



**THE CONFERENCE BOARD**

FOR RELEASE: 10:00 A.M. (BRUSSELS TIME), MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2009

The Conference Board®  
Euro Area Business Cycle Indicators<sup>SM</sup>  
**THE CONFERENCE BOARD LEADING ECONOMIC INDEX<sup>TM</sup>**  
**(LEI) FOR THE EURO AREA**  
**AND RELATED COMPOSITE ECONOMIC INDEXES FOR AUGUST 2009**

**BRUSSELS, September 28, 2009...** The Conference Board Leading Economic Index<sup>TM</sup> (LEI) for the Euro Area increased 1.8 percent and The Conference Board Coincident Economic Index<sup>TM</sup> (CEI) decreased 0.1 percent in August.

- The Conference Board LEI for the Euro Area increased sharply for a fifth consecutive month in August, with the interest rate spread and the Economic Sentiment Index making the largest positive contributions. Between February and August 2009, the leading economic index increased 8.2 percent (about a 17.0 percent annual rate), a sharp reversal from the 8.1 percent decline (about a -15.6 percent annual rate) between August 2008 and February 2009. In addition, the strengths among the leading indicators have remained widespread in recent months.
- The Conference Board CEI for the Euro Area, a measure of current economic activity, continued to decline in August according to preliminary estimates. Between February and August 2009, the coincident economic index decreased by 1.1 percent (about a -2.1 percent annual rate), slower than the 2.9 percent decline (about a -5.8 percent annual rate) between August 2008 and February 2009. Additionally, the weaknesses among the coincident indicators have remained very widespread, with all four components decreasing during the past six months. At the same time, real GDP fell at a 0.5 percent annual rate in the second quarter of 2009, following a contraction of 9.5 percent annual rate in the first quarter.
- After declining rapidly from the middle of 2007 through the end of last year, The Conference Board LEI for the Euro Area has rebounded strongly during the past five months. The six-month growth rate in the index has reached its highest rate since 1987 with widespread strength among its components. Meanwhile, The Conference Board CEI for the Euro Area has continued to decline; however the pace of this decline has slowed recently. Taken together, the recent behavior of the composite economic indexes suggests that the downturn in economic activity is bottoming out and that the economy is moving closer to a recovery.

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

The next release is scheduled for Wednesday, October 28, 2009 at 10:00 A.M. (Brussels Time)

*In New York – Wednesday, October 28, 2009 at 5:00 A.M. (ET)*

With the 1.8 percent increase in August, The Conference Board LEI for the Euro Area now stands at 99.1 (2004=100). Based on revised data, this index increased 1.6 percent in July and increased 1.3 percent in June. During the six-month span through August, the index increased 8.2 percent, with seven of the eight components increasing (diffusion index, six-month span equals 87.5 percent).

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

With the 0.1 percent decrease in August, 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 July and decreased 0.2 percent in June. During the six-month period through August, the index decreased 1.1 percent, with none of the four components increasing (diffusion index, six-month span equals 0.0 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 September 23, 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.

Effective with the March 26, 2009 release, the retail trade component of The Conference Board CEI for the Euro Area changed slightly due to benchmark revisions by the source agency. As a result, “Volume of retail trade except for motor vehicles and motorcycles” replaced “volume of retail trade except for motor vehicles, motorcycles and repair of personal and household goods.” The difference between these component series is small and does not affect the cyclical characteristics of the coincident economic index.

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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 2009 schedule for “**The Conference Board Leading Economic Index**<sup>TM</sup> (LEI) for the Euro Area” news release is:

September 2009 Data.....	Wednesday, October 28, 2009
October 2009 Data.....	Monday, November 30, 2009
November 2009 Data.....	Wednesday, December 30, 2009

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 <a href="http://www.conference-board.org/publications/describeBCI.cfm">http://www.conference-board.org/publications/describeBCI.cfm</a>)</i>	
BCI Handbook (published 2001)	\$ 20
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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

	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	2009			
				May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.
Leading index	91.6	91.2 r	92.8 r	94.6	95.8 r	97.3 p	99.1 p
Percent change	-0.5	-0.4 r	1.8 r	1.9 r	1.3 r	1.6 p	1.8 p
Diffusion index	31.3	31.3	75.0	93.8	81.3	62.5	62.5
Coincident index	102.5	102.2 r	102.0 r	101.9 r	101.7 p	101.5 p	101.4 p
Percent change	-0.5	-0.3 r	-0.2 r	-0.1 r	-0.2 p	-0.2 p	-0.1 p
Diffusion index	0.0	12.5	25.0	37.5	12.5	25.0	75.0
	Aug to Feb	Sep to Mar	Oct to Apr	Nov to May	Dec to Jun	Jan to Jul	Feb to Aug
Leading index							
Percent change	-8.1	-7.2 r	-2.8 r	1.0	4.4 r	5.6 p	8.2 p
Diffusion index	25.0	25.0	37.5	62.5	87.5	87.5	87.5
Coincident index							
Percent change	-2.9	-2.9 r	-2.7 r	-2.4 r	-1.9 p	-1.5 p	-1.1 p
Diffusion index	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

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.

