



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

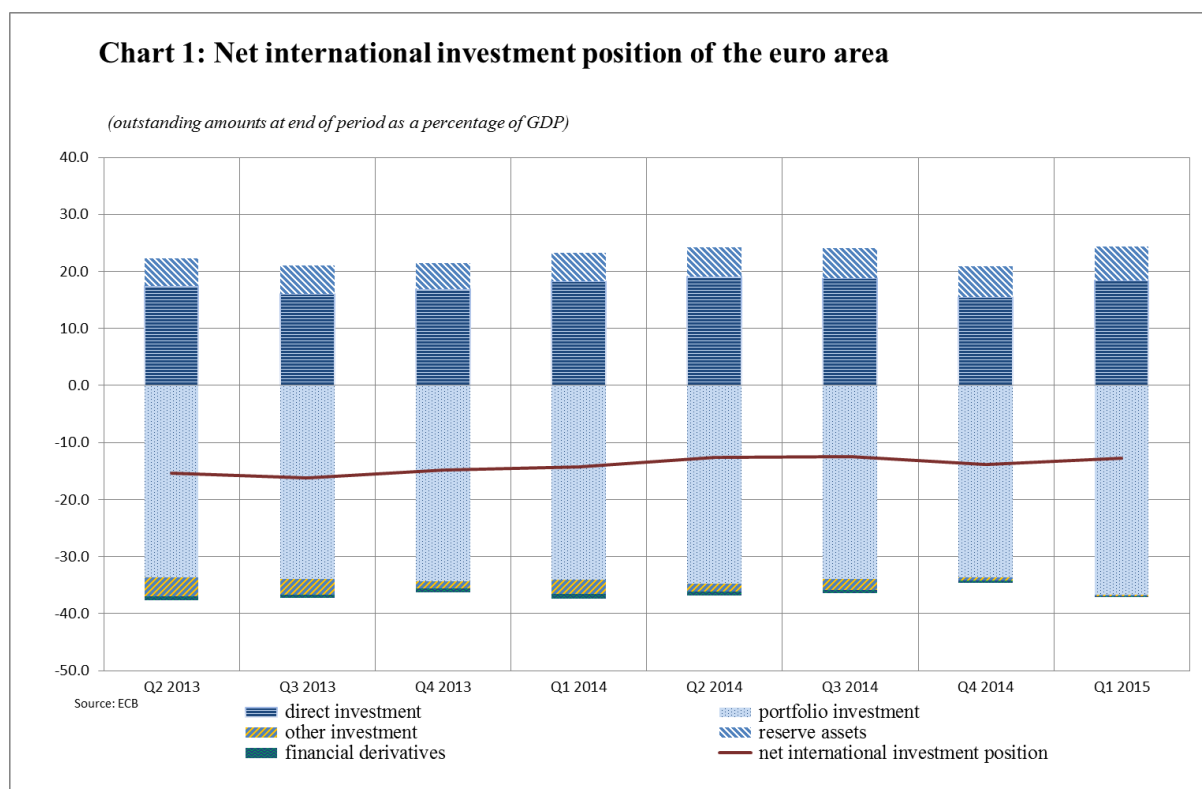
EUROSYSTEM

PRESS RELEASE

9 July 2015

Euro area quarterly balance of payments and international investment position (first quarter of 2015)

- The current account of the euro area showed a surplus of €238.2 billion (2.3% of euro area GDP) in the four quarters to the first quarter of 2015.
- At the end of the first quarter of 2015 the international investment position of the euro area recorded net liabilities of €1.3 trillion (approximately 13% of euro area GDP).



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Current account

The *current account* of the euro area showed a surplus of €54.5 billion in the first quarter of 2015, compared with €23.0 billion in the last quarter of 2014 (see Table 1). The increase in the *current account* surplus was due to increases in the surpluses for *goods* (from €44.9 billion to €67.2 billion) and *primary income* (from €15.8 billion to €28.0 billion). These increases were partly offset by a decrease in the surplus for *services* (from €12.5 billion to €9.8 billion) and by a marginal increase in the deficit for *secondary income* (from €50.2 to €50.5 billion).^[1]

The decrease in the surplus for *services* was mainly a result of a deterioration in the balances for the *travel* (a decrease in the surplus from €2.0 billion to €1.1 billion) and “*other*” (an increase in the deficit from €4.0 billion to €7.9 billion) components. This was partly offset by an improvement in the balance for the *telecommunication, computer and information services* component, where the surplus rose from €10.0 billion to €12.0 billion.

