



THE CONFERENCE BOARD

FOR RELEASE: 10:00 A.M. (BRUSSELS TIME), WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2009

The Conference Board®
Euro Area Business Cycle IndicatorsSM
THE CONFERENCE BOARD LEADING ECONOMIC INDEXTM
(LEI) FOR THE EURO AREA
AND RELATED COMPOSITE ECONOMIC INDEXES FOR NOVEMBER 2009

Next month's release will incorporate annual benchmark revisions to the composite indexes, which bring them up-to-date with revisions in the source data. These revisions do not change the cyclical properties of the indexes. The indexes are updated throughout the year, but only for the previous six months. Data revisions that fall outside of the moving six-month window are not incorporated until the benchmark revision is made and the entire histories of the indexes are recomputed. As a result, the revised indexes will no longer be directly comparable to those issued prior to the benchmark revision.

For more information, please visit our website at <http://www.conference-board.org/economics/bci/> or contact us at indicators@conference-board.org.

BRUSSELS, December 30, 2009... The Conference Board Leading Economic IndexTM (LEI) for the Euro Area increased 0.7 percent and The Conference Board Coincident Economic IndexTM (CEI) decreased 0.1 percent in November.

- The Conference Board LEI for the Euro Area increased again in November. The interest rate spread and the Economic Sentiment Index continued making large positive contributions, but the strengths among the leading indicators have been less widespread in recent months. Between May and November 2009, the leading economic index increased by 7.3 percent (about a 15.1 percent annual rate), a sharp reversal from the earlier declines, but lower than the 10.1 percent increase (about a 21.2 percent annual rate) between March and September 2009.
- The Conference Board CEI for the Euro Area, a measure of current economic activity, declined slightly for a third consecutive month in November according to preliminary estimates. Between May and November 2009, the coincident economic index decreased by 0.6 percent (about a -1.2 percent annual rate), slower than the 2.3 percent decline (about a -4.5 percent annual rate) during the previous six months. Additionally, the strengths and weaknesses among the coincident indicators have remained balanced in recent months. At the same time, real GDP grew at a 1.5 percent annual rate during the third quarter, its first increase since the first quarter of 2008.
- The Conference Board LEI for the Euro Area has rebounded sharply since March, but its rate of growth has slowed recently. Meanwhile, The Conference Board CEI for the Euro Area continued to decline, albeit at a slower pace than earlier in 2009. Taken together, the recent behavior of the composite economic indexes suggests that the downturn in economic activity is bottoming out and that economic conditions will continue to improve in the near term.

The next release is scheduled for Wednesday, January 27, 2010 at 10:00 A.M. (Brussels Time)

In New York – Wednesday, January 27, 2010 at 4:00 A.M. (ET)

LEADING INDICATORS. Five of the eight components in The Conference Board LEI for the Euro Area increased in November. The positive contributors—in order from the largest positive contributor to the smallest—are the interest rate spread, the Economic Sentiment Index, real money supply*, the Markit Purchasing Managers' Index (manufacturing) and new orders of capital goods*. The negative contributors—in order from largest to smallest—are the Markit business expectations index (services), the Dow Jones EURO STOXX® Index and residential building permits*.

With the 0.7 percent increase in November, The Conference Board LEI for the Euro Area now stands at 101.7 (2004=100). Based on revised data, this index increased 0.6 percent in October and increased 0.9 percent in September. During the six-month span through November, the index increased 7.3 percent, with six of the eight components increasing (diffusion index, six-month span equals 75.0 percent).

COINCIDENT INDICATORS. Three of the four components that make up The Conference Board CEI for the Euro Area increased in November. The positive contributors were manufacturing turnover*, retail trade* and industrial production*. Employment* declined in November.

With the 0.1 percent decrease in November, The Conference Board CEI for the Euro Area now stands at 101.4 (2004=100). Based on revised data, this index decreased 0.2 percent in October and decreased 0.2 percent in September. During the six-month period through November, the index decreased 0.6 percent, with two of the four components increasing (diffusion index, six-month span equals 50.0 percent).

* See notes under data availability.

FOR TABLES AND CHARTS, SEE BELOW

DATA AVAILABILITY The data series used to compute **The Conference Board Leading Economic Index™** (LEI) for the Euro Area and **The Conference Board Coincident Economic Index™** (CEI) for the Euro Area reported in this release are those available “as of” 10:00 A.M. ET December 22, 2009. Some series are estimated as noted below.

