

KEY INDICATORS FOR THE EURO AREA



European Commission, DG ECFIN

Key indicators for the euro area

this update: 9 March 2006

next update: 4 April 2006

		2002	2003	2004	Sep-05	Oct-05	Nov-05	Dec-05	Jan-06	Feb-06
1 Output										
Industrial confidence ^{1.1}	Balance	-12	-11	-5	-7	-6	-7	-5	-4	-2
Industrial production ^{1.2}	mom % ch.	-0.7	0.5	2.0	-0.2	-0.7	1.4	0.1		
		2002	2003	2004	04Q4	05Q1	05Q2	05Q3	05Q4	06Q1
Gross domestic product ^{1.3}	qoq % ch.				0.2	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.3	
2 Private consumption										
Consumer confidence ^{2.1}	Balance	-11	-18	-14	-15	-13	-13	-11	-11	-10
Retail sales ^{2.2}	mom % ch.	1.1	0.1	0.2	-0.7	0.3	0.0	-0.1	0.8	
		2002	2003	2004	04Q4	05Q1	05Q2	05Q3	05Q4	06Q1
Private consumption ^{2.3}	qoq %ch.	0.6	1.1	1.6	0.8	0.1	0.3	0.5	-0.2	
3 Investment										
Capacity utilization ^{3.1}	%	81.2	80.7	81.6	82.1	81.9	81.1	80.9	81.1	81.7
Gross fixed capital formation ^{3.2}	qoq % ch.	-2.0	0.9	2.3	0.6	0.2	1.0	1.1	0.8	
Change in stocks ^{3.3}	% of GDP	-0.1	0.0	-0.1	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.5	
4 Labour market										
Unemployment ^{4.1}	%	8.2	8.4	8.9	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	
		2002	2003	2004	04Q4	05Q1	05Q2	05Q3	05Q4	06Q1
Employment ^{4.2}	yoy % ch.	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.6		
Shortage of labour ^{4.3}	%	3.8	2.5	2.4	2.1	2.2	2.0	2.1	2.8	2.4
Wages ^{4.4}	yoy % ch.	2.9	2.5	2.2	1.9	2.6	2.2	2.1		
5 International transactions										
Export order books ^{5.1}	Balance	-22	-24	-13	-17	-15	-14	-11	-11	-9
World trade ^{5.2}	Index	125	132							
Exports of goods ^{5.3}	Bn. EUR	776.9	1038.6	1142.1	107.3	104.4	108.2	108.7		
Imports of goods ^{5.4}	Bn. EUR	781.6	970.4	1069.1	105.1	105.4	107.3	111.1		
Trade balance ^{5.5}	Bn. EUR	-4.7	68.2	73.0	2.2	-1.0	0.8	-2.4		
		2002	2003	2004	04Q4	05Q1	05Q2	05Q3	05Q4	06Q1
Exports of goods and services ^{5.6}	qoq % ch.	2.1	0.6	5.9	0.4	-0.9	2.0	3.4	0.5	
Imports of goods and services ^{5.7}	qoq % ch.	0.5	2.6	6.1	1.4	-1.5	2.3	3.1	0.9	
		2002	2003	2004	Sep-05	Oct-05	Nov-05	Dec-05	Jan-06	Feb-06
Current account balance ^{5.8}	Bn. EUR	44.9	18.1	42.4	-2.2	-7.4	-9.5	-5.3		
Direct investment (net) ^{5.9}	Bn. EUR	-11.0	-18.4	-39.7	2.2	-6.4	-12.9	-6.8		
Portfolio investment (net) ^{5.10}	Bn. EUR	64.4	-9.4	39.0	14.3	-6.6	-34.7	-15.9		
6 Prices										
HICP ^{6.1}	yoy % ch.	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.2	2.4	2.3
Core HICP ^{6.2}	yoy % ch.	2.5	2.0	2.1	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.3	
Producer prices ^{6.3}	yoy % ch.	1.7	1.6	2.3	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.7	5.3	
Import prices ^{6.4}	Index	97.9	102.5	97.2	109.1	108.9	109.5			
7 Monetary and financial indicators										
Interest rate (3 months) ^{7.1}	% p.a.	3.3	2.3	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.6
Bond yield (10 years) ^{7.2}	% p.a.	4.8	4.1	4.1	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.5
ECB repo rate ^{7.3}	% p.a.	3.25	2.75		2.00	2.00	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.50
Stock markets ^{7.4}	Index	3053	2420	2805	3352	3344	3405	3548	3627	3744
M3 ^{7.5}	yoy % ch.	5.6	7.8	5.9	8.2	8.0	7.6	7.5		
Credit to private sector (loans) ^{7.6}	yoy % ch.	7.7	5.0	6.0	8.7	8.9	9.0	9.2	9.7	
Exchange rate USD/EUR ^{7.7}	Value	0.95	1.13	1.24	1.23	1.20	1.18	1.19	1.21	1.19
Nominal effective exchange rate ^{7.8}	Index	95.1	106.4	109.8	108.5	108.2	107.6	107.8	108.7	108.2

European Communities, 2006. http://europa.eu.int/comm/economy_finance/indicators/key_euro_area/keyeuroarea_en.htm



Comments

1. Output

The Commission's **industrial confidence** indicator increased by 2 points in February. The upward path, which began towards the end of the second quarter of 2005, appears to be sustained. The improvement in the indicator was reflected in all its components.

Industrial production in the euro area rose by 0.1% in December. On an annual basis, industrial production increased by 2.5% vis-à-vis the same period in 2004. Month-on-month production increased in the energy sector and in non-durable consumer goods, while it fell in intermediate, capital and durable consumer goods.

Eurostat's first estimate of **gross domestic product** for the fourth quarter of 2005 shows an increase of 0.3% over the previous quarter. In comparison with the same quarter of the previous year, GDP grew by 1.7%.

The Commission's **dynamic factor model** for quarterly euro-area GDP growth projects GDP growth in the range of 0.4% to 0.9% for the first quarter of 2006, slightly revised upwards compared to the previous release. The projected range for GDP growth in the second and third quarter of 2006 is also 0.4% to 0.9%. The projection for the second quarter is unchanged compared to the January release.

2. Private consumption

The **consumer confidence** indicator improved by 1 point in February. The indicator seems to have established a slight upward trend since mid-2005 and is now back at levels last reached in 2002.

In January 2006, the volume of **retail sales** rose by 0.8%, compared to the previous month. Vis-à-vis the same period in 2005, retail sales grew by 0.9%.

Private consumption contracted by 0.2% in the last quarter of 2005 (q-o-q), after a 0.5% rise in the previous quarter. On an annual basis, household final consumption expenditure increased by 0.8%.

3. Investment

Gross fixed capital formation rose by 0.8% in the fourth quarter of 2005 (q-o-q), after a rise of 1.1% in the previous quarter. On an annual basis, investment increased by 3.2%, compared to a 2.7% rise in the third quarter. The change in **stocks** as a

percentage of GDP amounted to 0.5% in the fourth quarter of 2005. According to the quarterly manufacturing survey, **capacity utilisation** in the manufacturing sector increased to 81.7% in the first quarter of 2006. This is slightly above its long-term average.

4. Labour market

In January 2006, the **unemployment** rate stood at 8.3%, unchanged from December. It was 8.9% one year ago.

Total **employment** in the euro area rose by 0.6% (y-o-y) in the third quarter of 2005, unchanged from the previous quarter. The growth rate registered one year previously was 0.7%. Businesses reported a slight deterioration in their employment expectations in January.

The level of **labour shortages** increased by 0.1 pp in the third quarter of 2005: 2.1% of firms reported that unfilled job openings were constraining production.

5. International transactions

The assessment of **export order books** in manufacturing improved by two points in February. The estimate of the **trade balance** for the euro area revealed a 2.4 bn euro deficit in December 2005, compared to a revised deficit of 0.8 bn euro in the previous month. The deterioration in the trade balance was the result of an increase in **imports of goods** (+3.8 bn euro), which was larger than the rise in **exports of goods** (+0.5 bn euro). In the fourth quarter of 2005, **exports of goods and services** (in volume terms) were up by 0.5% and **imports** by 0.9% (q-o-q). Compared to one year earlier, exports and imports rose by 5.1% and 5.0%, respectively.

The seasonally-adjusted **current account** of the euro area showed a deficit of 5.3 bn euro in December 2005 (corresponding to a deficit of 0.3 bn euro in non seasonally-adjusted terms). This reflected deficits in income (4.7 bn euro) and current transfers (6.2 bn euro), which were only partly offset by surpluses in goods (2.3 bn euro) and services (3.3 bn euro).

In the **financial account**, combined direct and portfolio investment recorded net outflows of 23 bn euro in December 2005, reflecting net outflows in both **portfolio investment** (16 bn euro) and **direct investment** (7 bn euro).



6. Prices

Euro area annual **HICP inflation** was 2.3% in February 2006 according to Eurostat's flash estimate (HICP data will be released on 16 March), down from 2.4% in January. The impact of higher energy prices (oil, petrol) remained the key determinant of price increases. In January, the highest annual inflation rates were recorded for housing (5.5%), transport (5.5%), alcohol and tobacco (2.5%) and education (2.5%), whereas declines were observed for communication (-2.8%) and clothing (-0.8%). The largest absolute contributions to the HICP inflation rate were again energy-price related. They stemmed from fuels for transport (annual increase of 15.2%), heating oil (28.9%), gas (14.1%) and district heating (20.4%) that accounted for 0.51, 0.20, 0.17 and 0.08 percentage points of HICP inflation, respectively. The **core inflation** rate (HICP excluding energy and unprocessed food) was 1.3%, down from 1.4% in December 2005.

In early March 2006, **oil prices** stood slightly above 60 US dollar per barrel (Brent) and thereby only moderately higher than at the end of 2005 (59 US dollar per barrel) and about ten percent below this year's peak. Despite ample domestic oil supply in the US and the expectation that OPEC will not change production plans at its March meeting, oil prices remained at high levels reflecting concerns about possible supply disruptions in Iran and Nigeria.

