

Our view on central banks

We think that tightening cycles are now finished across the major economies, and we're expecting the first rate cuts from the likes of the Federal Reserve and the ECB by the middle of next year



Clockwise from top left: Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey, Governor of the Bank of Japan Kazuo Ueda, US Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell, and European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde

Federal Reserve

4.9% annualised third-quarter GDP, unemployment at 3.8% and inflation still well above target mean the Federal Reserve's 'higher for longer' narrative has gained increased traction, with Treasury yields hovering just below the 5% level. This has helped push mortgage rates above 8%, and with personal loan and credit card borrowing costs hitting multidecade highs, we are now seeing a clear tightening of financial conditions and the Fed regarding monetary policy as restrictive. This is giving us greater confidence that the Fed funds policy rate has now indeed peaked.

Consumer spending is key for the outlook for 2024 given it is 70% of economic activity. Real household disposable income has fallen in each of the past four months, savings are being run down, and consumer credit has turned negative with households repaying student loans. As such, the drivers of consumer spending are looking much less supportive and we expect economic activity to moderate. Inflation is moving in the right direction and we see this process continuing given the deteriorating consumer fundamentals. We acknowledge that we were too aggressive in expecting rate cuts – but we still see more scope for policy easing through 2024 than the market is currently pricing. We look for rate cuts to start in the second quarter, with the policy rate ending the year at 4%.

James Knightley

European Central Bank

The European Central Bank has finally realised that its growth optimism might have been too much. While ECB officials had tried to talk up market expectations about further rate hikes after the September meeting, the message at the October meeting was a different one. The central bank has become much more cautious regarding the eurozone's growth outlook. Disappointing sentiment indicators – and most of all, the ongoing impact of the policy rate hikes so far – suggest a further weakening of the eurozone economy. As inflation should also continue to come down, there is very little need for the ECB to consider further rate hikes any time soon. Instead, we think that it has already reached peak interest rates and has now entered the next phase of its tightening cycle: high for longer.

Carsten Brzeski

Bank of Japan

The Bank of Japan is expected to ditch its Yield Curve Control (YCC) policy in the next quarter once global rates stabilise. The BoJ recently decided to allow 10Y JGB to float above 1%, and continuing to ease the reference would make YCC policy meaningless. A weak yen will continue to add to inflationary pressures, and we believe next year's wage growth could be strong enough to convince the BoJ to normalise its policies.

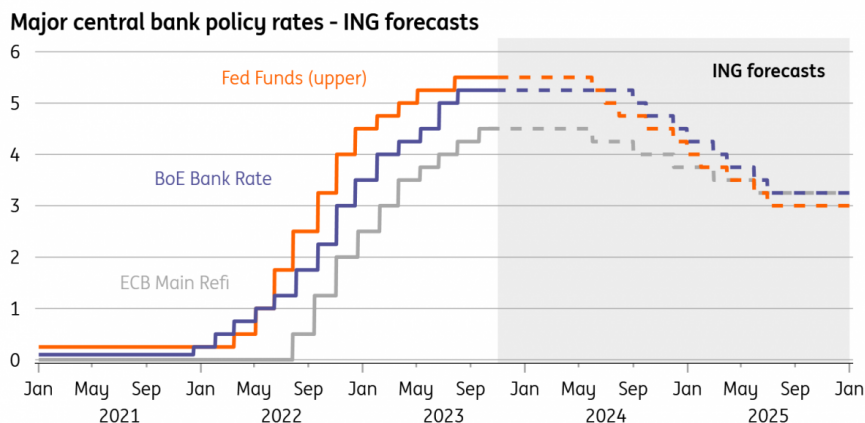
Our call is that we see YCC scrapped in the first quarter of next year and that a rate hike will follow in the second. The risk, however, is that the BoJ believes a sustainable return to the inflation target is not reachable, especially if we only see a slight growth in wages. That could see the central bank maintaining its policy easing for longer.

Min Joo Kang

Bank of England

The Bank of England is keen not to shut the door to further rate hikes, and it would prefer the most recent on-hold decision to be viewed as a pause rather than a definite end to the rate hike cycle. It's true that another hike can't be totally ruled out, especially if we get some unpleasant surprises in either services inflation or private-sector wage growth over the next month or two. But we think that's unlikely, and there are now clear signs of disinflation in the pipeline – not least because the jobs market is weakening. The battle is now keeping rate cut expectations at bay, and initial policy easing is now being priced for next summer. That's our view too, especially if we're right that core inflation will be back below 3% by then. We ultimately expect rate cuts to take us back to the 3% area by mid-2025.

James Smith



Source: Macrobond, ING

Author

James Knightley

Chief International Economist, US

james.knightley@ing.com

Carsten Brzeski

Global Head of Macro

carsten.brzeski@ing.de

Min Joo Kang

Senior Economist, South Korea and Japan

min.joo.kang@asia.ing.com

James Smith

Developed Markets Economist, UK

james.smith@ing.com

Disclaimer

This publication has been prepared by the Economic and Financial Analysis Division of ING Bank N.V. (“ING”) solely for information purposes without regard to any particular user’s investment objectives, financial situation, or means. *ING forms part of ING Group (being for this purpose ING Group N.V. and its subsidiary and affiliated companies).* The information in the publication is not an investment recommendation and it is not investment, legal or tax advice or an offer or solicitation to purchase or sell any financial instrument. Reasonable care has been taken to ensure that this publication is not untrue or misleading when published, but ING does not represent that it is accurate or complete. ING does not accept any liability for any direct, indirect or consequential loss arising from any use of this publication. Unless otherwise stated, any views, forecasts, or estimates are solely those of the author(s), as of the date of the publication and are subject to change without notice.

The distribution of this publication may be restricted by law or regulation in different jurisdictions and persons into whose possession this publication comes should inform themselves about, and observe, such restrictions.

Copyright and database rights protection exists in this report and it may not be reproduced, distributed or published by any person for any purpose without the prior express consent of ING. All rights are reserved. ING Bank N.V. is authorised by the Dutch Central Bank and supervised by the European Central Bank (ECB), the Dutch Central Bank (DNB) and the Dutch Authority for the Financial Markets (AFM). ING Bank N.V. is incorporated in the Netherlands (Trade Register no. 33031431 Amsterdam). In the United Kingdom this information is approved and/or communicated by ING Bank N.V., London Branch. ING Bank N.V., London Branch is authorised by

the Prudential Regulation Authority and is subject to regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority and limited regulation by the Prudential Regulation Authority. ING Bank N.V., London branch is registered in England (Registration number BR000341) at 8-10 Moorgate, London EC2 6DA. For US Investors: Any person wishing to discuss this report or effect transactions in any security discussed herein should contact ING Financial Markets LLC, which is a member of the NYSE, FINRA and SIPC and part of ING, and which has accepted responsibility for the distribution of this report in the United States under applicable requirements.

Additional information is available on request. For more information about ING Group, please visit www.ing.com.