



Investment Report

Fixed Income D0

Quarter 2, 2024

The evolution of the economy and financial markets

Economy & markets

During the second quarter, the main economic indicators – inflation, interest rates, and economic growth – continued to develop favorably. This led to a positive reaction in the stock markets, which continued their impressive gains. However, bonds were still facing the disappointment that there will be fewer interest rate cuts this year than initially expected.



Inflation and labor market normalizing as expected

Inflation figures continue to decline slowly but steadily. In the eurozone, inflation fell to 2.5%, and in the US to 3.3%. Further developments largely depend on underlying services inflation.

In the eurozone, high services inflation is attributed to persistent wage inflation and, surprisingly, to Taylor Swift tourism. In the US, services inflation has decreased due to the normalization of the labor market.

[Read more on page 3.](#)



First rate cut, but still 'higher for longer'

Thanks to the favorable evolution of inflation figures, the ECB was able to implement its first interest rate cut. However, further rate cuts will depend on the continued evolution of inflation figures.

The Fed left its interest rate unchanged. This is noteworthy, as it usually takes action before the ECB. It foresees only one rate cut before the end of this year. Nevertheless, the US policy rate is expected to move towards 3% by the end of 2026.

[Read more on page 4.](#)



Economic outlook looks positive

The fear of recession in Europe seems to be behind us, as the figures show an improvement in economic activity. The services sector, in particular, is showing positive signs, while the European industry is still faltering.

As always, the US is growing faster than Europe, which is also reflected in corporate earnings. For the entire year, earnings growth of +10% is expected in the US, supported by strong technology companies, compared to a 3% earnings decline in Europe.

[Read more on page 5.](#)



Technology stocks driving markets

Despite a minor correction in April, the stock markets continued to rise nicely. The performance of the US technology markets is particularly impressive, while the Japanese and European markets lagged somewhat behind.

Bonds have had a harder time this year, as fewer rate cuts are now expected than initially anticipated. Additionally, political uncertainty in Europe caused temporary unrest in the bond markets.

[Read more on page 7.](#)

Inflation and labor market normalizing as expected

Economy

In the past quarter, inflation figures continued their slow but steady decline towards the 2% target. In June, inflation in the eurozone stood at 2.5% year-on-year, slightly higher than the 2.4% in April but slightly lower than the 2.6% in May, due to volatility in energy prices, but still with elevated core inflation. In the United States, however, the inflation rate decreased more than expected from 3.4% in April to 3.3% in May, thanks to a favorable drop in core inflation. For the first time since July 2022, the overall price level in the US remained stable month-on-month.

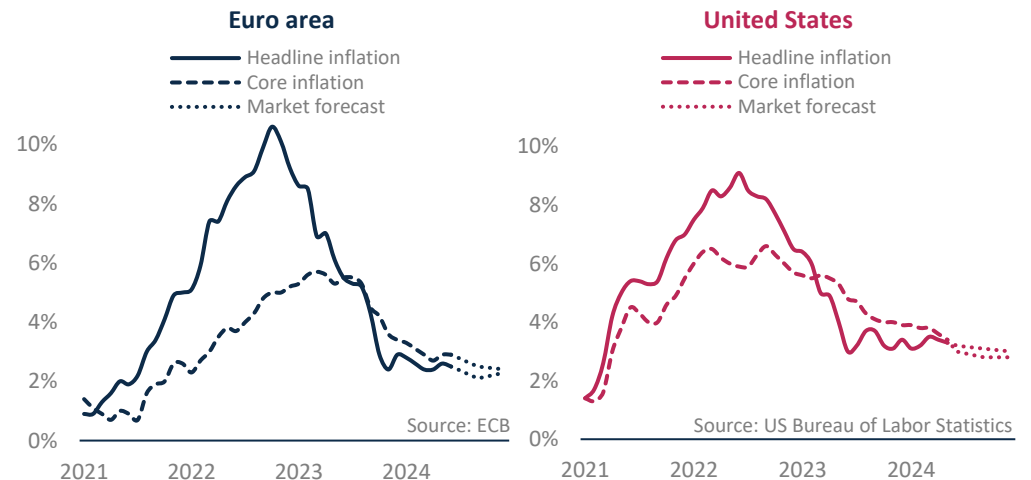
The development of core inflation in both regions is mainly influenced by underlying services inflation, which measures inflation in sectors such as housing, recreation, healthcare, transport, education, and communication.

In the eurozone, services inflation rose from 3.7% in April to 4.1% in May and June, mainly due to persistently high wage inflation. Although wage inflation has remained at the same level since February, the outlook is rather positive. The rise in services inflation now seems mainly driven by tourism in Spain and Portugal, partly due to Taylor Swift concerts. The European Football Championship in Germany and the Olympics in France may also play a role in the coming months.

In the United States, services inflation decreased from 5.3% in April to 5.2% in May. This decline is attributed to a less tight labor market in recent months. The number of job openings relative to the number of unemployed has fallen to pre-pandemic levels, mainly due to fewer job vacancies, while the number of unemployed remains reasonably stable. This cooling of wage increases is favorable for services inflation.

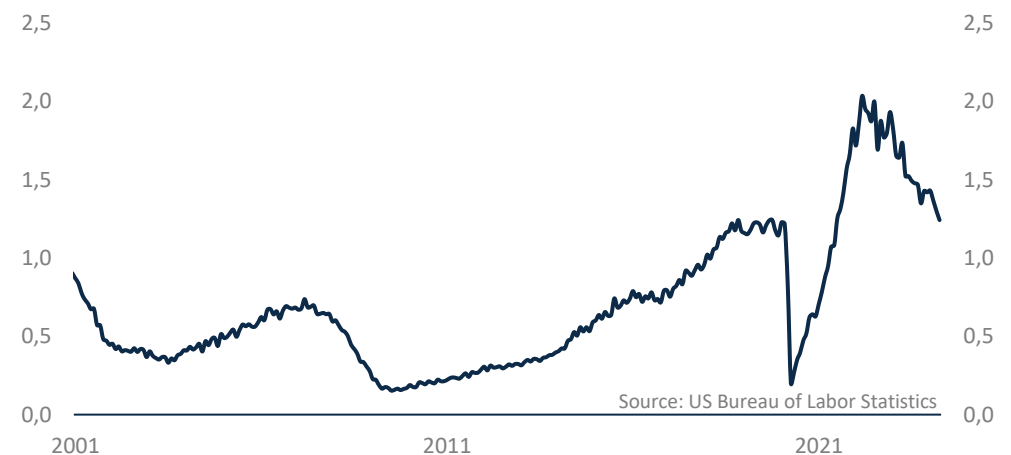
Inflation rates normalise towards 2%

Consumer price index (year-on-year percentage)



US labor market nearly fully normalized

Number of job openings per unemployed person in the U.S.