In January 2006, **producer price** inflation increased to 5.3%, up from 4.7% in December 2005. Among the main components, the highest annual inflation rate was recorded for energy (19.9%). Producer prices excluding energy and construction increased at an annual rate of 1.6% suggesting that the indirect effects of higher energy prices have remained limited in the period up to January 2006.

7. Monetary and financial indicators

On 2 March 2006, the ECB Governing Council decided to raise policy interest rates by 25 basis points. The minimum bid rate on the main refinancing operations of the Eurosystem now stands at 2.50%. In 2006 euro area money markets have been strongly affected by market expectations of future changes in ECB policy interest rates. In early March 2006, the **three-month money market rate** stood slightly below 2.70% indicating that markets had priced in another increase in policy interest rates in the coming weeks.

Government bond yields moved in a narrow range around 3.60% in February and early March. The euro area **yield curve** (as measured by the difference between long-term yields and three-month interest rates) remained relatively flat in early 2006.

M3 growth accelerated in January 2006. The annual growth rate increased to 7.6%, from 7.3% in December 2005. The three-month moving average of M3 growth lowered to 7.5% in the period November 2005 to January 2006. The most liquid components continued to grow faster than the aggregate, but the pace decreased slightly compared with December. The annual growth rate of M1 decreased from 11.3% in December 2005 to 10.2% in January 2006. The still very low level of interest rates remained a key determinant of monetary developments. The annual rate of **credit growth (loans)** to the private sector increased from a revised rate of 9.2% in December to 9.7% in January. Lending for house purchase grew even stronger in response to low mortgage interest rates and house price dynamics (+11.7% in January). All in all, monetary developments supported the view of ample liquidity conditions in the euro area.

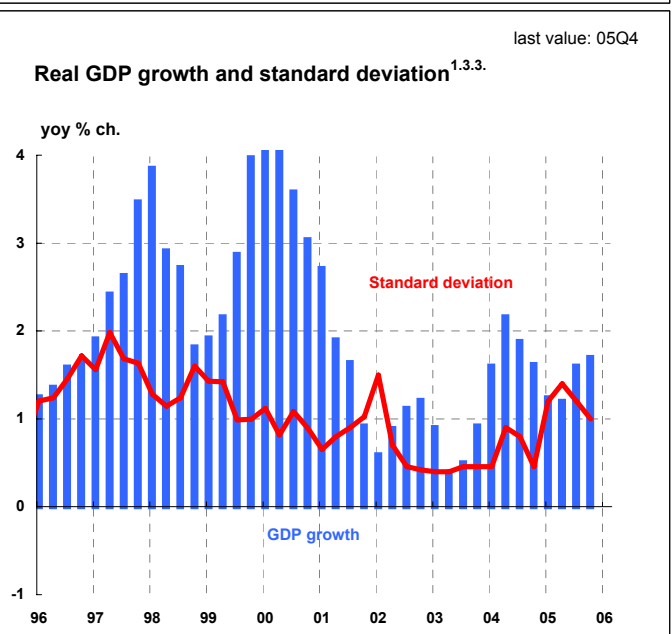
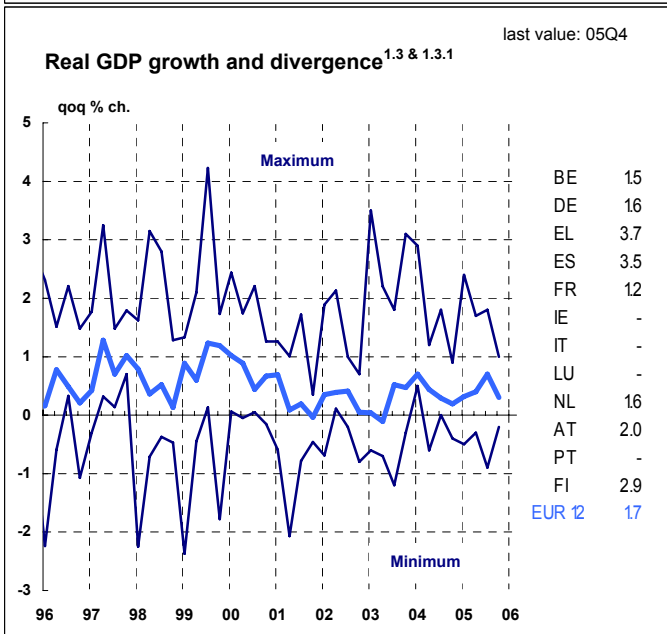
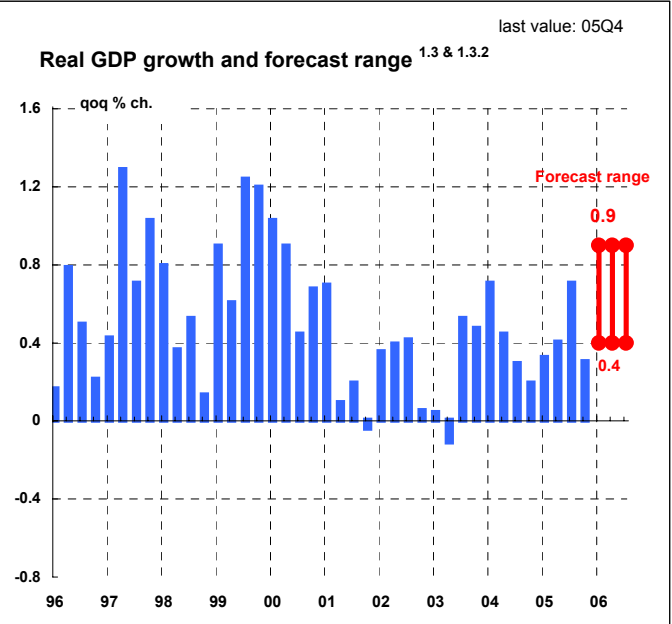
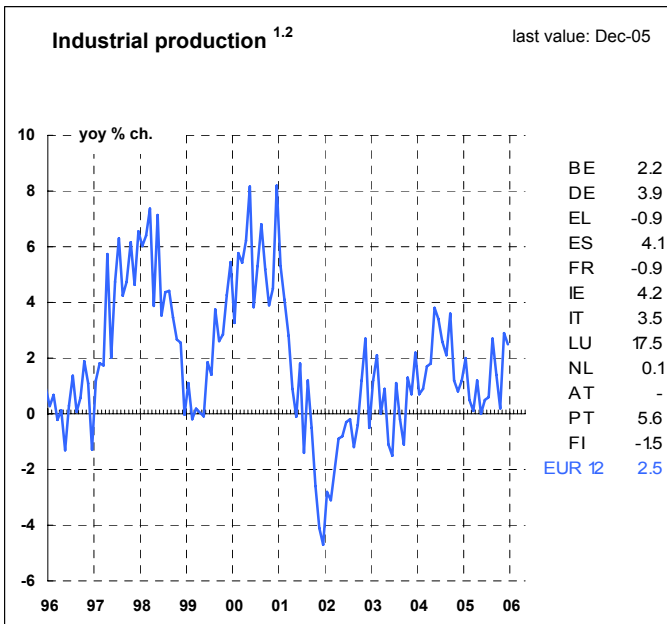
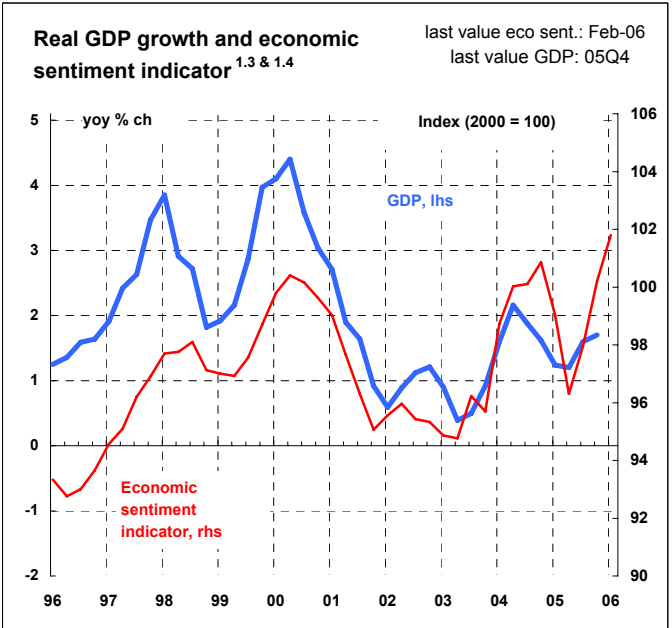
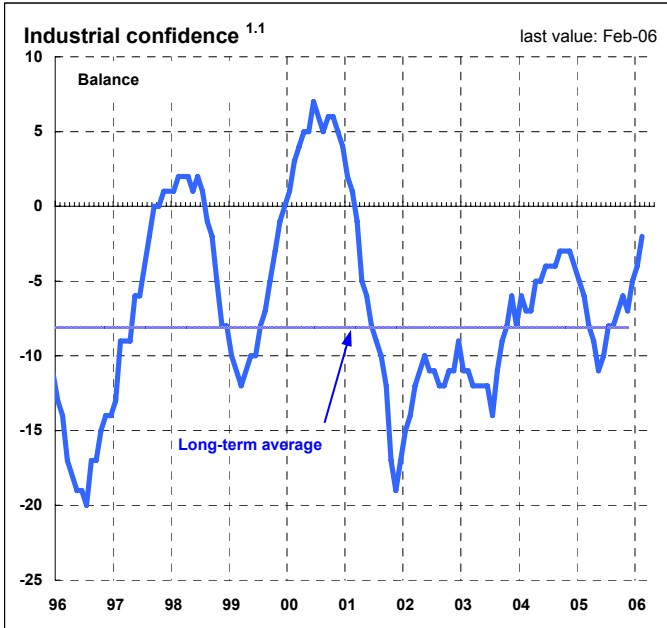
The **euro exchange rate** stood in a range between 1.18 and 1.21 US dollar per euro in February. Some volatility was observed in response to changes in expectations about the future stance of monetary policy in the US and the euro area. Among the key determinants of exchange rate movements were the interest rate differential and the outlook for the US and the euro area.