All components contributed to an increase in the *primary income* surplus, particularly the increase in the *investment income* surplus for *direct investment*.

International investment position

At the end of the first quarter of 2015 the international investment position of the euro area recorded net liabilities of €1.3 trillion vis-à-vis the rest of the world (approximately 13% of euro area GDP; see Chart 1). This represented a decrease of €102 billion in net liabilities compared with the last quarter of 2014 (see Table 2).

This decrease was the result of (i) higher net asset positions for *direct investment* (€1,873 billion, up from €1,570 billion) and *reserve assets* (€603 billion, up from €534 billion) and (ii) lower net liability positions for *other investment* (€25 billion, down from €52 billion) and *financial derivatives* (€21 billion, down from €44 billion). These developments were partly offset by an increase in the net liability position for *portfolio investment* (from €3,406 billion to €3,724 billion).

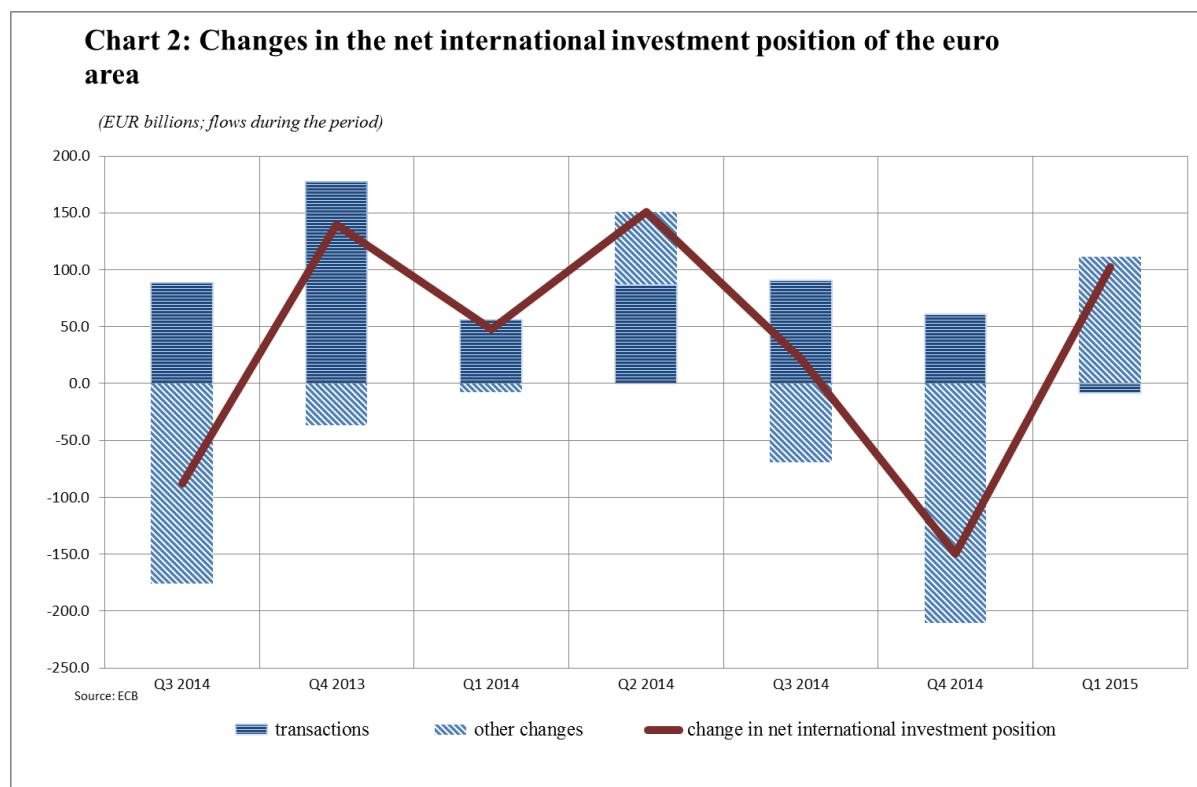
The change in the net international investment position of the euro area was broadly explained by revaluations – changes in exchange rates and asset prices – and other volume changes. Whereas the increases in *portfolio investment* and *direct investment* for both assets and liabilities were explained by transactions and other changes; other changes (mainly exchange rate effects) were mainly responsible for the developments in *reserve assets*. The increases in *other investment* assets and liabilities were mainly attributed to transactions (see Chart 2).

