being distributed by electronic and ordinary mail to professional investors, who are expected to make their own investment decisions without undue reliance on this publication, and may not be redistributed, reproduced or published in whole or in part for any purpose.

This report was completed and first published on 26 July 2019 at 11:40.

Responsibility for the content of this publication lies with:

UniCredit Group and its subsidiaries are subject to regulation by the European Central Bank

a) UniCredit Bank AG (UniCredit Bank, Munich or Frankfurt), Arabellastraße 12, 81925 Munich, Germany, (also responsible for the distribution pursuant to §34b WpHG). Regulatory authority: "BaFin" – Bundesanstalt für Finanzdienstleistungsaufsicht, Marie-Curie-Str. 24-28, 60439 Frankfurt, Germany.

b) UniCredit Bank AG London Branch (UniCredit Bank, London), Moor House, 120 London Wall, London EC2Y 5ET, United Kingdom. Regulatory authority: "BaFin" – Bundesanstalt für Finanzdienstleistungsaufsicht, Marie-Curie-Str. 24-28, 60439 Frankfurt, Germany and subject to limited regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority, 12 Endeavour Square, London E20 1JN, United Kingdom and Prudential Regulation Authority 20 Moorgate, London, EC2R 6DA, United Kingdom. Further details regarding our regulatory status are available on request.

c) UniCredit Bank AG Milan Branch (UniCredit Bank, Milan), Piazza Gae Aulenti, 4 - Torre C, 20154 Milan, Italy, duly authorized by the Bank of Italy to provide investment services. Regulatory authority: "Bank of Italy", Via Nazionale 91, 00184 Roma, Italy and Bundesanstalt für Finanzdienstleistungsaufsicht, Marie-Curie-Str. 24-28, 60439 Frankfurt, Germany.

d) UniCredit Bank AG Vienna Branch (UniCredit Bank, Vienna), Rothschildplatz 1, 1020 Vienna, Austria. Regulatory authority: Finanzmarktaufsichtsbehörde (FMA), Otto-Wagner-Platz 5, 1090 Vienna, Austria and subject to limited regulation by the "BaFin" – Bundesanstalt für Finanzdienstleistungsaufsicht, Marie-Curie-Str. 24-28, 60439 Frankfurt, Germany. Details about the extent of our regulation by the Bundesanstalt für Finanzdienstleistungsaufsicht are available from us on request.

e) UniCredit Bank Austria AG (Bank Austria), Rothschildplatz 1, 1020 Vienna, Austria. Regulatory authority: Finanzmarktaufsichtsbehörde (FMA), Otto-Wagner-Platz 5, 1090 Vienna, Austria

f) UniCredit Bulbank, Sveta Nedelya Sq. 7, BG-1000 Sofia, Bulgaria. Regulatory authority: Financial Supervision Commission (FSC), 16 Budapeshta str., 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria

g) Zagrebačka banka d.d., Trg bana Josipa Jelačića 10, HR-10000 Zagreb, Croatia. Regulatory authority: Croatian Agency for Supervision of Financial Services, Franje Račkoga 6, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

h) UniCredit Bank Czech Republic and Slovakia, Želetavská 1525/1, 140 92 Praga 4, Czech Republic. Regulatory authority: CNB Czech National Bank, Na Příkopě 28, 115 03 Praga 1, Czech Republic

i) ZAO UniCredit Bank Russia (UniCredit Russia), Prechistsenskaya nab. 9, RF-119034 Moscow, Russia. Regulatory authority: Federal Service on Financial Markets, 9 Leninsky prospekt, Moscow 119991, Russia

j) UniCredit Bank Czech Republic and Slovakia, Slovakia Branch, Šancova 1/A, SK-813 33 Bratislava, Slovakia. Regulatory authority: CNB Czech National Bank, Na Příkopě 28, 115 03 Praha 1, Czech Republic and subject to limited regulation by the National Bank of Slovakia, Imricha Karvaša 1, 813 25 Bratislava, Slovakia. Regulatory authority: National Bank of Slovakia, Imricha Karvaša 1, 813 25 Bratislava, Slovakia

k) UniCredit Bank Romania, Bucharest 1F Expozitiei Boulevard, 012101 Bucharest 1, Romania. Regulatory authority: National Bank of Romania, 25 Lipscani Street, 030031, 3rd District, Bucharest, Romania

l) UniCredit Bank AG New York Branch (UniCredit Bank, New York), 150 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017. Regulatory authority: "BaFin" – Bundesanstalt für Finanzdienstleistungsaufsicht, Marie-Curie-Str. 24-28, 60439 Frankfurt, Germany and New York State Department of Financial Services, One State Street, New York, NY 10004-1511 Further details regarding our regulatory status are available on request.

ANALYST DECLARATION

The analyst's remuneration has not been, and will not be, geared to the recommendations or views expressed in this report, neither directly nor indirectly.