Equity markets in the euro area and the US showed further upward movements in February, whereas stock prices in Japan fell. Euro area stocks benefited from strong earning results and exchange market developments helping export-oriented companies. The **EuroSTOXX50** increased by about 2 percent in February and by about 4½ percent since the beginning of the year thereby outperforming US equity markets. The Japanese stock market lost all gains reported earlier this year in response to concerns about a forthcoming change in the stance of monetary policy leaving gains of about percent since the beginning of the year.

KEY INDICATORS FOR THE EURO AREA



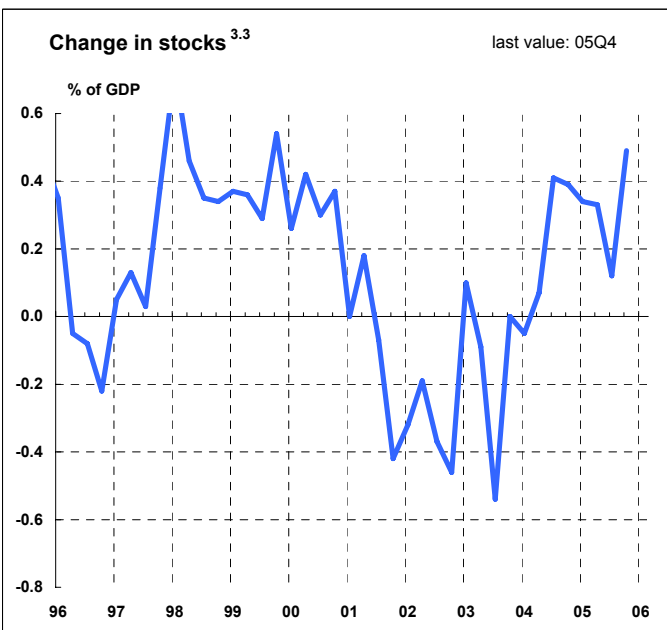
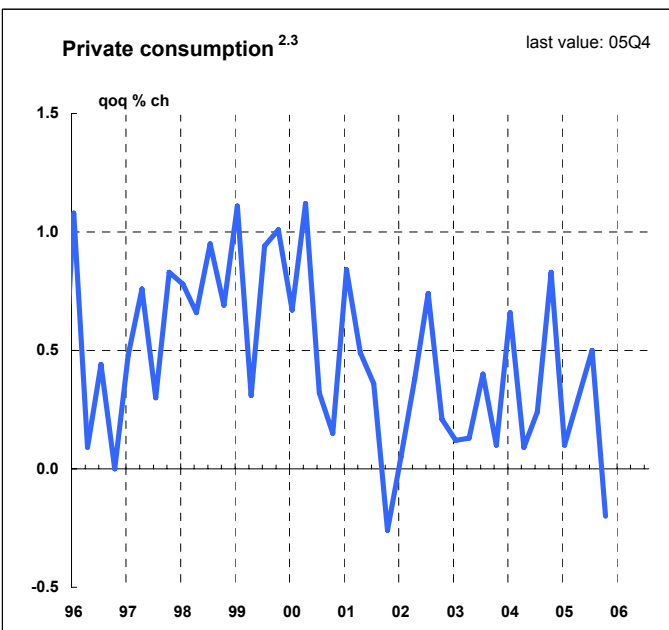
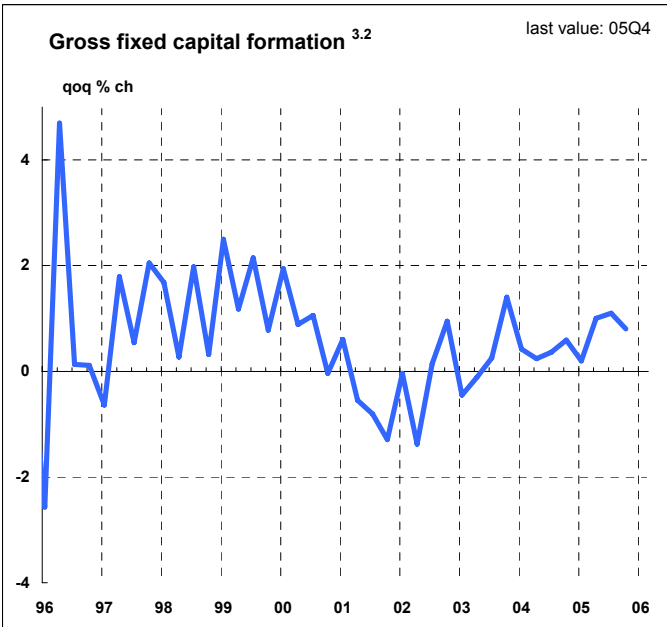
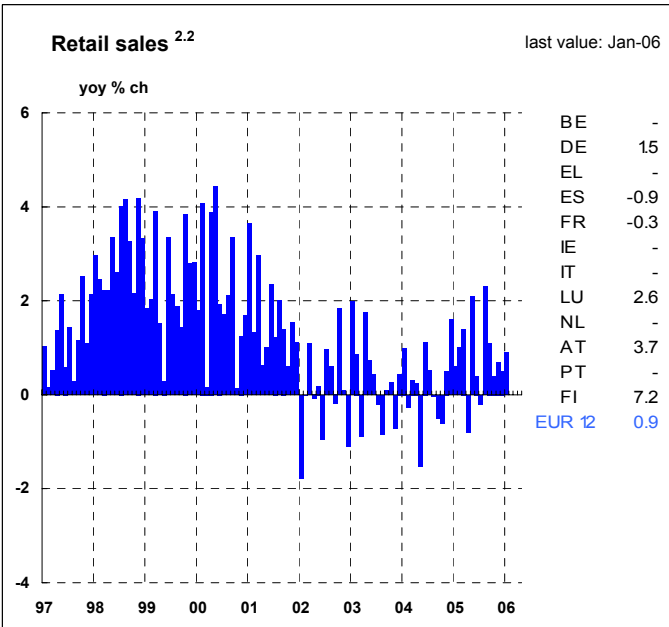
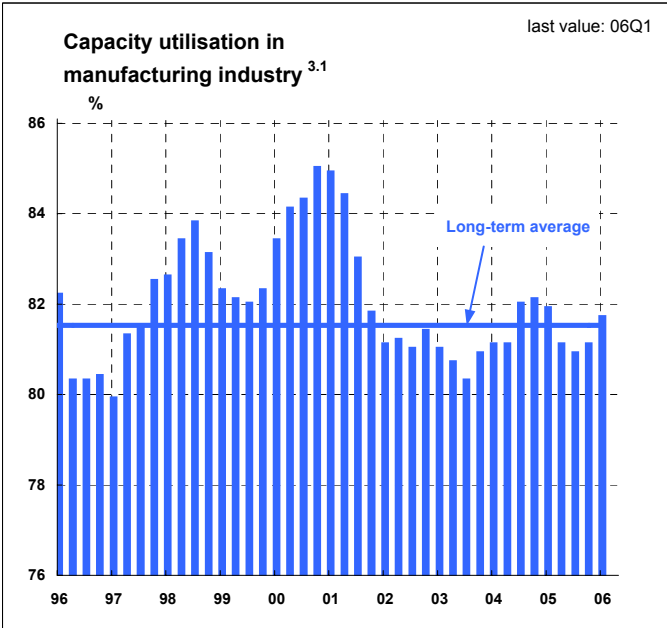
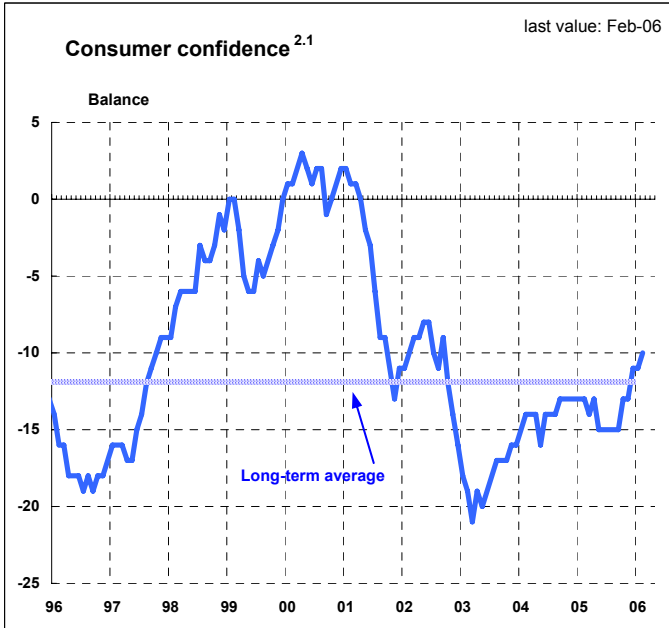
1. OUTPUT