NOTES: Series in The Conference Board LEI for the Euro Area that are based on our estimates are real money supply, residential building permits and new orders of capital goods. Series in The Conference Board CEI for the Euro Area that are based on our estimates are employment, industrial production, retail trade and manufacturing turnover.

For this release, residential building permits are estimated by The Conference Board for the most recent five months rather than the usual three months because of source agency delays in releasing Euro Area aggregate data. (These delays are a result of a temporary suspension in the production of French data for this series in order to incorporate changes in methodology.) In addition, new orders of capital goods are estimated for two months rather than the usual one month due to a release schedule change by the source agency.

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THE CYCLICAL INDICATOR APPROACH. The composite economic indexes are the key elements in an analytic system designed to signal peaks and troughs in the business cycle. The leading and coincident economic indexes are essentially composite averages of several individual leading or coincident indicators. (See page 3 for details.) They are constructed to summarize and reveal common turning point patterns in economic data in a clearer and more convincing manner than any individual component—primarily because they smooth out some of the volatility of individual components.

Historically, the cyclical turning points in The Conference Board LEI for the Euro Area have occurred before those in aggregate economic activity, while the cyclical turning points in The Conference Board CEI for the Euro Area have occurred at about the same time as those in aggregate economic activity.

Further explanations of the cyclical indicator approach and the composite economic index methodology appear in The Conference Board's *Business Cycle Indicators* report and website: <http://www.conference-board.org/economics/bci/>.

Euro Area Composite Economic Indexes: Components and Standardization Factors

<u>Leading Economic Index</u>	<u>Factor</u>
1. Yield Spread cumulated, 10 year minus policy rate	0.2441
2. Economic Sentiment Index	0.1006
3. Markit Purchasing Managers' Index (Manufacturing)	0.1504
4. Markit Business Expectations Index (Services)	0.0696
5. Dow Jones EURO STOXX® Index	0.0298
6. Money Supply	0.3151
7. New Orders of Capital Goods	0.0413
8. Residential Building Permits	0.0491

<u>Coincident Economic Index</u>	
1. Employment	0.7685
2. Industrial Production	0.0795
3. Retail trade	0.1114
4. Manufacturing turnover	0.0406

Notes:

The standardization factors are inversely related to the standard deviation of the month-to-month changes in each component. They are used to equalize the volatility of the contribution from each component and are “normalized” to sum to 1.

These factors were revised effective on the release for January 2009, and all historical values for the two composite indexes were revised at this time to reflect the changes. (Under normal circumstances, updates to the leading and coincident indexes only incorporate revisions to data over the past six months.) The factors above were calculated using 2000-2007 as the sample period for measuring volatility for The Conference Board LEI for the Euro Area. Separate sets of factors for February 1987-December 1993, January 1994-January 1995, February 1995-January 1996, February 1996-June 1997, July 1997-July 1998 and August 1998-July 2000 are available upon request. The factors above for The Conference Board CEI for the Euro Area were calculated using 1995-2007. A separate set of factors is available for 1987- 1995. These multiple sample periods are the result of different starting dates for the component data. When one or more components are missing, the other factors are adjusted proportionately to ensure that the total continues to sum to 1. For additional information on the standardization factors and the index methodology visit our website: <http://www.conference-board.org/economics/bci/>.

The trend adjustment factors for The Conference Board LEI for the Euro Area are -0.3001 calculated over 1987-1996 and -0.3701 calculated over 1997-2007.

To address the problem of lags in available data, those leading and coincident indicators that are not available at the time of publication are estimated using statistical imputation. An autoregressive model is used to estimate each component. The resulting indexes are constructed using real and estimated data, and will be revised as the data unavailable at the time of publication become available. Such revisions are part of the monthly data revisions, now a regular part of the U.S. Business Cycle Indicators program. The main advantage of this procedure is to utilize in the leading economic index the data, such as stock prices, that are available sooner than other data on “real” aspects of the economy, such as new orders and changes in inventory. Empirical research by The Conference Board suggests there are real gains in adopting this procedure to make all the indicator series as up-to-date as possible.