All of the views expressed accurately reflect the analyst's views, which have not been influenced by considerations of UniCredit Bank's business or client relationships.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

You will find a list of keys for company specific regulatory disclosures on our website <https://www.unicreditresearch.eu/index.php?id=disclaimer>.

RECOMMENDATIONS, RATINGS AND EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

You will find the history of rating regarding recommendation changes as well as an overview of the breakdown in absolute and relative terms of our investment ratings, and a note on the evaluation basis for interest-bearing securities on our website <https://www.unicreditresearch.eu/index.php?id=disclaimer> and <https://www.unicreditresearch.eu/index.php?id=legalnotices>.

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED DISCLOSURES UNDER THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS OF JURISDICTIONS INDICATED

You will find a list of further additional required disclosures under the laws and regulations of the jurisdictions indicated on our website <https://www.unicreditresearch.eu/index.php?id=disclaimer>.

UniCredit Research*

Macro Research



Erik F. Nielsen
 Group Chief Economist
 Global Head of CIB Research
 +44 207 826-1765
 erik.nielsen@unicredit.eu



Dr. Ingo Heimig
 Head of Research Operations
 & Regulatory Controls
 +49 89 378-13952
 ingo.heimig@unicredit.de

Head of Macro Research



Marco Valli
 Head of Macro Research
 Chief European Economist
 +39 02 8862-0537
 marco.valli@unicredit.eu

European Economics Research



Dr. Andreas Rees
 Chief German Economist
 +49 69 2717-2074
 andreas.rees@unicredit.de



Dr. Loredana Federico
 Chief Italian Economist
 +39 02 8862-0534
 loredanamaría.federico@unicredit.eu



Stefan Bruckbauer
 Chief Austrian Economist
 +43 50505-41951
 stefan.bruckbauer@unicreditgroup.at



Daniel Vernazza, Ph.D.
 Chief International Economist
 +44 207 826-7805
 daniel.vernazza@unicredit.eu



Tullia Bucco
 Economist
 +39 02 8862-0532
 tullia.bucco@unicredit.eu



Edoardo Campanella
 Economist
 +39 02 8862-0522
 edoardo.campanella@unicredit.eu



Walter Pudschedl
 Economist
 +43 50505-41957
 walter.pudschedl@unicreditgroup.at



Chiara Silvestre
 Economist
 chiara.silvestre@unicredit.eu



Dr. Thomas Strobel
 Economist
 +49 89 378-13013
 thomas.strobel@unicredit.de

EEMEA Economics Research



Dan Bucsa
 Chief CEE Economist
 +44 207 826-7954
 dan.bucsa@unicredit.eu



Gökçe Çelik
 Senior CEE Economist
 +44 207 826-6077
 gokce.celik@unicredit.eu



Mauro Giorgio Marrano
 Senior CEE Economist
 +43 50505-82712
 mauro.giorgiomarrano@unicredit.de



Artem Arkhipov
 Head, Macroeconomic Analysis
 and Research, Russia
 +7 495 258-7258
 artem.arkhipov@unicredit.ru



Hrvoje Dolenc
 Chief Economist, Croatia
 +385 1 6006-678
 hrvoje.dolenc@unicreditgroup.zaba.hr



Dr. Ágnes Halász
 Chief Economist, Head of Economics and
 Strategic Analysis, Hungary
 +36 1 301-1907
 agnes.halasz@unicreditgroup.hu



Ľubomír Koršňák
 Chief Economist, Slovakia
 +421 2 4950 2427
 lubomir.korsnak@unicreditgroup.sk



Anca Maria Negrescu
 Senior Economist, Romania
 +40 21 200-1377
 anca.negrescu@unicredit.ro



Kristofor Pavlov
 Chief Economist, Bulgaria
 +359 2 923-2192
 kristofor.pavlov@unicreditgroup.bg



Pavel Sobišek
 Chief Economist, Czech Republic
 +420 955 960-716
 pavel.sobisek@unicreditgroup.cz

UniCredit Research, Corporate & Investment Banking, UniCredit Bank AG, Am Eisbach 4, D-80538 Munich, globalresearch@unicredit.de
 Bloomberg: UCCR, Internet: www.unicreditresearch.eu

MR 19/2

*UniCredit Research is the joint research department of UniCredit Bank AG (UniCredit Bank, Munich or Frankfurt), UniCredit Bank AG London Branch (UniCredit Bank, London), UniCredit Bank AG Milan Branch (UniCredit Bank, Milan), UniCredit Bank AG Vienna Branch (UniCredit Bank, Vienna), UniCredit Bank Austria AG (Bank Austria), UniCredit Bulbank, Zagrebačka banka d.d., UniCredit Bank Czech Republic and Slovakia, ZAO UniCredit Bank Russia (UniCredit Russia), UniCredit Bank Romania.