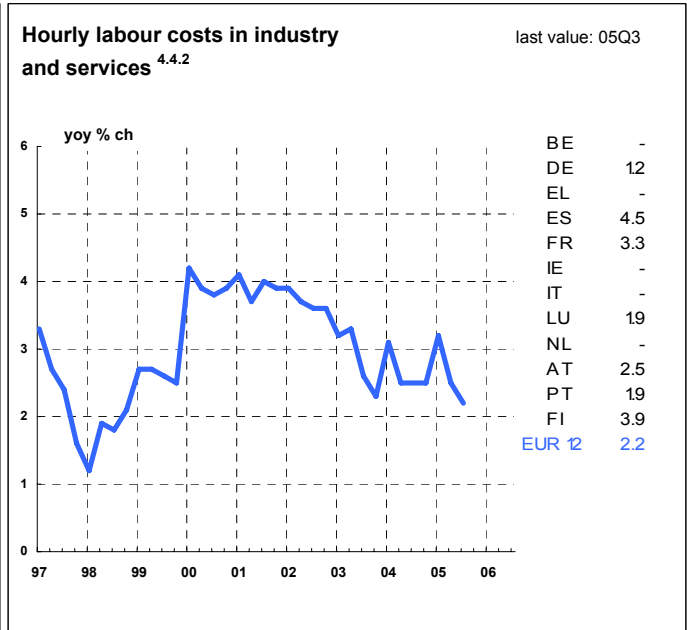
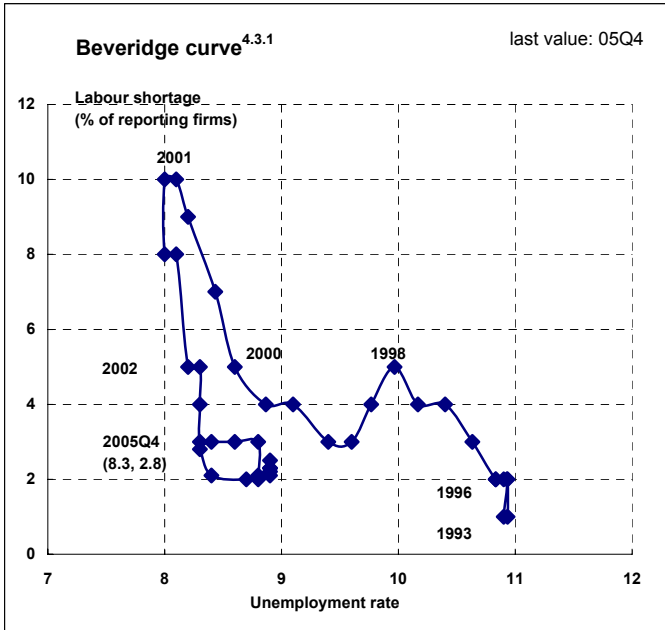
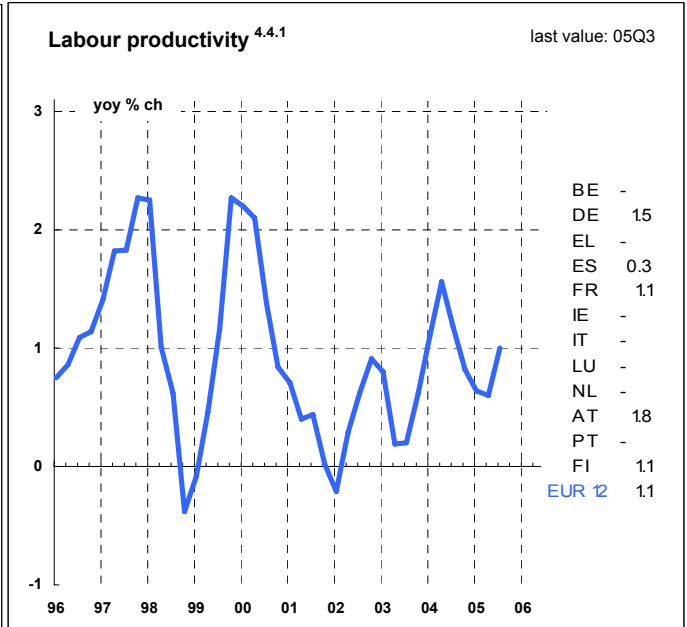
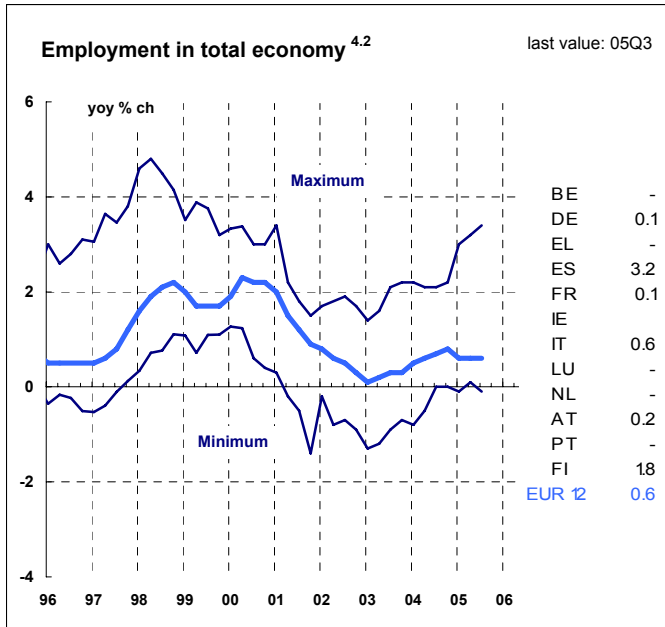
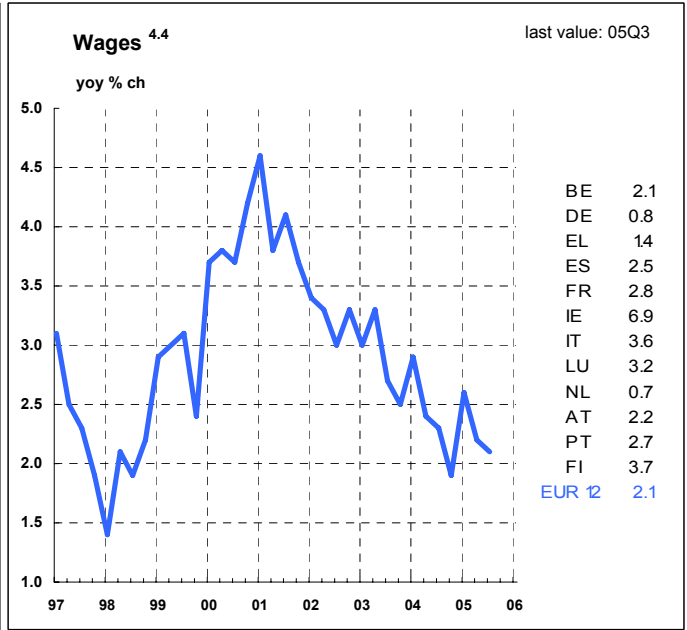
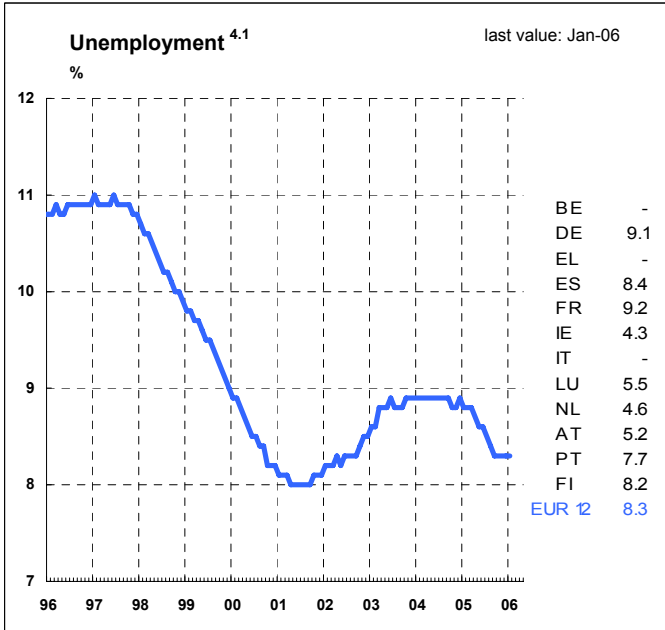
2. PRIVATE CONSUMPTION