First rate cut, but still 'higher for longer'

Economy

The past quarter was marked by the first interest rate cuts in several Western countries, such as the eurozone, Switzerland, Canada, Denmark, and Sweden. In June, for the first time in five years, the European Central Bank (ECB) lowered interest rates from 4% to 3.75%.

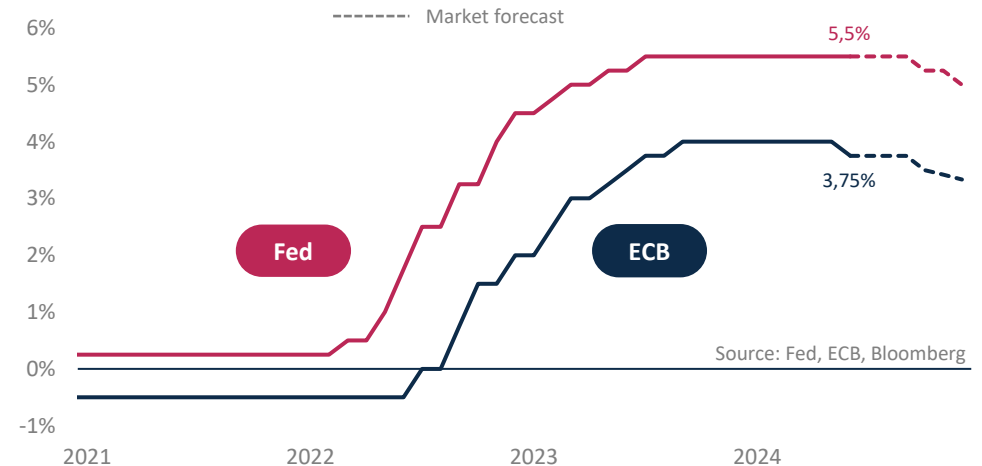
The ECB decided on this interest rate cut because, on the one hand, inflation is moving favorably towards the 2% target, but also likely to stimulate economic growth. Further rate cuts are not expected for the time being. The ECB will base its future decisions on incoming data on wage growth, as core inflation may remain under upward pressure. It is notable that the ECB implemented this rate cut before the Federal Reserve (Fed), which is rare.

In the second quarter, the Federal Reserve kept interest rates unchanged due to a strong labor market and positive economic growth. At the end of March, Fed Chair Powell indicated expectations for three rate cuts in 2024, but now only one cut is anticipated by the end of 2024 due to persistently high inflation. The Fed remains committed to achieving a policy rate of 3% by the end of 2026.

Although declining overall inflationary pressures make central bankers more willing to lower rates in the future, they remain cautious. Inflation has proven to be resilient in the past. Despite the recent rate cut by the ECB, the Bank of England (BoE) kept its rate unchanged at 5.25%. A rate cut is not currently on the agenda due to high services inflation of 5.7%, driven by wage growth around 6%, although overall inflation dropped to 2% in May.

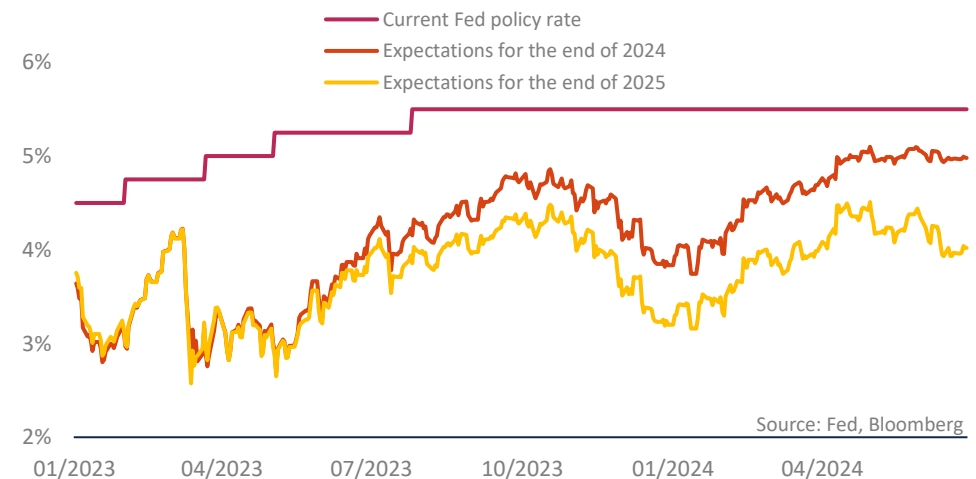
ECB ahead of the US in interest rate cuts

Federal funds rate (Fed) and deposit rate (ECB)



Market expectations for interest rates continuously adjusted

Federal funds rate (Fed) and market expectations by the end of 2024 and 2025



Economic outlook looks positive

Economy

Recent figures show upward economic activity and restored confidence in both the eurozone, the US, and many emerging countries. The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), based on interviews with purchasing managers, serves as a key indicator for this trend. A reading above 50 indicates improving market conditions. In May, this figure stood above 54 in both the US and China, while in the eurozone, it has remained above 50 for four consecutive months. Although expected activity declined slightly in June compared to April and May, optimism prevails.

These positive figures are primarily driven by a robust services sector. The European industry lags behind, with no immediate signs of improvement, given weak foreign demand, notably from China.

Expected real economic growth (GDP) for the second quarter on a quarterly basis is +0.5% for the US and Japan, +0.2% for the eurozone, and +0.9% for China.