NOTICES

The 2010 schedule for “**The Conference Board Leading Economic Index**TM (LEI) for the Euro Area” news release is:

November 2009 Data.....	Wednesday, January 27, 2010
December 2009 Data.....	Friday, February 26, 2010
January 2010 Data.....	Monday, March 29, 2010
February 2010 Data.....	Wednesday, April 28, 2010
March 2010 Data.....	Thursday, May 27, 2010
April 2010 Data.....	Monday, June 28, 2010
May 2010 Data.....	Monday, July 26, 2010
June 2010 Data.....	Thursday, August 26, 2010
July 2010 Data.....	Monday, September 27, 2010
August 2010 Data.....	Wednesday, October 27, 2010
September 2010 Data.....	Monday, November 29, 2010
October 2010 Data.....	Monday, December 27, 2010

All releases are at 10:00 A.M. (Brussels Time)

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE BOARD

The Conference Board is a global, independent business membership and research association working in the public interest. Our mission is unique: To provide the world’s leading organizations with the practical knowledge they need to improve their performance *and* better serve society. The Conference Board is a non-advocacy, not-for-profit entity holding 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt status in the United States.

AVAILABLE FROM THE CONFERENCE BOARD:

Euro Area Business Cycle Indicators Internet Subscription	\$ 635 per year (1 user)
<i>(Includes monthly release, data, charts and commentary)</i>	
Individual Data Series	\$ 35 per series downloaded
Monthly BCI Report	\$ 275 per year
<i>(Sample available at http://www.conference-board.org/publications/describeBCI.cfm)</i>	
BCI Handbook (published 2001)	\$ 20
Corporate Site License	contact Indicators Program at (212) 339-0330

Business Cycle Indicators for France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Spain, the Euro Area and the U.K. are available at \$635 per country per year (1 user). Discounts are available to Associates of The Conference Board and accredited academic institutions.

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The Conference Board Euro Area Business Cycle Indicators

Table 1.--Summary of Euro Area Composite Economic Indexes

	May.	Jun.	Jul.	2009			
				Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.
Leading index	94.8	96.0 r	97.6 p	99.5 p	100.4 p	101.0 p	101.7 p
Percent change	1.8	1.3 r	1.7 p	1.9 p	0.9 p	0.6 p	0.7 p
Diffusion index	93.8	81.3	75.0	75.0	68.8	37.5	56.3
Coincident index	102.0	101.9	101.8 r	101.9	101.7 p	101.5 p	101.4 p
Percent change	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1 r	0.1 r	-0.2 p	-0.2 p	-0.1 p
Diffusion index	50.0	37.5	50.0	62.5	25.0	12.5	75.0
	Nov to May	Dec to Jun	Jan to Jul	Feb to Aug	Mar to Sep	Apr to Oct	May to Nov
Leading index							
Percent change	1.2	4.6 r	6.0 p	8.6 p	10.1 p	8.5 p	7.3 p
Diffusion index	62.5	87.5	87.5	87.5	87.5	87.5	75.0
Coincident index							
Percent change	-2.3	-1.7	-1.2 r	-0.6	-0.5 p	-0.6 p	-0.6 p
Diffusion index	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0

p Preliminary. r Revised (both noted only for index levels and one-month percent changes).

CALCULATION NOTE: The diffusion indexes measure the proportion of the components that are rising. Components that rise more than 0.05 percent are given a value of 1.0, components that change less than 0.05 percent are given a value of 0.5, and components that fall more than 0.05 percent are given a value of 0.0.

For more information, visit our Web site at www.conference-board.org/economics/bci

Source: The Conference Board

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The Conference Board Euro Area Business Cycle Indicators

Table 2.--Data and Net Contributions for Components of the Euro Area Leading Economic Index