3. INVESTMENT



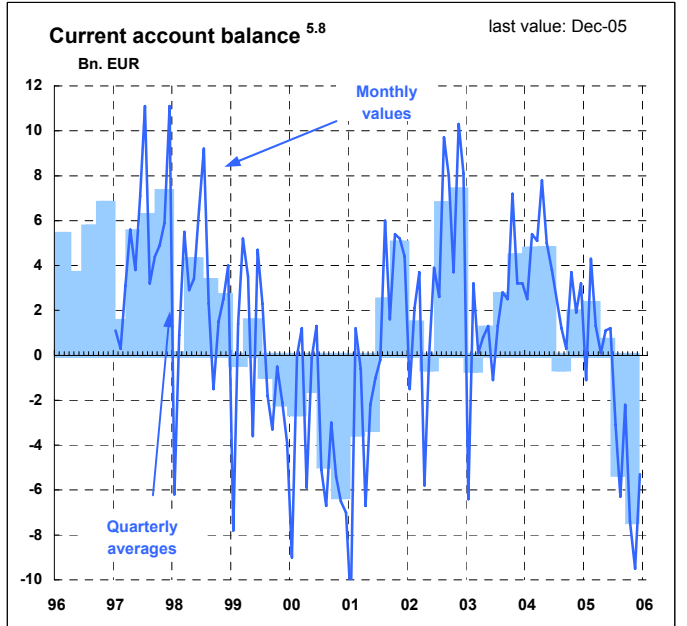
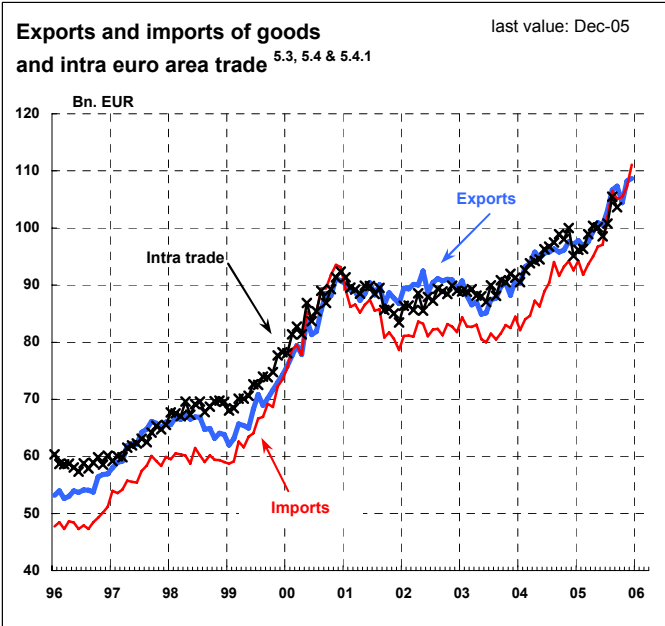
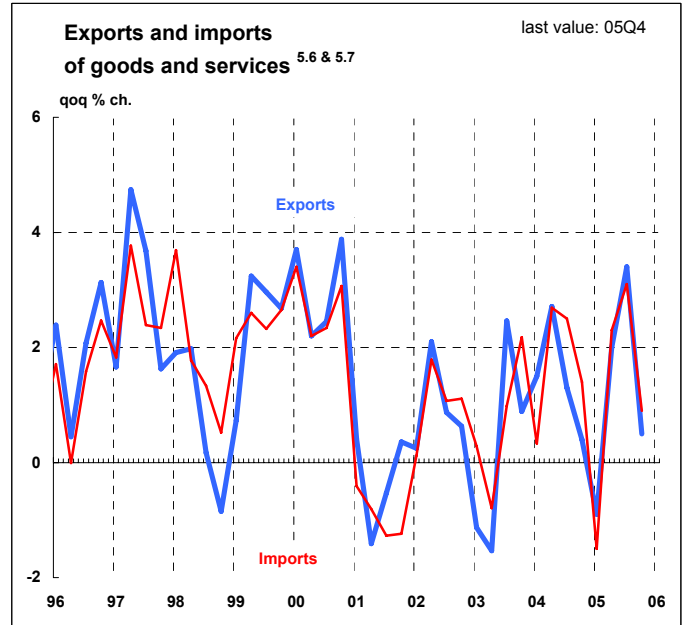
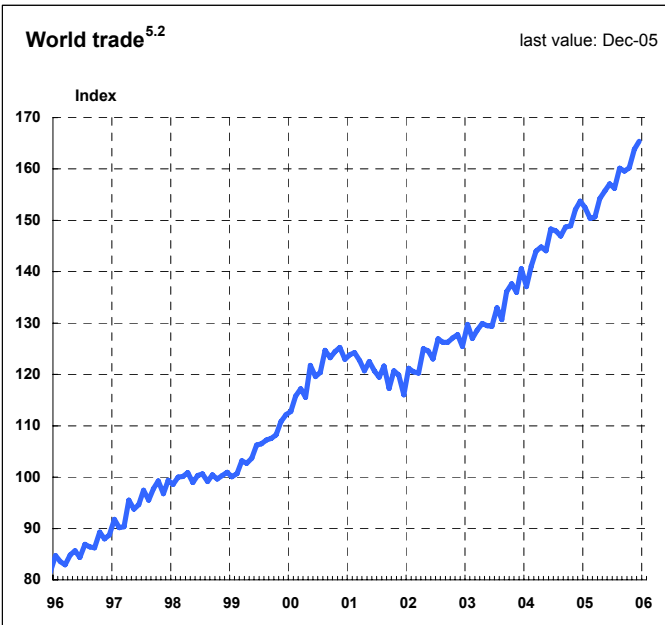
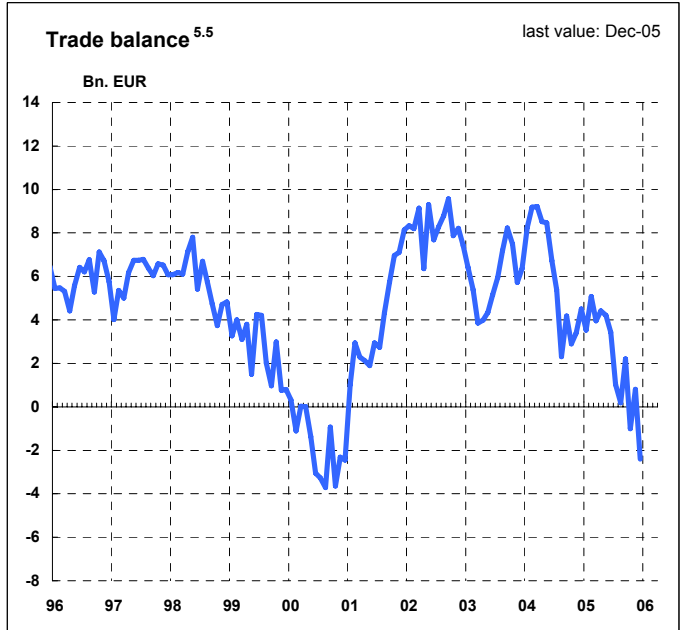
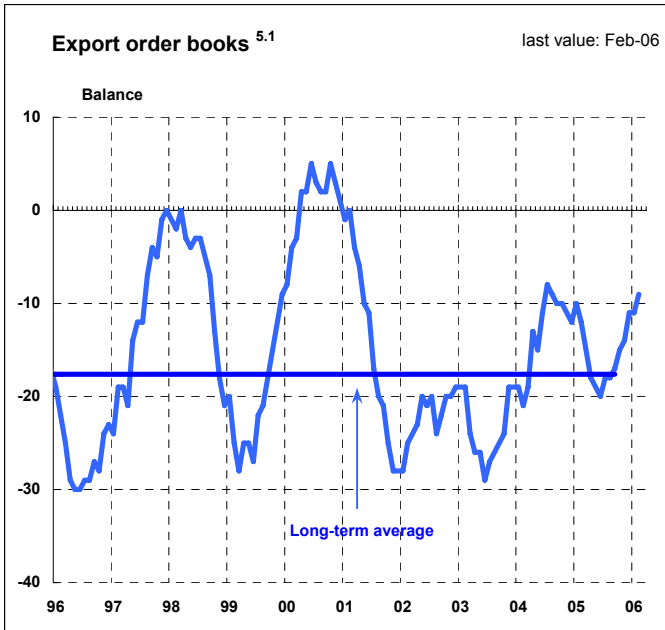