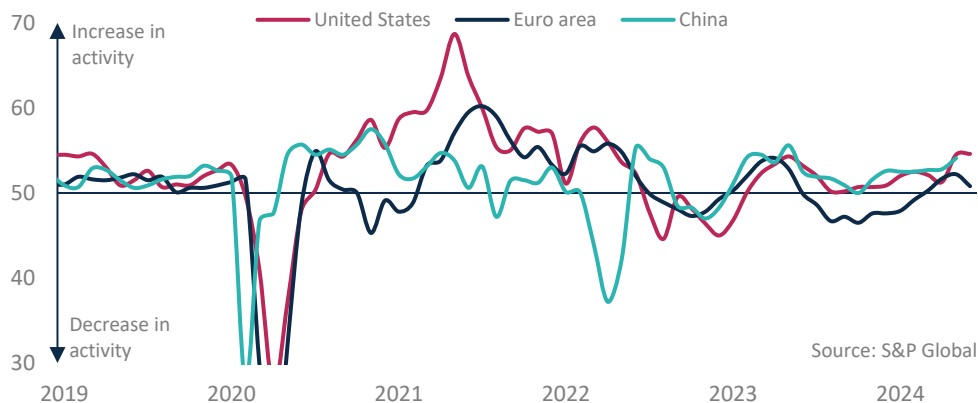
The difference in economic growth between the United States and Europe is also clearly reflected in corporate results. The first quarter marked the strongest profit season for American companies in over two years: over 80% of companies reported earnings that exceeded expectations. Revenue increased by 4%, while profits grew by just over 5% year-over-year. Driving this growth was predominantly the technology sector, fueled by rapid advancements in AI. A 10% earnings growth is anticipated for the entire year in the US.

In Europe, however, revenue and profits declined by 5% and 10% respectively. Despite this, the results were actually less negative than initially feared. The lack of major technology firms and lower productivity clearly hinder growth prospects: European companies are expected to see a 3% decline in profits.

Nevertheless, most companies in both the US and Europe manage to maintain profit margins above pre-pandemic levels. This solidifies their foundations and supports higher stock prices.

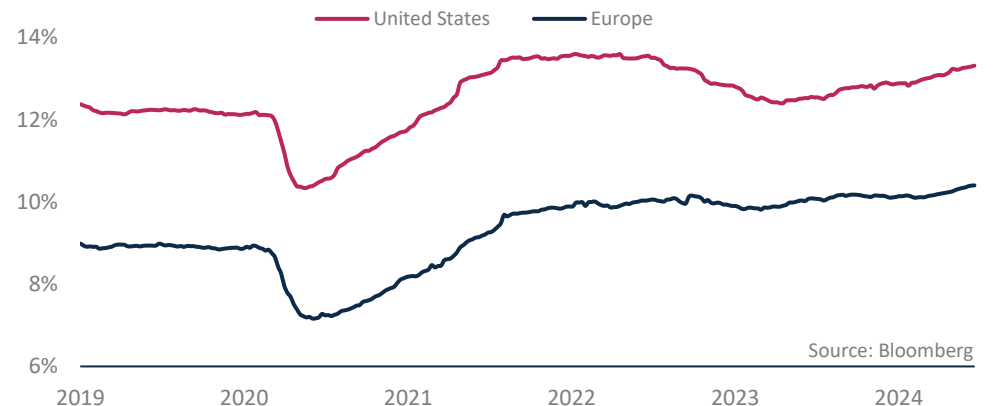
PMIs indicate robust upward activity

Composite PMI Index



Companies are more profitable than before the pandemic

Profit margins (based on expected earnings for the next 12 months)