Component	2009						
	May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.
Euro Area Leading Economic Index component data							
Yield Spread, 10 year ECB Benchmark Rate minus ECB Minimum Bid Rate-----	2.89	3.32	3.09	2.89	2.86	2.80	2.83
Economic Sentiment Index (Index of five sentiment surveys) Average value 1990-2008 = 100-----	70.2	73.2	76.0	80.8	82.8	86.1 r	88.8
Markit Purchasing Managers' Index (Manufacturing) 50 = Balanced Positive and Negative Responses-----	40.68	42.62	46.25	48.24	49.29	50.73	51.20
Markit Business Expectations Index (Services) 50 = Balanced Positive and Negative Responses-----	59.09	62.27	61.38	67.25	68.39	66.32	64.75
Stock Price (Average Closing Price) Dow Jones EURO STOXX® Index, 12/31/1991=100-----	225.74	226.70	228.01	250.72	263.96	268.73	265.43
Money Supply (M2) In Billions of 2005 Euros-----	7509 r	7507.81 r	7584.02 r	7607.6 r	7576.2 r	7547.55 r	7583.8 **
Capital Goods New Orders Index (2005=100)-----	76.37	80.06	82.25	82.64 r	85.60 r	85.07 **	85.47 **
Index of Residential Building Permits (Index, 2005 = 100) Square meters of usable floor area-----	55.65 r	53.91 r	54.04 **	53.84 **	53.71 **	53.56 **	53.41 **
LEADING INDEX (2004=100).....	94.8	96.0 r	97.6 p	99.5 p	100.4 p	101.0 p	101.7 p
Percent change from preceding month.....		1.3 r	1.7 r	1.9	0.9 r	0.6 p	0.7 p
Euro Area Leading Economic Index net contributions							
Yield Spread, 10 year ECB Benchmark Rate ECB Minimum Bid Rate	----	0.81	0.75	0.71	0.70	0.68	0.69
Economic Sentiment Index (Index of five sentiment surveys) Average value 1990-2008 = 100	----	0.30	0.28	0.48	0.20	0.33 r	0.27
Markit Purchasing Managers' Index (Manufacturing) 50 = Balanced Positive and Negative Responses	----	0.29	0.55	0.30	0.16	0.22	0.07
Markit Business Expectations Index (Services) 50 = Balanced Positive and Negative Responses	----	0.22	-0.06	0.41	0.08	-0.14	-0.11
Stock Price (Average Closing Price) Dow Jones EURO STOXX® Index, 12/31/1991=100	----	0.01	0.02	0.28	0.15	0.05	-0.04
Money Supply (M2) In Billions of 2005 Euros	----	0.00 r	0.32	0.10 r	-0.13 r	-0.12 r	0.15 **
Capital Goods New Orders Index (2005=100)	----	0.20	0.11	0.02	0.15	-0.03 **	0.02 **
Index of Residential Building Permits (Index, 2005 = 100) Square meters of usable floor area	----	-0.16 r	0.01 **	-0.02 **	-0.01 **	-0.01 **	-0.01 **

p Preliminary. r Revised. s.a. Seasonally Adjusted

* Inverted series; a negative change in this component makes a positive contribution to the index.

** Statistical Imputation (See page 2 for more details)

Q Quarterly series; these series are converted to monthly through a linear interpolation.

Data Sources: Eurostat, ECB, Reuters Thomson, Markit Economics, STOXX Limited

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STOXX and Dow Jones do not warrant the accuracy or completeness of the index data displayed in this report

CALCULATION NOTE--The percent change in the index does not always equal the sum of the net contributions

of the individual components (because of rounding effects and base value differences).

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The Conference Board Euro Area Business Cycle Indicators

Table 3.--Data and Net Contributions for Components of the Euro Area Coincident Economic Index

Component	2009						
	May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.
Euro Area Coincident Economic Index Component Data							
Number of Employees							
Thous. Of Employees, S.A. Q	145499.0 r	145262.0 r	145025.0 r	144788.0 r	144557.4 **	144333.0 **	144114.7 **
Industrial Production, Volume Index (2005=100). S.A.	89.2 r	90.0 r	90.2 r	91.3 r	91.5 r	90.9 r	91.0 **
Retail Trade, Volume Index (2005=100). S.A.	101.2 r	101.2 r	101.0 r	101.0 r	100.5 r	100.6 r	100.6 **
Manufacturing Turnover, Index (2005=100). S.A.	90.7	89.4	90.9	92.1	91.6 r	91.1 r	91.4 **
COINCIDENT INDEX (2004=100).....	102.0	101.9	101.8 r	101.9	101.7 p	101.5 p	101.4 p
Percent change from preceding month.....		-0.1	-0.1 r	0.1 r	-0.2 p	-0.2 p	-0.1 p
Euro Area Coincident Economic Index net contributions							
Number of Employees	-----	-0.13 r	-0.13 r	-0.13 r	-0.12 **	-0.12 **	-0.12 **
Thous. Of Employees, S.A. Q							
Industrial Production, Volume Index (2005=100). S.A.	-----	0.07	0.02	0.09 r	0.02	-0.05 r	0.01 **
Retail Trade, Volume Index (2005=100). S.A.	-----	0.00	-0.02	0.00 r	-0.05 r	0.00 r	0.01 **
Manufacturing Turnover, Index (2005=100). S.A.	-----	-0.06	0.07	0.05	-0.02 r	-0.02 r	0.01 **

p Preliminary. r Revised. s.a. Seasonally Adjusted

* Inverted series; a negative change in this component makes a positive contribution to the index.