4. LABOUR MARKET



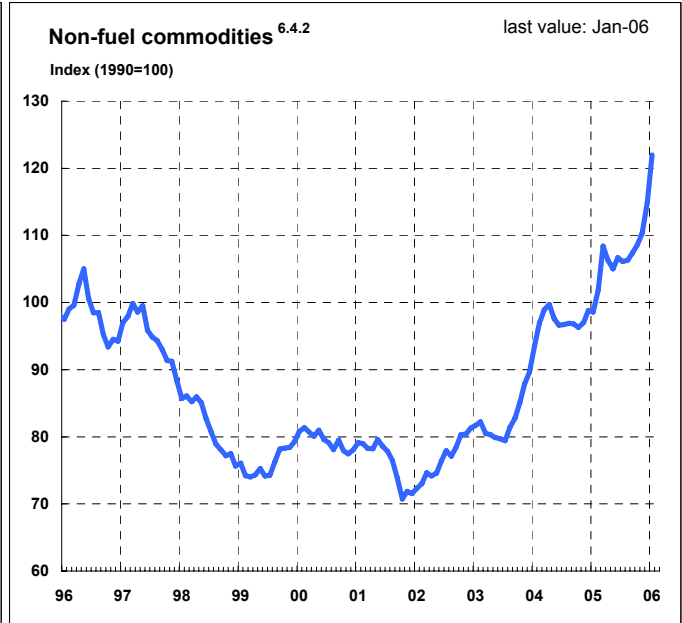
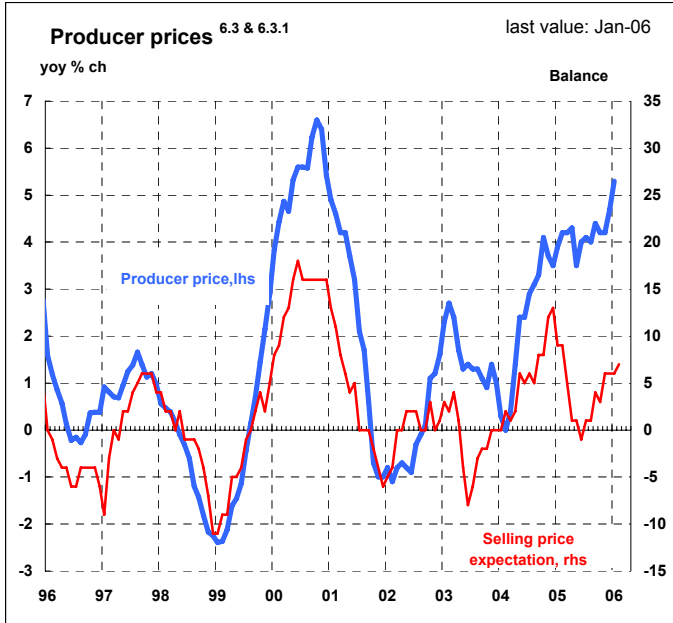
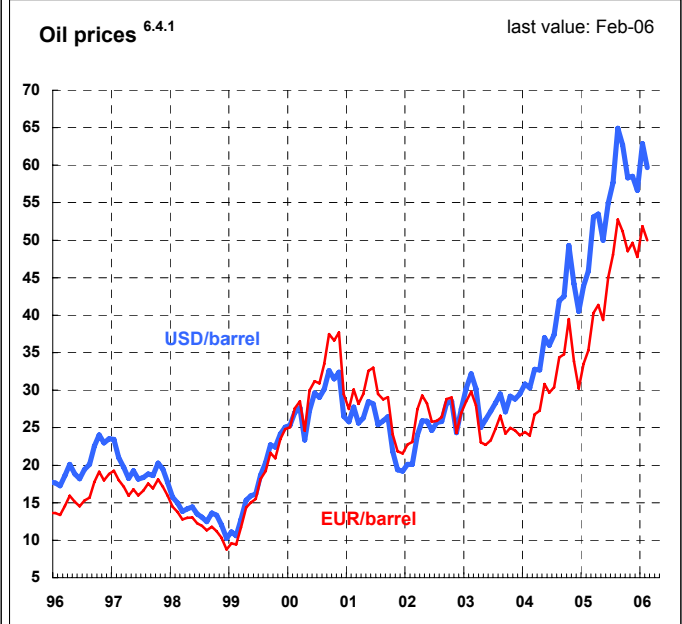
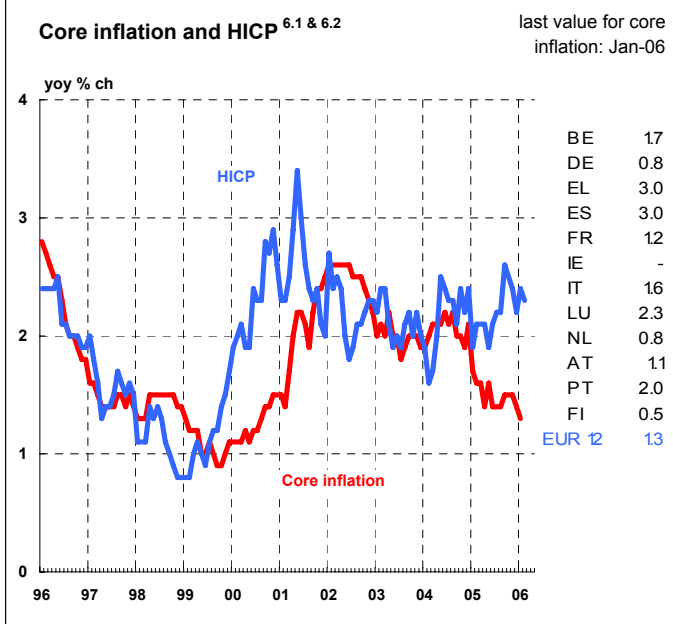
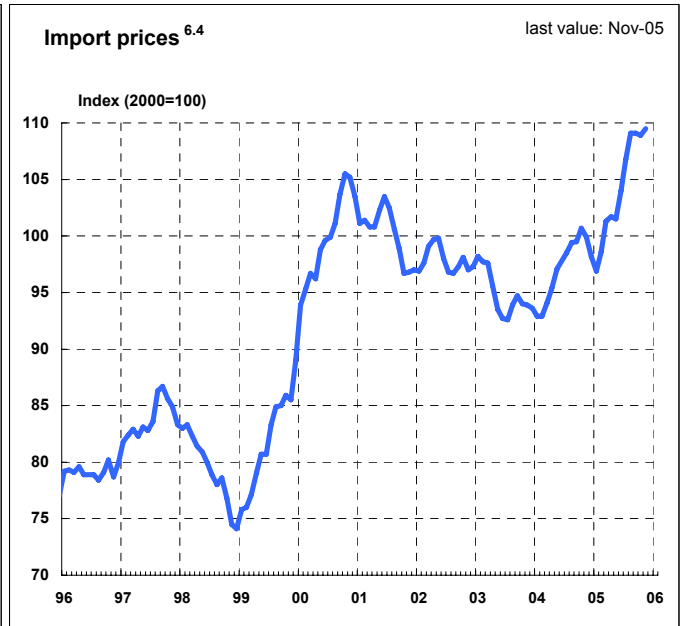
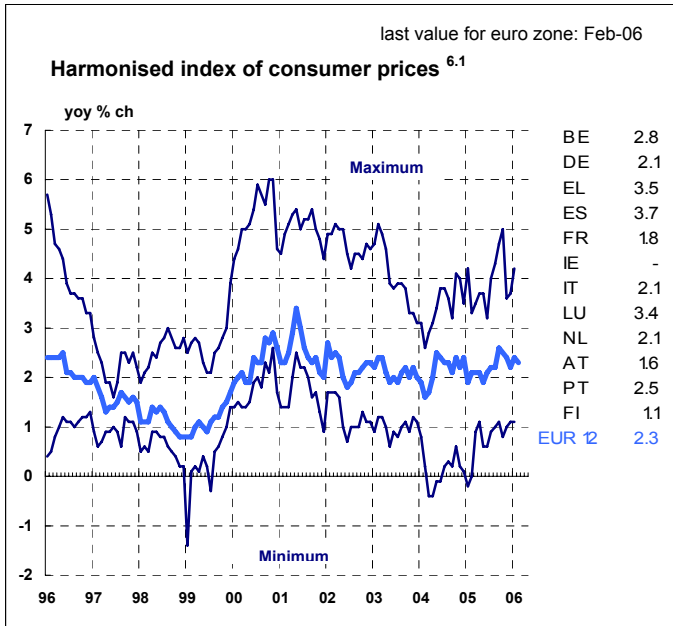


5. INTERNATIONAL TRANSACTIONS





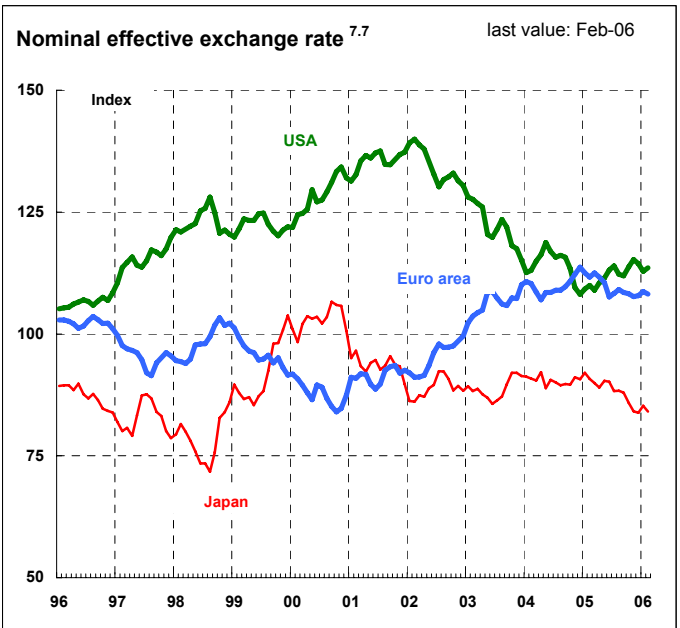
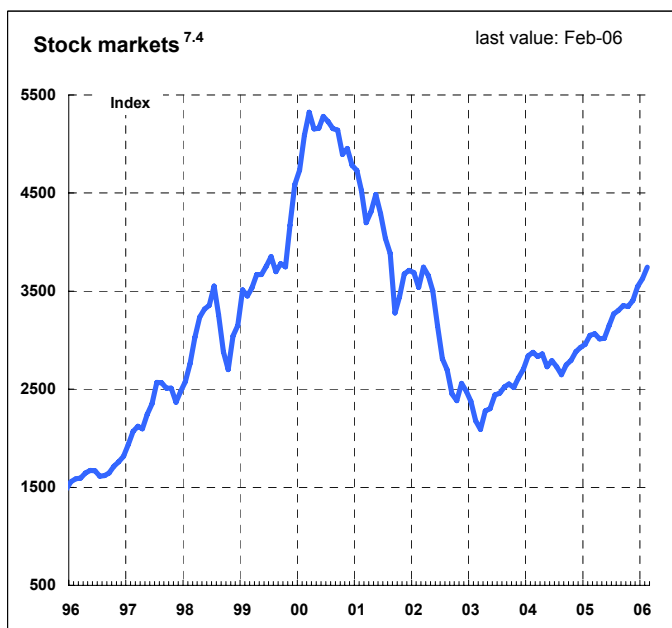
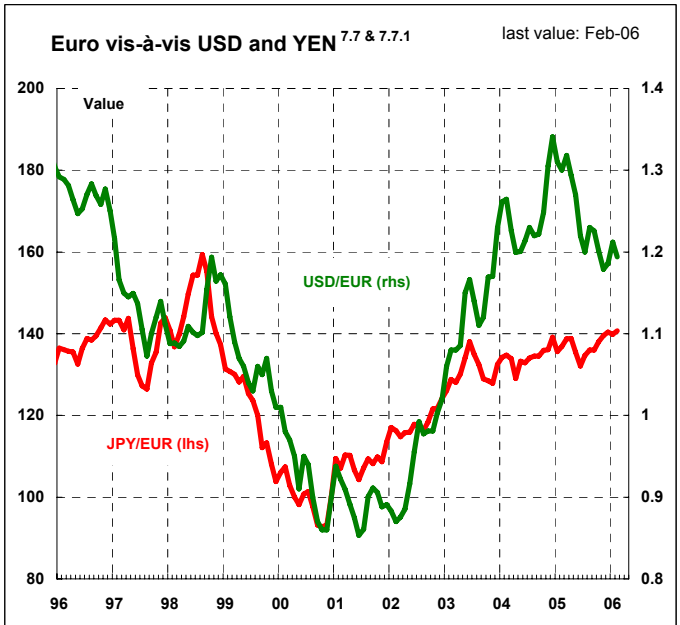
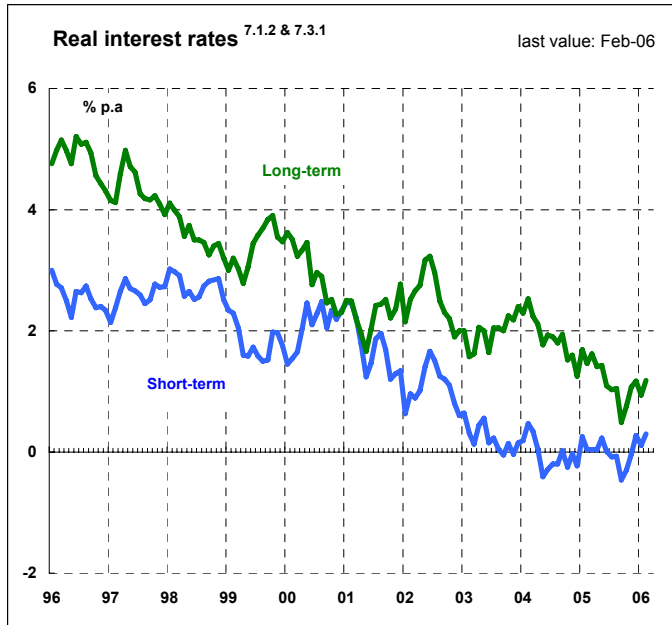
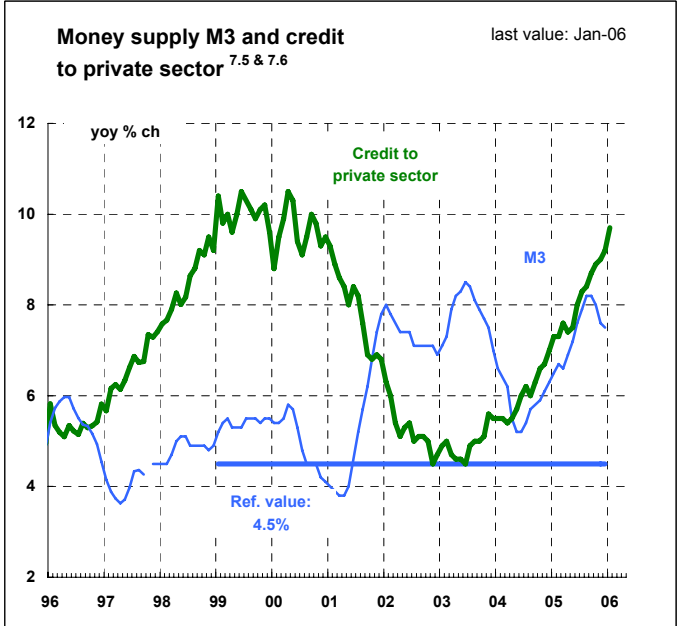
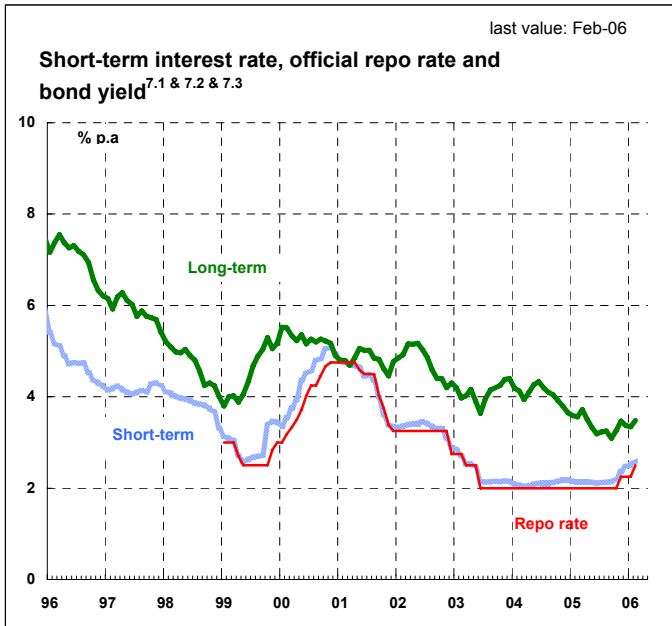
6. PRICES