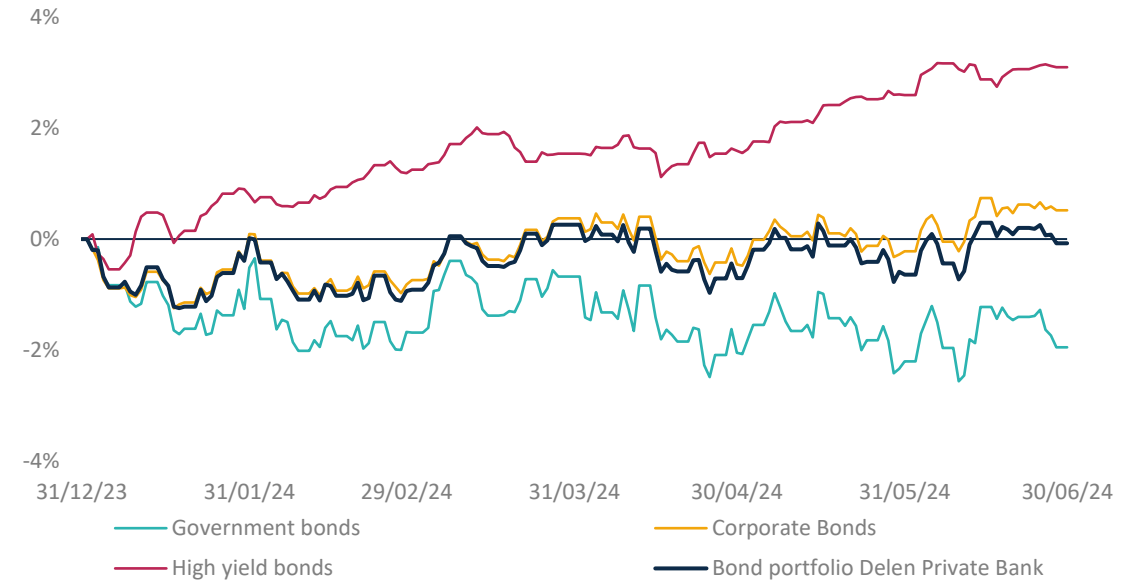


Market Monitor

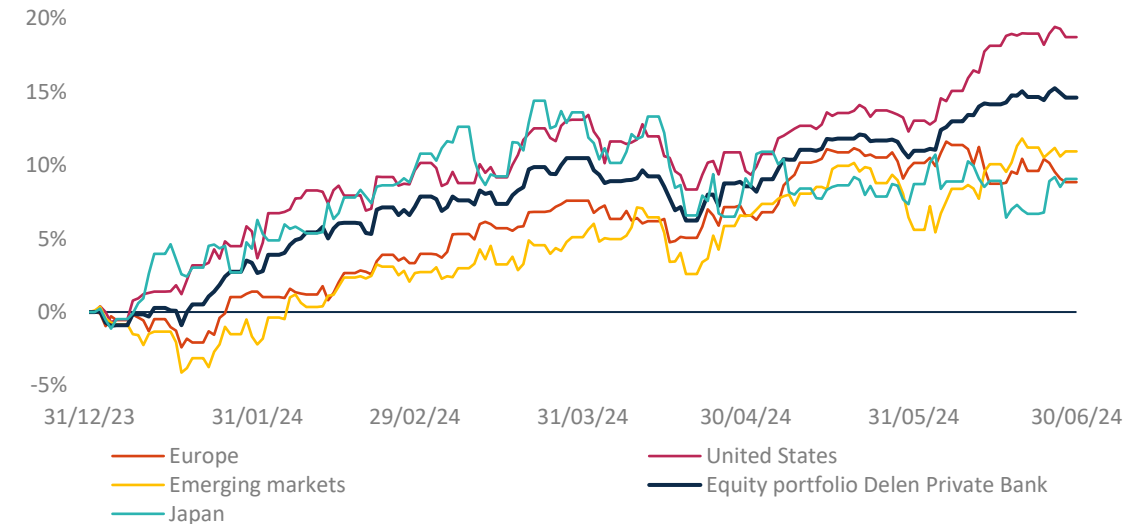
Financial markets

	30/06/2024	Last price	2024	2023	2022
Government interest rates	(%)				
German interest rate 3 month	3,32	-0,23	1,99	2,38	
American interest rate 3 month	5,35	0,02	0,99	4,36	
Japanese interest rate 3 month	0,03	0,09	0,11	0,05	
German interest rate 10 year	2,50	0,48	-0,54	2,72	
American interest rate 10 year	4,40	0,52	0,00	2,37	
Japanese interest rate 10 year	1,05	0,44	0,20	0,35	
Bond indices	(€)				
Corporate bonds		0,5%	8,0%	-13,9%	
Government bonds		-1,9%	6,7%	-18,1%	
High yield bonds		3,1%	12,3%	-11,3%	
Currencies	(€)				
USD	1,07	3,0%	-3,0%	6,2%	
GBP	0,85	2,3%	2,1%	-5,2%	
CHF	0,96	-3,5%	6,5%	4,8%	
JPY	172,39	-9,7%	-9,8%	-6,8%	
Commodities	(€)				
Gold per ounce	2170,78	16,2%	9,7%	6,1%	
Crude Oil (Brent)	80,64	15,8%	-13,2%	17,7%	
DJ UBS Commodities	94,24	5,7%	-15,3%	21,2%	
Real estate	(€)				
EPRA Developed Europe Index	1621,78	-5,2%	12,6%	-38,8%	
Equity markets net total return	(€)				
World		13,1%	17,5%	-13,0%	
United States		18,7%	23,1%	-15,1%	
Europe		8,8%	15,8%	-11,1%	
Emerging markets		10,9%	8,0%	-14,0%	
Japan		9,1%	15,4%	-10,2%	

How did the bond markets evolve this year?



How did the stock markets evolve this year?



Technology stocks driving markets

Financial markets

Overall, despite a minor correction in April, stock markets continued their upward trend in the second quarter. Particularly impressive was the performance of the US stock market, driven by the 'Magnificent 7' and notably Nvidia. Japanese stocks lagged somewhat due to exchange rates, while European markets experienced some volatility following election results.

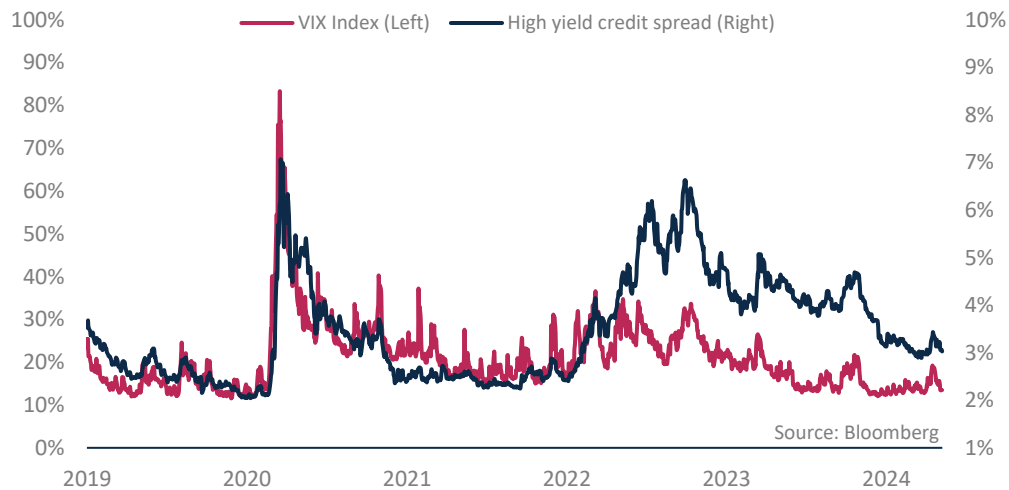
Within the tech sector, a neck-and-neck race is underway: Nvidia briefly became the world's most valuable company after surpassing Microsoft and Apple. The three companies now each have a market capitalization exceeding \$3 trillion, nearly equivalent to the value of the London Stock Exchange, Europe's largest exchange. Together, these giants even surpass the total Chinese stock market in size.

Stocks experienced a relatively calm quarter, as evidenced by the low levels of the VIX index, which measures market volatility. Bonds faced significant challenges this year due to inflation figures declining too slowly and central banks being cautious about lowering policy rates. Investors had anticipated rate cuts sooner and had to adjust their expectations throughout the year to expect rates to remain 'higher for longer'.

Political uncertainty in Europe also caused fluctuations in bond markets. European bond yields surged following the announcement of early elections in France. Investors sought refuge in safer German bonds, but overall, calm returned fairly quickly.