** Statistical Imputation (See page 2 for more details)

Q Quarterly series; these series are converted to monthly through a linear interpolation.

Data Sources: Eurostat, ECB, Reuters Thomson

CALCULATION NOTE--The percent change in the index does not always equal the sum of the net contributions of the individual components (because of rounding effects and base value differences).

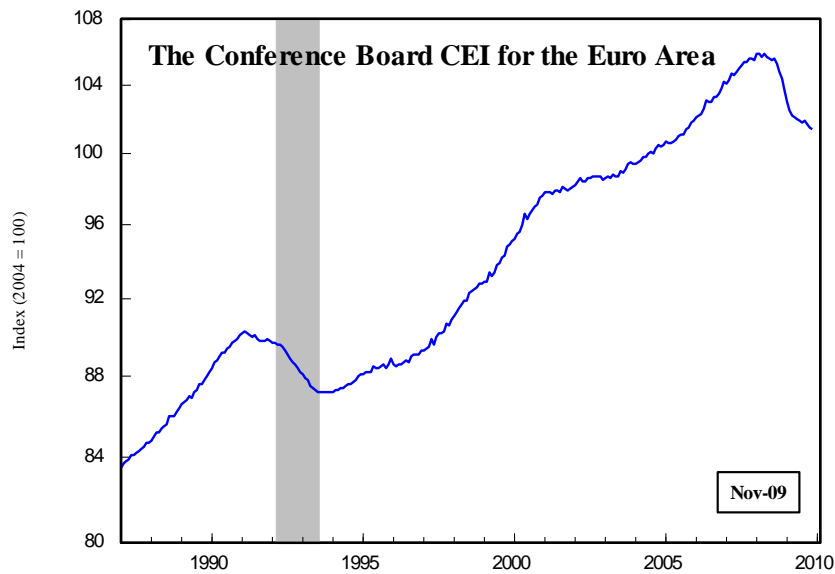
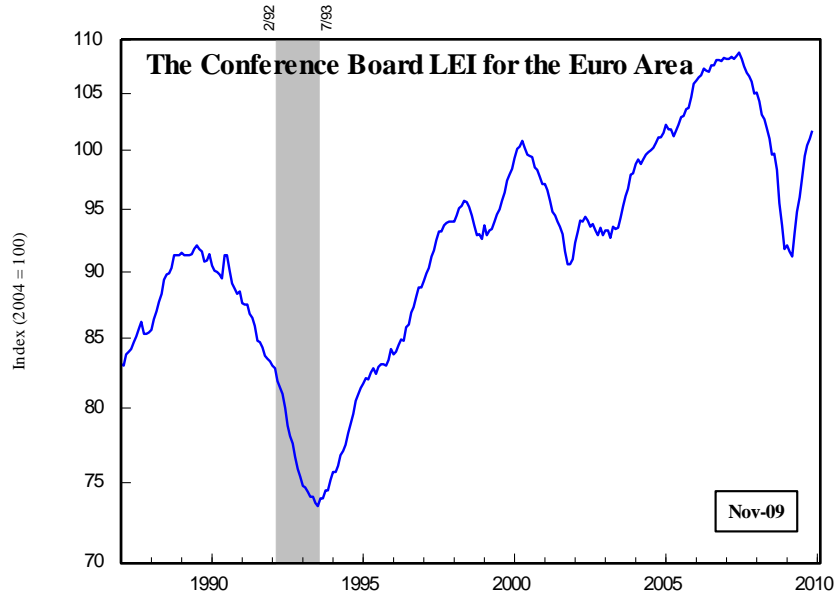
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Euro Area Composite Economic Indexes



Note: The shaded areas represent business cycle recessions. The peaks and troughs are designated by The Conference Board based on the coincident index and real GDP.

Source: The Conference Board