KEY INDICATORS FOR THE EURO AREA

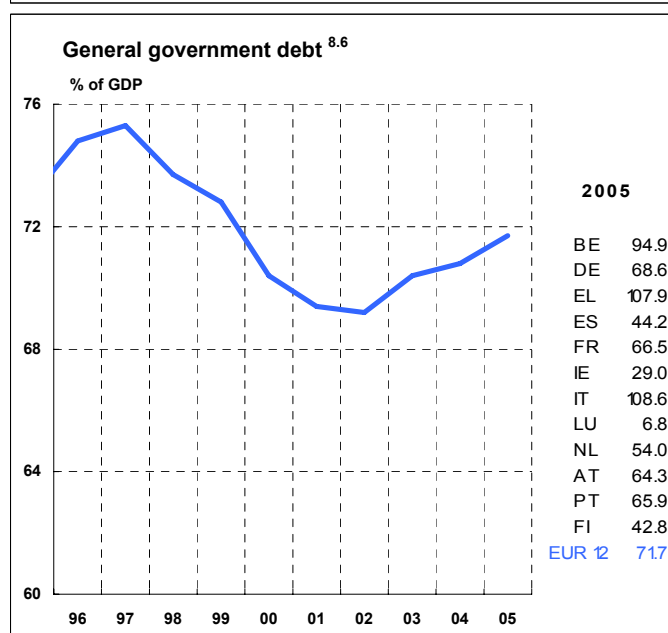
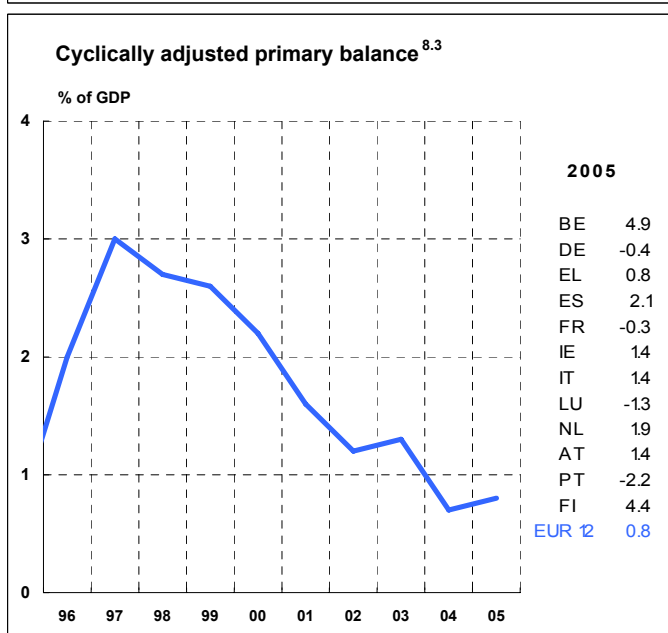
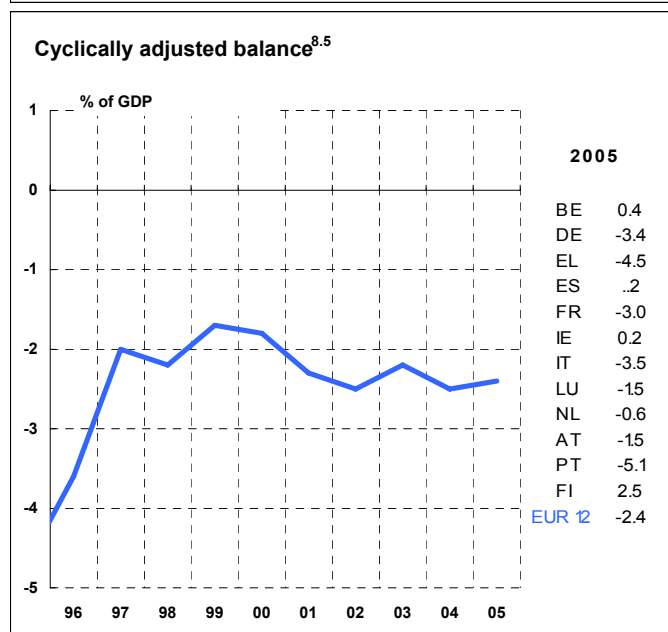
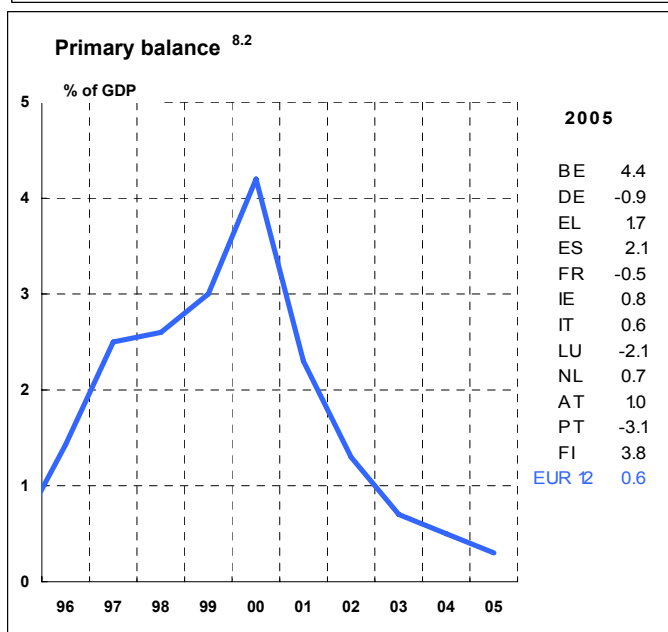
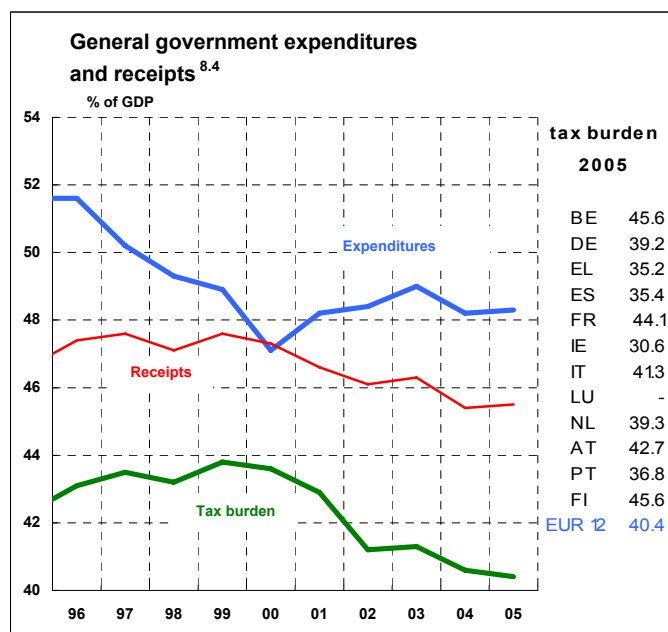
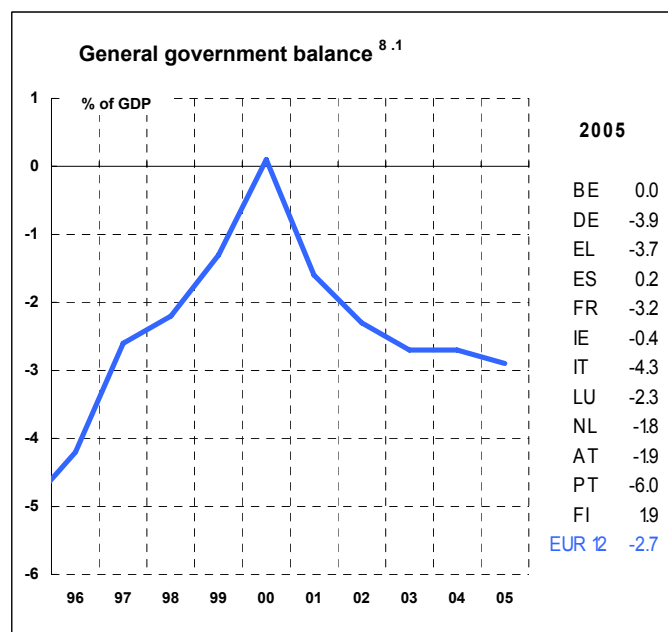