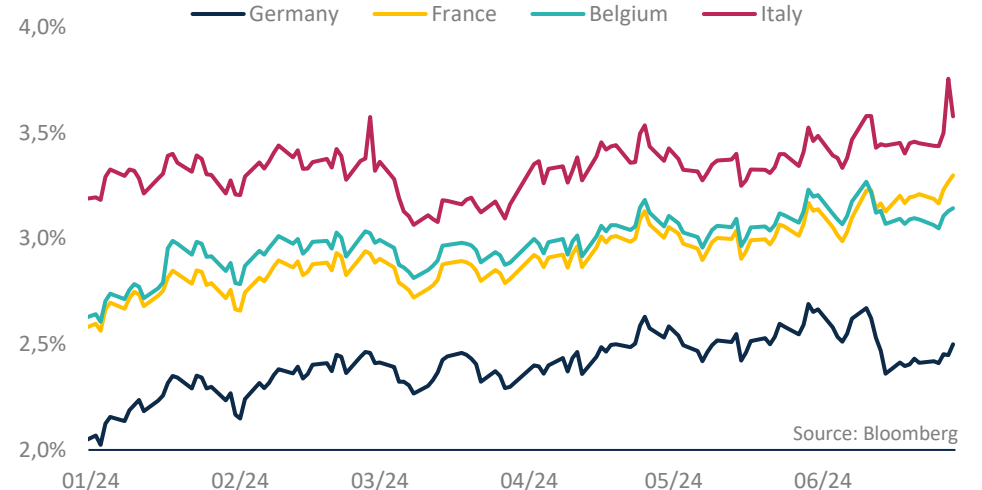
Tranquil market conditions

Evolution of VIX index and high yield credit spread



Interest rates respond to political uncertainties

Evolution of 10-year government bond yields



Overview

Portfolio

30/06/2024

Your investment profile

Fixed Income D0

Strategic equity risk 0,00%

Currency breakdown

Euro 100,0%

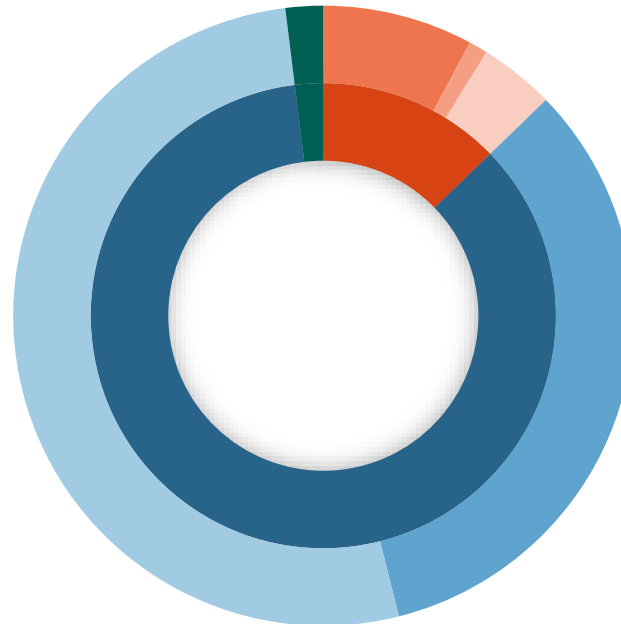
Information on the fixed-income portfolio

Average yield 3,69%

Average duration 5,80

Adjusted Risk

4,6%



Bonds 86,3%

● Government bonds 33,7%

● Corporate bonds 52,6%

Other bonds 11,5%

● Perpetual bonds 7,2%

● Convertible bonds 0,4%

● High Yield bonds 3,9%

Cash 2,2%

Precious Metals 0,0%

Portfolio overview

Portfolio

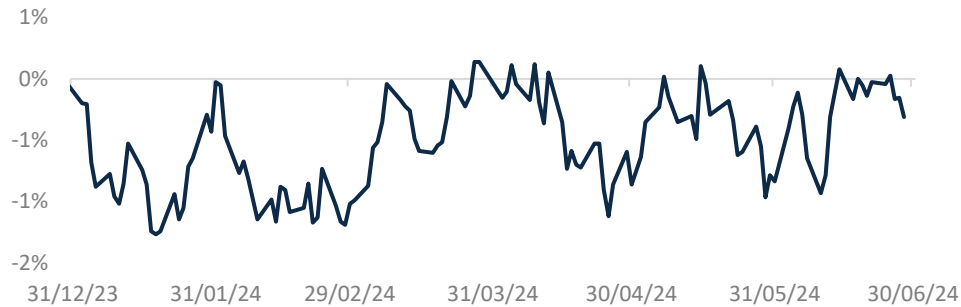
Your investment profile

Fixed Income D0

Strategic equity risk 0,00%

Return 2024*

Return year-to-date -0,31%

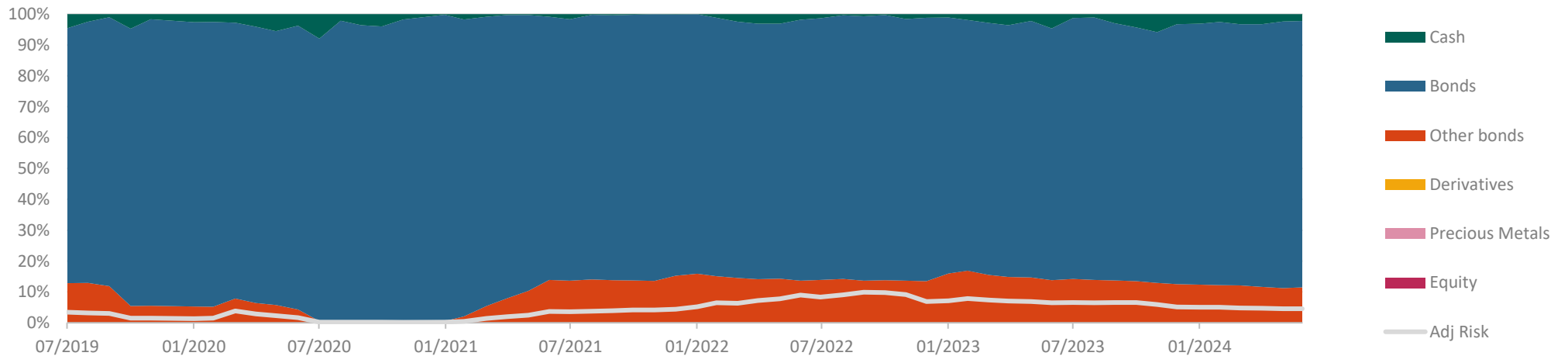


*The displayed return is representative of a private portfolio fully invested within this profile and is calculated after costs (based on an invested amount between 0.5 and 1 million euros), excluding any taxes.

Asset allocation (lookthrough)

	%	Adj Risk
Tot.	100%	4,6%
Equity	0,0%	0,0%
Options	0,0%	0,0%
Perpetual bonds	7,2%	3,2%
High Yield bonds	3,9%	1,3%
Convertible bonds	0,4%	0,0%
Corporate bonds	52,6%	0,0%
Government bonds	33,7%	0,0%
Cash	2,2%	0,0%
Precious Metals	0,0%	0,0%

Evolution asset allocation



Active management within your portfolio

Portfolio



Performance analysis 2024

The gross return of the equity portfolio was +14.6% since the start of the year, which is +1.5% better than the broad market. The better performance is due to a strong preference for American technology stocks and favorable stock selection in other regions.

The bond portfolio had a gross return of -0,1%, which is +0.6% better than the broad market. The shorter average duration and the preference for corporate bonds played a positive role.



Neutral equity allocation with preference for US

In the second quarter of 2024, the focus further shifted to American stocks, partly due to the strong performances of companies like NVIDIA and Alphabet Inc. The weight of European stocks was further reduced.