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At the end of first quarter of 2015 the *gross external debt* of the euro area amounted to €12.6 trillion (approximately 124% of euro area GDP), which represented an increase of over €760 billion compared with the previous quarter. By contrast, the *net external debt* decreased by approximately €170 billion on account of a more marked increase in euro area residents' holdings of (debt) assets issued by non-residents.

Data revisions

- This press release incorporates revisions to the data for the reference periods between the first quarter of 2013 and the last quarter of 2014. These revisions reflect improvements in the national contributions to the euro area aggregates.

Additional information

- Time series data: [ECB's Statistical Data Warehouse \(SDW\)](#).
- Methodological information: [ECB's website](#).
- [Next press releases:](#)
 - o Monthly balance of payments: **20 July 2015** (reference data up to May 2015).

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- Quarterly balance of payments and international investment position: **8 October 2015**
(reference data up to the second quarter of 2015)

Annexes

- Table 1: Current account of the euro area
- Table 2: International investment position of the euro area

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Notes:

- ^[1] In broad terms, the new BPM6 concept of “primary income” corresponds to the old BPM5 concept of “income”, and the new concept of “secondary income” corresponds to the old concept of “current transfers”.

Table 1: Current account of the Euro area

(EUR billions, unless otherwise indicated; transactions during the period; non working day and non seasonally adjusted)

	Cumulated figures for the four-quarter period ending in						Q1 2014			Q1 2015		
	Q4 2014			Q1 2015			Net	Credit	Debit	Net	Credit	Debit
	Net	Credit	Debit	Net	Credit	Debit						
Current account	206.8	3,330.7	3,123.9	238.2	3,368.6	3,130.3	23.0	795.4	772.3	54.5	833.3	778.8
Percentage of GDP	2.0	33.0	30.9	2.3	33.2	30.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goods	248.3	1,964.8	1,716.5	270.5	1,989.4	1,718.9	44.9	471.5	426.5	67.2	496.0	428.9
of which: General merchandise	238.6	1,914.9	1,676.3	258.7	1,937.4	1,678.7	43.8	460.0	416.2	64.0	482.6	418.6
Services	67.6	693.2	625.7	64.9	705.4	640.5	12.5	154.8	142.3	9.8	166.9	157.1
Transport	6.4	128.3	122.0	6.8	130.0	123.1	0.4	29.9	29.6	0.8	31.6	30.8
Travel	18.0	117.1	99.0	17.2	117.5	100.3	2.0	20.8	18.9	1.1	21.3	20.2
Insurance pension and financial services	15.0	78.5	63.6	14.8	80.2	65.4	3.4	18.8	15.3	3.3	20.4	17.2
Telecommunication, computer and information services	46.3	88.0	41.7	48.4	90.9	42.5	10.0	20.0	10.0	12.0	22.8	10.8
Other business services	-0.9	181.4	182.3	-1.2	185.9	187.1	0.7	41.8	41.1	0.4	46.3	45.9
Other	-17.2	99.8	117.1	-21.0	100.8	121.9	-4.0	23.4	27.4	-7.9	24.4	32.2
Primary income	30.2	578.3	548.1	42.3	577.7	535.4	15.8	147.4	131.6	28.0	146.9	118.9
Compensation of employees	18.7	33.0	14.3	19.2	33.6	14.4	5.3	8.1	2.8	5.9	8.7	2.9
Investment income	-11.4	505.5	516.9	-1.6	502.2	503.7	0.9	125.9	124.9	10.8	122.5	111.8
Direct investment	60.5	295.4	234.8	68.0	287.3	219.3	13.6	77.0	63.4	21.0	68.9	47.9
of which: Reinvested earnings	-31.7	15.4	47.1	-43.4	8.1	51.4	-2.3	15.4	17.7	-13.9	8.1	22.0
Portfolio investment	-70.9	163.6	234.4	-70.3	168.1	238.4	-11.5	37.4	48.9	-10.9	41.9	52.8
Dividends	2.1	55.4	53.3	2.9	57.7	54.7	5.9	11.5	5.6	6.8	13.8	7.0
Income on investment fund shares	-72.6	5.0	77.6	-74.7	4.9	79.7	-15.8	1.1	16.9	-17.9	1.0	18.9
Interest	-0.3	103.2	103.5	1.5	105.5	104.0	-1.6	24.8	26.4	0.2	27.1	26.9
Other investment	-4.0	43.6	47.6	-2.3	43.7	46.0	-1.9	10.7	12.6	-0.2	10.9	11.1
of which: interest	-3.0	40.4	43.4	-1.3	40.5	41.8	-1.5	10.1	11.6	0.2	10.2	10.0
Reserve assets		2.9			3.0			0.8			0.8	
Other primary income	22.9	39.8	17.0	24.7	42.0	17.3	9.5	13.5	3.9	11.3	15.6	4.3
Secondary income	-139.2	94.4	233.6	-139.5	96.1	235.6	-50.2	21.8	71.9	-50.5	23.4	73.9