7. MONETARY AND FINANCIAL INDICATORS





8. PUBLIC FINANCE*



* Figures are from the Commission's autumn 2005 forecast and will be replaced after the spring 2006 forecast, which will take into account the Member States' notifications.

Key indicators for the euro area - Explanatory notes

The euro area includes 12 countries (BE, DE, EL, ES, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, AT, PT, FI)

mom % ch., qoq % ch., yoy % ch.: monthly, quarterly and annual percentage change respectively.

No.	Indicator	Note	Source
1	Output		
1.1	Industrial confidence indicator	Industry survey, average of balances to replies on production expectations, order books, and stocks (the latter with inverted sign)	ECFIN
1.2	Industrial production	Volume, excluding construction, working day adjusted	Eurostat
1.3	Gross domestic product	Volume (1995), seasonally adjusted	Eurostat
1.3.1	Gross domestic product & divergence	From 1992 until 1996 the minimum and maximum is based on BE, DE, ES, FR, IT, NL, PT and FI; from 1996 it includes also AT	Eurostat
1.3.2	Gross domestic product and forecast range	Volume (1995), seasonally adjusted; the forecast is based on confidence indicators, real and financial variables (see also ECFIN Economic Papers No 154, June 2001)	ECFIN/ Eurostat
1.3.3	Gross domestic product and standard deviation	From 1992 until 1996 the standard deviation is based on BE, DE, ES, FR, IT, NL, PT and FI; from 1996 it includes also AT	ECFIN/ Consensus Forecasts
1.4	Economic sentiment indicator	Composite of indicators for industry, construction, retail trade and consumers (1995 = 100)	ECFIN
2	Private consumption		
2.1	Consumer confidence indicator	Consumer survey, average of balances to replies to four questions (financial and economic situation, unemployment, savings over next 12 months)	ECFIN
2.2	Retail sales	Volume, excluding motor vehicles, working day adjusted	Eurostat
2.3	Private consumption	Volume (1995 prices), seasonally adjusted	Eurostat
3	Investment		
3.1	Capacity utilization	In percent of full capacity, manufacturing, seasonally adjusted, survey data (collected each January, April, July and October)	ECFIN
3.2	Gross fixed capital formation	Volume (1995 prices), seasonally adjusted	Eurostat
3.3	Change in stocks	In percent of GDP, volume (1995 prices), seasonally adjusted	Eurostat
4	Labour market		
4.1	Unemployment	In percent of total workforce, ILO definition, seasonally adjusted	Eurostat
4.2	Employment	Total employment, domestic concept, seasonally and working day adjusted	Eurostat
4.3	Shortage of labour	Percent of firms in the manufacturing sector reporting a shortage of labour (unfilled job openings) as a constraint to production, seasonally adjusted	ECFIN
4.3.1	Beveridge curve	Relationship between the unemployment rate and shortage of labour as defined in 4.3	ECFIN/ Eurostat
4.4	Wages	Wages and salaries. Labour cost index, industry and services (excluding public administration), nominal, working day adjusted	Eurostat
4.4.1	Labour productivity	Difference between GDP growth and employment growth	ECFIN
4.4.2	Hourly labour costs in industry and services	Labour cost index, industry and services (excluding public administration), hourly, not seasonally adjusted	Eurostat
5	International transactions		
5.1	Export order books	Industry survey; balance of positive and negative replies, seasonally adjusted	ECFIN
5.2	World trade	Volume, 1998=100, seasonally adjusted	CPB
5.3	Exports of goods	Bn. EUR, excluding intra euro area trade, fob, seasonally and working day adjusted	Eurostat
5.4	Imports of goods	Bn. EUR, excluding intra euro area trade, cif, seasonally and working day adjusted	Eurostat
5.4.1	Intra trade	Bn. EUR, intra euro area trade, seasonally and working day adjusted	Eurostat
5.5	Trade balance	Bn. EUR, excluding intra euro area trade, fob-cif, seasonally and working day adjusted	
5.6	Exports of goods and services	Volume (1995 prices), including intra euro area trade, seasonally adjusted	Eurostat Eurostat
5.7	Imports of goods and services	Volume (1995 prices), including intra euro area trade, seasonally adjusted	Eurostat
5.8	Current account balance	Bn. EUR, excluding intra euro area transactions; before 1997 partly estimated	ECB
5.9	Direct investment	(net) Bn. EUR, excluding intra euro area transactions	ECB
5.10	Portfolio investment	(net) Bn. EUR, excluding intra euro area transactions	ECB

No.	Indicator	Note	Source
6	Prices		
6.1	HICP	Harmonised index of consumer prices, national CPI until 1996	Eurostat
6.2	Core HICP	Harmonised index of consumer prices, excluding energy and unprocessed food	Eurostat
6.3	Producer prices	Without construction	Eurostat
6.3.1	Selling price expectation	Industry survey; balance of positive and negative replies, seasonally adjusted	ECFIN
6.4	Import prices	Import unit values index for goods, 2000=100	Eurostat
6.4.1	Oil prices	Brent light; USD/barrel and EUR/barrel	Ecwin
6.4.2	Non-fuel commodities prices	Index of market prices for non-fuel commodities, 1995=100, in USD terms	IMF
7	Monetary and financial indicators		
7.1	Interest rate	Percent p.a., 3-month interbank money market rate, period averages	Ecwin
7.1.2	Real short-term interest rates	3-month interbank money market rate (period averages) minus annual percentage change of HICP (CPI before 1996)	Ecwin/ Eurostat
7.2	ECB repo rate	Percent p.a., minimum bid rate of the ECB, end of period	Ecwin
7.3	Bond yield	Percent p.a., 10-year government bond yields (before 1995 long-term bond yield available) lowest level prevailing in the euro area, period averages	Ecwin
7.3.1	Real long-term interest rates	10-year government bond yields (lowest level prevailing in the euro area, period averages) minus annual percentage change of HICP (CPI before 1996)	Ecwin/ Eurostat
7.4	Stock markets	DJ Euro STOXX50 index, period averages	Ecwin
7.5	M3	Seasonally adjusted, three-month moving average (attributed to middle month): from 1997 onwards corrected for holdings by non-residents	ECB
7.6	Credit to private sector (loans)	MFI loans to euro area residents excluding MFIs and general government, monthly values: month end values, annual values: annual averages	ECB
7.7	Exchange rate USD/EUR	Period averages, until December 1998: USD/ECU rates	ECB
7.7.1	Exchange rate JPY/EUR	Period averages, until December 1998: JPY/ECU rates	ECB
7.8	Nominal effective exchange rate	Against 13 other industrialized countries, double export weighted, 1995 = 100, increase (decrease): appreciation (depreciation)	ECFIN
8	Public finance		
8.1	General government balance	In percent of GDP, net lending (+) or net borrowing (-) general government, ESA 79 up to 1994, ESA 95 as of 1995, 2005 estimates are based on ECFIN autumn 2005 forecasts*	ECFIN
8.2	Primary balance	In percent of GDP; net lending/borrowing minus interest payment; ESA 79 up to 1994, ESA 95 as of 1995; incl. 2000 and 2001 one-off proceeds relative to UMTS licences, 2005 results are based on ECFIN autumn 2005 forecasts	ECFIN
8.3	Cyclically adjusted primary balance	In percent of GDP; primary balance corrected for the influence of the cycle; ESA 79 up to 1994, ESA 95 as of 1995, proceeds from UMTS licences excluded, 2005 results are based on ECFIN autumn 2005 forecasts	ECFIN
8.4	General government expenditure and receipts	In percent of GDP, ESA 79 up to 1994, ESA 95 as of 1995; proceeds from UMTS licences booked as expenditure with negative sign; tax burden: taxes on production and imports (incl. taxed paid to EU) + current taxes on income and wealth + actual social contributions + capital taxes; 2005 results are based on ECFIN autumn 2005 forecasts	ECFIN
8.5	Cyclically adjusted balance	In percent of GDP, general government balance corrected for the influence of the cycle; ESA 79 up to 1994, ESA 95 as of 1995, proceeds from UMTS licences excluded, 2005 results are based on ECFIN autumn 2005 forecasts	ECFIN
8.6	General government debt	In percent of GDP, ESA 79 up to 1994, ESA 95 from 1995 onwards, 2005 results are based on ECFIN autumn 2005 forecasts	ECFIN