The equity allocation remains at a neutral level. Bonds are still an attractive alternative investment: the gross yield to maturity of the bond portfolio is currently around 4% per year. An increase in the equity allocation in the future remains dependent on market conditions.



Impact of French elections reasonably limited

The announcement of early national elections in France resulted in a decline of more than 6% in the French stock markets. Since the equity portfolio contains less than 5% French stocks, and mainly consists of companies with international revenues, the impact remained limited.

The bond portfolio also remained stable: it consists of 4% French government bonds and 9.5% French corporate bonds, which is less than the broad market. The diversification of the bond portfolio provided stability during the political unrest.



More interest rate risk and less credit risk

Since the end of 2022, the duration in the bond portfolio has been gradually extended to now more than 5 years. This strategy will pay off when interest rates decline.

Profits were taken on corporate bonds due to the decreasing compensation for credit risk. The weight of government bonds has been increased to 30%, but the focus on high-quality corporate bonds through diversification remains.

Performance analysis 2024

Portfolio

The stock markets also ended the second quarter higher, driven by technology stocks. However, bonds continued to face pressure due to delayed interest rate cuts and recent political unrest.

Your profile 'Fixed Income DO' concluded the second quarter with a gross return of -0,1%.

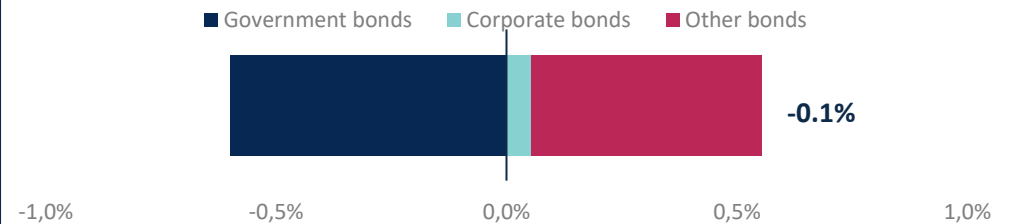
Bond return

The gross return of the bond portfolio is currently -0.1% year-to-date. The disappointing return is attributed to delayed interest rate cuts that caused long-term rates to rise this year. Nevertheless, bonds remain an attractive investment: the gross return to maturity of the bond portfolio is currently around 4%, which is quite decent.

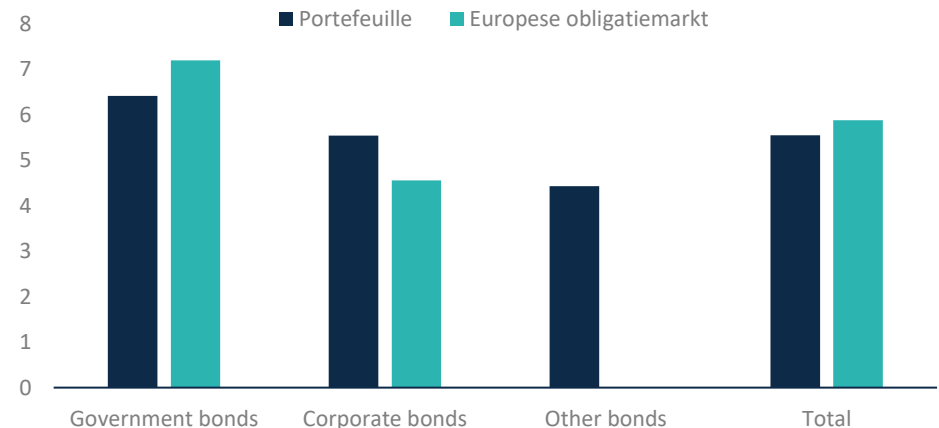
The bond portfolio outperformed the broad bond market by more than +0.9%. One key reason is the strong preference for corporate bonds and other types of bonds. This proved to be a strategic choice as the yield spread between government bonds and corporate bonds (as compensation for credit risk) further narrowed. As a result, prices of corporate and high-yield bonds rose slightly, while those of government bonds declined.

A second factor is the shorter average duration of the portfolio compared to the broad market, which mitigated pressure on bond prices when long-term interest rates rose.

Contribution to return



Duration by bond type



Impact of French elections reasonably limited

Portfolio

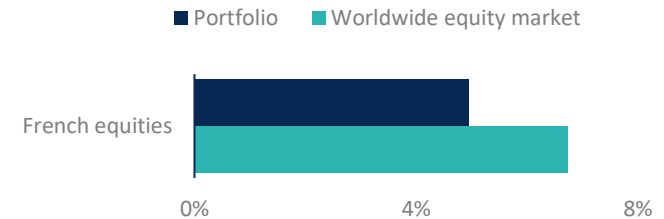
After the European Parliament elections in early June, Macron decided to call for early national parliamentary elections. In response, the CAC 40 index dropped more than 6% in a week. Bank stocks and French government bonds were particularly affected, amid concerns over potential lower economic growth and high government debt. Markets across Europe also reacted negatively to the political uncertainty.

However, the equity portfolio experienced minimal impact. French stocks constitute slightly less than 5% of the portfolio. Among the 13 French stocks, Cadelam Fund Manager prefers large companies with diversified international revenues. The largest position is LVMH, which makes up 0.92% of the total equity portfolio, with only 8% of its revenue coming from France.

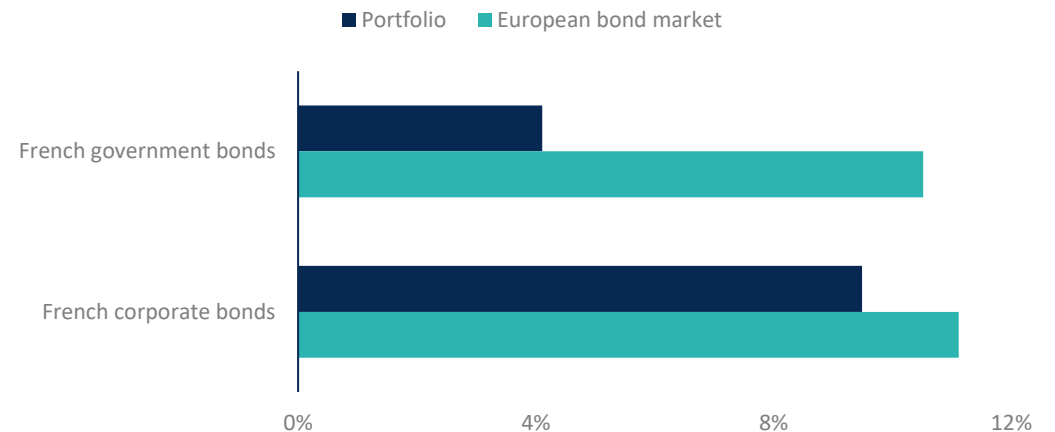
Due to the strategic preference for corporate bonds, the bond portfolio was also hardly affected by the political unrest. French government bonds represent only 4% of the total bond portfolio, while French corporate bonds account for 9.5%. Together, they amount to 13.5%, significantly less than the 21.5% exposure to France in the broad market. Corporate bonds were minimally impacted by the political unrest, with slight increases in credit risk.