Source: ECB.

Table 2: International investment position of the euro area

(EUR billions, unless otherwise indicated; amounts outstanding at the end of the period, flows during the period; non working day and non seasonally adjusted)

	Q1 2014	Q2 2014	Q3 2014	Q4 2014			Q1 2015			
				Transactions	Other changes	Amounts outstanding	Transactions	Other changes	Amounts outstanding	Percentage of GDP
Net/Balance	-1,420	-1,269	-1,248	61	-210	-1,397	-9	111	-1,295	-13
of which: Direct investment	1,822	1,912	1,897	-17	-310	1,570	85	218	1,873	18
of which: Portfolio investment	-3,402	-3,489	-3,407	96	-95	-3,406	-131	-187	-3,724	-37
of which: Other investment	-254	-129	-202	-31	180	-52	4	23	-25	-0
Assets	17,940	18,472	19,220	58	74	19,352	505	1,231	21,087	208
Direct investment	7,464	7,543	7,798	56	-285	7,569	160	476	8,204	81
Equity	5,142	5,171	5,315	8	-57	5,266	71	289	5,626	55
Debt instruments	2,322	2,372	2,483	48	-228	2,303	89	187	2,578	25
Portfolio investment	5,664	5,961	6,306	93	110	6,509	129	633	7,271	72
Equity	2,043	2,190	2,318	22	77	2,417	-15	347	2,749	27
Investment fund shares	360	380	404	-10	24	418	2	51	470	5
Debt securities	3,261	3,390	3,584	81	9	3,674	142	235	4,052	40
Short-term	525	535	583	19	-10	592	13	38	644	6
Long-term	2,736	2,856	3,001	62	20	3,082	129	197	3,408	34
Financial derivatives (net assets)	-82	-70	-56	10	2	-44	27	-5	-21	-0
Other investment	4,397	4,532	4,652	-105	235	4,783	183	64	5,030	50
of which: Currency and deposits	2,369	2,459	2,518	-84	150	2,584	109	66	2,758	27
Reserve assets	497	507	520	3	12	534	6	63	603	6
Liabilities	19,360	19,741	20,468	-3	284	20,749	514	1,119	22,382	220
Direct investment	5,642	5,631	5,901	74	25	5,999	75	258	6,332	62
Equity	3,728	3,721	3,868	60	102	4,031	3	85	4,119	41
Debt instruments	1,915	1,909	2,032	13	-78	1,968	71	174	2,212	22
Portfolio investment	9,066	9,449	9,713	-3	205	9,915	260	820	10,995	108
Equity	1,736	1,827	1,835	3	-6	1,832	42	331	2,205	22
Investment fund shares	2,636	2,762	2,924	31	57	3,013	101	307	3,421	34
Debt securities	4,694	4,860	4,954	-37	153	5,071	117	182	5,370	53
Short-term	434	465	484	-53	6	437	22	10	470	5
Long-term	4,260	4,394	4,470	16	147	4,633	94	172	4,899	48
Other investment	4,651	4,661	4,854	-74	55	4,835	179	41	5,055	50
of which: Currency and deposits	2,823	2,802	2,907	-53	9	2,863	119	166	3,147	31
Memo item: Gross external debt	11,255	11,426	11,836	-	-	11,869	-	-	12,633	124
Memo item: Net external debt	1,090	944	917	-	-	903	-	-	731	7

Source: ECB.