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Market Pulse

October 2024

Equity Market Outlook

The FTSE MPF All World Index gained 1.9% in September. Interest rate sensitive sectors such as Consumer Discretionary, Utilities and Real Estate outperformed as the European Central Bank ("ECB"), the Federal Reserve ("Fed") and the People's Bank of China all cut their policy interest rates in September. The pace of worldwide economic momentum mildly recovered. In August, the JPMorgan Global Composite Purchasing Managers' Index ("PMI") rose to 52.8, marginally above July's 52.5. Manufacturing activity remained weak but services sector showed sign of improvement.

In September, the Standard & Poor's 500 Index jumped by 2%. After shooting up to its highest level North since COVID in August, the Chicago Board Options Exchange VolatilityVIX Index which measures equity America market volatility went down in September after the Fed lowering policy rates for the first time in four years. The 50 basis points rate-cut was larger-than-expected. Some investors speculated that the Fed would further loosen its monetary stance by the end of this year.

> Key economic data in the United States ("US") remained mixed. In September, although the preliminary University of Michigan Consumer Sentiment Index increased from its previous month's level, the Conference Board Consumer Confidence Index went down to 98.7 from August's 105.6.

- The Euro Stoxx Index ended the month of September with 1% gain. The ECB cut policy interest rates Europe again in September as economic growth in the Eurozone faltered. After the one-off boost from the Paris Olympics, the economic momentum of the Eurozone fell back to the contraction territory with the preliminary Hamburg Commercial Bank Composite PMI for the month of September slipping to 48.9 from August's 51.0. The Composite PMI statistics of Germany and France, the two largest economies in the Eurozone, were below 50, which indicates contraction in economic activity.
- China & The Hang Seng Index shot up by 17.5% in September. The strong rally started at the end of the month after Chinese financial authorities announced massive concerted policy efforts, including interest rate HK cuts, to pump-prime the economy. Home purchase restrictions in China's tier-1 cities had further been released. The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index soared by 18.6%. The CSI 300 Index sharply jumped by 21% as investors were excited by the massive economic stimulus measures announced by the Chinese government.

However, the pace of economic growth in China showed little sign of improvement. Although the official composite PMI marginally recovered in September to 50.4 from previous 50.1, the Caixin composite PMI weakened to 50.3 from 51.2 a month ago.

Bond Market Outlook

The FTSE MPF World Government Bond Index ended the month of September with 1.1% gain and registered monthly increase for three months in a row. Bond investors' sentiment was boosted by interest rate cuts by the central banks in the Eurozone, the US and China in September. In September, the 10-year US Treasury yield dropped below 3.7% for the first time in 2024 amid the Fed's first rate cut in four years.



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