Moreover, the bond portfolio is highly diversified, consisting of over 1,000 bonds from more than 400 different issuers. This diversification provides substantial stability and resilience during market fluctuations, as demonstrated during the recent elections.

French stocks in the portfolio
Weight in the equity portfolio and top 5 positions



French bonds in the portfolio
Weight in the bond portfolio



More interest rate risk and less credit risk

Bond portfolio

Since the end of 2022, the fund managers have extended the duration (average maturity) of the portfolio to slightly over 5 years, allowing the bond portfolio to benefit from higher interest rates for an extended period. We do not expect long-term bond yields to rise much further, given the favorable inflation trends, although the current interest rate environment may remain volatile for some time.

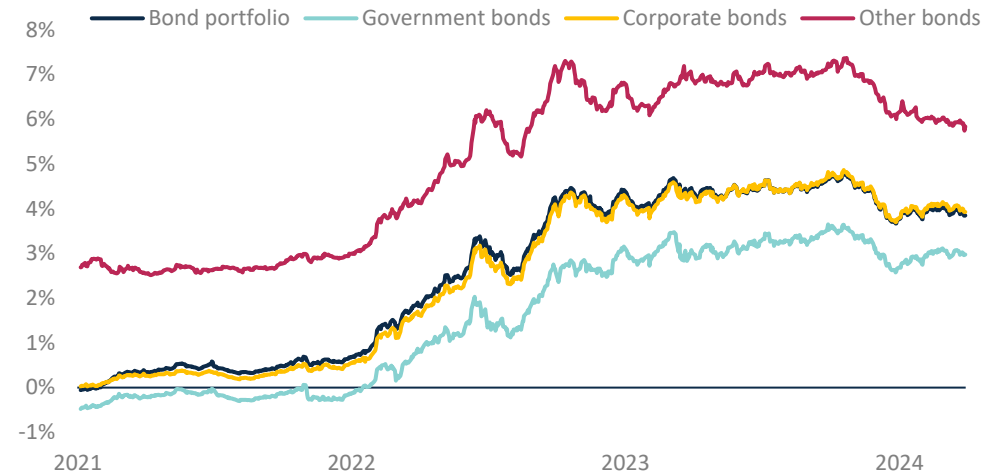
The duration was primarily extended by purchasing government bonds, which typically have longer maturities. Following the conclusion of corporate earnings reporting (a period when companies do not often issue new bonds), longer-dated corporate bonds are now also being acquired on the primary market.

In terms of bond types, profits were taken on corporate bonds (including high-yield, convertible, and perpetual bonds). This is because the credit spreads (additional yield for bearing corporate risk compared to government bonds) have significantly contracted, decreasing from nearly 7% to around 3% in the market. Following the profit-taking on these bonds, government bonds were purchased, which now constitute 30% of the bond portfolio.

However, the strong conviction in high-quality corporate bonds remains intact. Due to the extensive diversification within the bond portfolio, the additional yield from corporate bonds outweighs the corporate risk taken.

