

**Overview**

- *Global recovery is fragile and in 2012 global GDP will grow less than in 2011 (+3.2% vs +3.8%). In the first part of the year economic growth will be robust in the US, modest in the Euro Area, high in Japan and dwindling in the emerging economies.*
- *The improvements in the Spread BTP/Bund from the end of January have now zeroed out. Yesterday, 10/04/2012, the Spread was over 400 basis points (the minimum value, 275 basis points, was reached on 16/03/2012).*
- *The €/€ exchange rate fluctuates between 1.30 and 1.34: in the last ten days the € has shown a moderate depreciation (1,3114 yesterday, 10/04/2012).*
- *The quotations of raw materials have recovered. In particular, the oil price has jumped (Brent oil over 120\$/barrel).*
- *In March 2012 inflation decelerated in the Euro Area (to 2.6%) and accelerated in Italy and Milan (to 3.3%).*
- *In February 2012 unemployment was firmly at 9.3% in the US, while increasing to 10.7% in the Euro Area. Unemployment was stable in Germany (5.7%) and in France (10.0%), while rising in Italy (9.3%) and in Spain (23.6%).*
- *In March 2012 the manufacturing confidence index¹ was substantially stable in the Euro Area for the sixth consecutive month. The index was dwindling in Germany; it rose again in France and it was stable for the third consecutive month in Italy. On the contrary, in February the manufacturing confidence index increased in the Milan Area, going back to the levels of the past summer thanks to the growth of foreign orders and to the reduction of inventories (over normal levels again), while production expectations had been stable for three months. In addition to this, positive signals came from foreign order expectations, but it's necessary to wait for additional data to confirm the actual recovery of foreign demand.*
- *In 2012 the Italian GDP will decline by 1.3%-1.5% due to marked contraction of internal demand, while foreign demand will hold up; in 2013 the Italian GDP will rise slightly (+0,4%). The unemployment rate will increase, as well.*
- *The credit growth rate from banks to firms has decelerated and banks' credit requirements have become more selective. The following March data allows the evaluation of the effect of the ECB's most recent Refinancing Operation (at the end of February) on the real economy. Italian banks have benefited a lot from that operation.*
- *In February 2012 the total amount of CIG² jumped both in Italy (+18% compared to last year) and in the Milan Area (+43%), after the contraction in January. There was an increase in the first two months of this year, +5% in Italy and +14% in the Milan Area, too. CIG in Deroga increased more (+40% in Italy, +100% in the Milan Area), while CIG Ordinaria rose less markedly (+31% in Italy, +4% in the Milan Area) and CIG Straordinaria decreased (-11% in Italy, -8% in the Milan Area). Differing from national growth and that of the Milan Area, the CIG Ordinaria requests by Assolombarda firms reduced by 34%.*

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¹ Data referred to European countries are extracted from the monthly survey on manufacturing sector harmonized by the European Commission. Assolombarda carries out an analogous survey interviewing 350 associated companies every month. The manufacturing confidence index is the main indicator of these surveys and is calculated as the mathematical average of the seasonally adjusted data on production expectations, orders and stock of finished products (with inverted sign).

² Cassa Integrazione Guadagni (CIG) is a particular Italian shock absorber. It is a redundancy fund which helps companies to keep labour force in times of economic difficulties. It allows workers to receive a part of their wages. There are three kinds of CIG: Ordinary (Cassa Integrazione Ordinaria - CIGO), Extraordinary (Cassa Integrazione Straordinaria - CIGS) and Special (Cassa Integrazione in Deroga - CIG in Deroga).