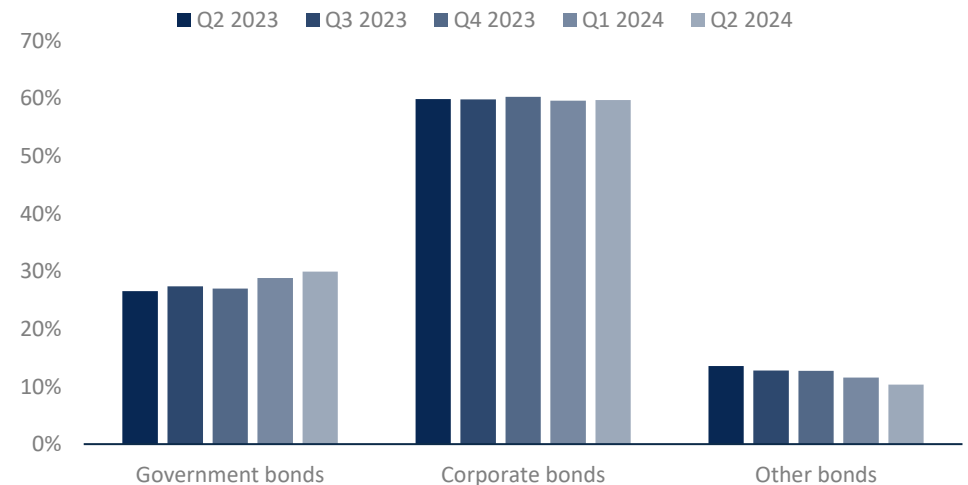
Attractive bond yield

Evolution of yield to maturity by bond type



Slight increase in government bonds

Evolution of weight by bond type in the bond portfolio



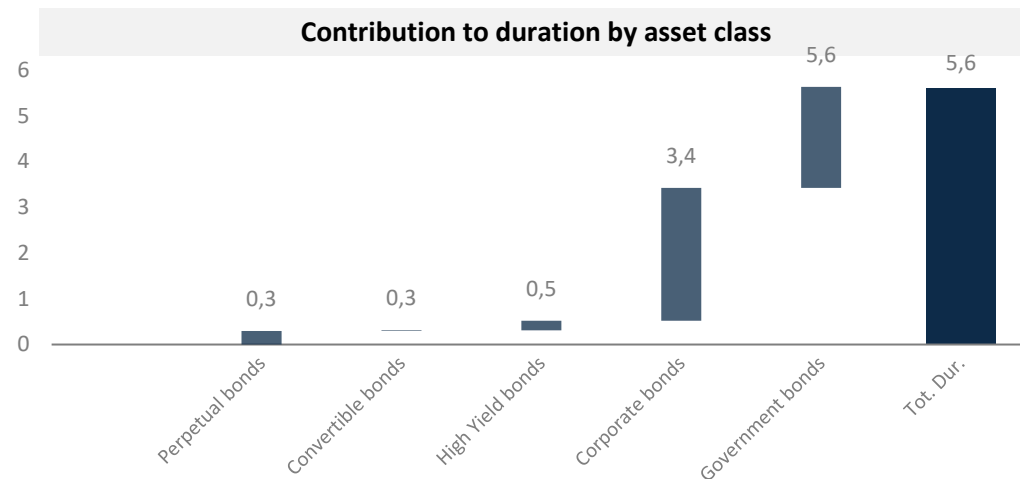
Breakdown fixed income portfolio

Bond portfolio

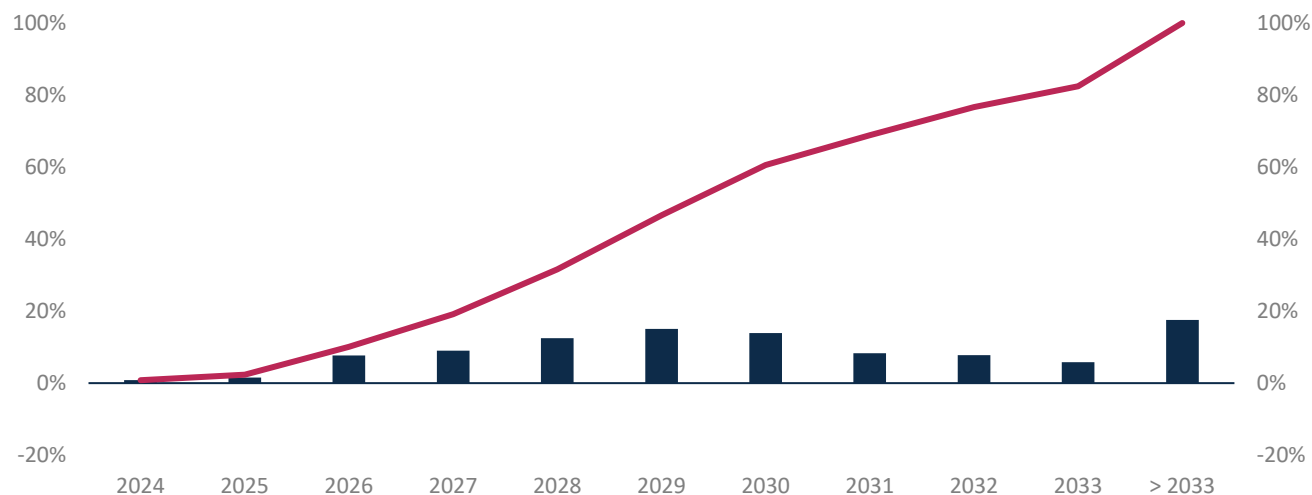
	% in ptf	YTM	Dur.	Rating
Other bonds	11,5%	5,3%	4,4	BB
Convertible bonds	0,4%	4,8%	2,7	BBB
High Yield bonds	3,9%	4,4%	5,3	BB
Perpetual bonds	7,2%	5,8%	4,1	BB
Bonds	86,3%	3,5%	6,0	A
Government bonds	33,7%	3,1%	6,4	AA+
Corporate bonds	52,6%	3,7%	5,5	BBB+
Total	97,8%	3,7%	5,6	A-

YTM = the expected return on the bond portfolio until maturity

Dur. = duration = interest rate sensitivity of the bond portfolio



Bond portfolio broken down by maturity date (per year and cumulative)



The blue bars represent the percentage of the fixed-income portfolio that matures in a given year. The red line represents the sum of the bars, i.e., all the bonds in the current fixed-income portfolio that will mature by that year.

We diversify across maturities, so that a portion of the bonds matures each year, allowing them to be easily replaced with newer bonds with higher coupons.

We also pay attention to the quality of the issuers, ensuring that they meet our standards.

Top bonds

Bond portfolio

	Weight	YTM		Weight	YTM		Weight	YTM
Perpetuals	0,71%	5,84%	Convertibles	0,22%	4,79%	High yield	0,61%	4,37%
BP CAPITAL PLC (EUR) 3,25% 20-PERP 22.06	0,18%	4,72%	TAG IMMO AG (EUR) 0,625% 20-26 27.08	0,06%	4,89%	WESTPAC BANKING (EUR) 0,766% 21-31	0,15%	4,58%
AGEAS FINANCE (EUR) 3,875% 19-PERP 10.06	0,17%	6,91%	WORLDLINE SA (EUR) 0% 20-25 30.07	0,05%	5,81%	EUROCLEAR INVEST (EUR) 2,625% 18-48	0,13%	4,52%
ORANGE (EUR) VAR 24-PERP 15.03	0,12%	4,61%	CELLNEX TELECOM (EUR) 2,125% 23-30 11.0	0,04%	2,15%	SWISS LIFE FINANCE (EUR) 0,5% 21-31 1	0,12%	3,66%
BANCO BILBAO (EUR) VAR% 24-PERP 13.09	0,12%	7,14%	ZALANDO SE (EUR) 0,05% 20-25 06.08	0,04%	4,44%	BELFIUS BANK SA (EUR) 5,25% 23-33 19.	0,11%	4,60%
SOUTHERN CO (EUR) 1,875% 21-81 15.09	0,11%	5,78%	WORLDLINE SA (EUR) 0% 19-26 30.07	0,04%	4,00%	SVENSKA HANDELSBANK(EUR) 3,25% 22	0,10%	4,31%
	Weight	YTM		Weight	YTM			
Government bonds	3,14%	3,70%	Corporate bonds	1,32%	3,70%			
FRANCE O.A.T. (EUR) 2,5% 14-30 25.05	0,70%	3,03%	INT BK RECON&DEVEL(EUR) 3,45% 23-38 13	0,32%	3,27%			
FRANCE O.A.T. (EUR) 0% 19-29 25.11	0,64%	3,22%	SANOFI (EUR) 1,25% 22-29 06.04	0,28%	3,30%			
EUROPEAN UNION (EUR) 3,375% 22-42 04.11	0,62%	3,49%	WALMART STORE (EUR) 4,875% 09-29 21.0	0,27%	3,19%			
FRANCE O.A.T. (EUR) 2% 22-32 25.11	0,61%	3,16%	VISA INC (EUR) 2% 22-29 15.06	0,23%	3,23%			
FRANCE O.A.T. (EUR) 4,75% 04-35 25.04	0,58%	3,32%	ROYAL BK CANADA (EUR) 4,375% 23-30 02.0	0,22%	3,69%			

DELEN

PRIVATE BANK

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