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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						
	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.
Euro Area Leading Economic Index component data							
Yield Spread, 10 year ECB Benchmark Rate minus ECB Minimum Bid Rate-----	2.20	2.15	2.59	2.89	3.32	3.09	2.89
Economic Sentiment Index (Index of five sentiment surveys) Average value 1990-2008 = 100-----	65.3	64.6	67.3	70.2	73.2	76.0	80.6
Markit Purchasing Managers' Index (Manufacturing) 50 = Balanced Positive and Negative Responses-----	33.55	33.93	36.83	40.68	42.62	46.25	48.24
Markit Business Expectations Index (Services) 50 = Balanced Positive and Negative Responses-----	46.14	48.65	54.40	59.09	62.27	61.38	67.25
Stock Price (Average Closing Price) Dow Jones EURO STOXX® Index, 12/31/1991=100-----	200.36	184.63	209.29	225.74	226.70	228.01	250.72
Money Supply (M2) In Billions of 2005 Euros-----	7551.01 r	7517.42 r	7523.19 r	7522.2 r	7520.9 r	7598.92 r	7622.9 **
Capital Goods New Orders Index (2005=100)-----	77.15 r	76.39	75.80	75.86	79.82 r	82.21 r	81.90 **
Index of Residential Building Permits (Index, 2005 = 100) Square meters of usable floor area-----	48.45 r	45.94 r	45.51 r	46.88 r	44.88 r	44.75 **	44.40 **
<b>LEADING INDEX (2004=100).....</b>	<b>91.6</b>	<b>91.2 r</b>	<b>92.8 r</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>95.8 r</b>	<b>97.3 p</b>	<b>99.1 p</b>
Percent change from preceding month.....		-0.4 r	1.8 r	1.9 r	1.3 r	1.6 p	1.8 p
Euro Area Leading Economic Index net contributions							
Yield Spread, 10 year ECB Benchmark Rate ECB Minimum Bid Rate	----	0.52	0.63	0.71	0.81	0.75	0.71
Economic Sentiment Index (Index of five sentiment surveys) Average value 1990-2008 = 100	----	-0.07	0.27	0.29	0.30	0.28	0.46
Markit Purchasing Managers' Index (Manufacturing) 50 = Balanced Positive and Negative Responses	----	0.06	0.44	0.58	0.29	0.55	0.30
Markit Business Expectations Index (Services) 50 = Balanced Positive and Negative Responses	----	0.17	0.40	0.33	0.22	-0.06	0.41
Stock Price (Average Closing Price) Dow Jones EURO STOXX® Index, 12/31/1991=100	----	-0.24	0.37	0.23	0.01	0.02	0.28
Money Supply (M2) In Billions of 2005 Euros	----	-0.14	0.02	0.00 r	-0.01	0.33 r	0.10 **
Capital Goods New Orders Index (2005=100)	----	-0.04 r	-0.03	0.00 r	0.21 r	0.12 r	-0.02 **
Index of Residential Building Permits (Index, 2005 = 100) Square meters of usable floor area	----	-0.26 r	-0.05 r	0.15 r	-0.21 r	-0.01 **	-0.04 **

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						
	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.
Euro Area Coincident Economic Index Component Data							
Number of Employees Thous. Of Employees, S.A. Q	146258.0 r	146024.0 r	145790.0 r	145556.0 r	145329.6 **	145110.5 **	144898.6 **
Industrial Production, Volume Index (2005=100). S.A.	91.2	90.2 r	88.8 r	89.4 r	89.2 r	88.9	89.0 **
Retail Trade, Volume Index (2005=100). S.A.	101.0	101.0 r	101.2 r	100.7 r	100.7 r	100.6 r	100.7 **
Manufacturing Turnover, Index (2005=100). S.A.	90.7	90.5 r	90.3 r	90.3	88.8 r	89.2 r	89.3 **
<b>COINCIDENT INDEX (2004=100).....</b>	<b>102.5</b>	<b>102.2 r</b>	<b>102.0 r</b>	<b>101.9 r</b>	<b>101.7 p</b>	<b>101.5 p</b>	<b>101.4 p</b>
Percent change from preceding month.....		-0.3 r	-0.2 r	-0.1 r	-0.2 p	-0.2 p	-0.1 p
Euro Area Coincident Economic Index net contributions							
Number of Employees Thous. Of Employees, S.A. Q	-----	-0.12 r	-0.12 r	-0.12 r	-0.12 **	-0.12 **	-0.11 **
Industrial Production, Volume Index (2005=100). S.A.	-----	-0.09 r	-0.12	0.06 r	-0.02 r	-0.03 r	0.01 **
Retail Trade, Volume Index (2005=100). S.A.	-----	0.00 r	0.02	-0.06 r	0.00 r	-0.01 r	0.01 **
Manufacturing Turnover, Index (2005=100). S.A.	-----	-0.01	-0.01	0.00 r	-0.07 r	0.02 r	0.00 **

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**

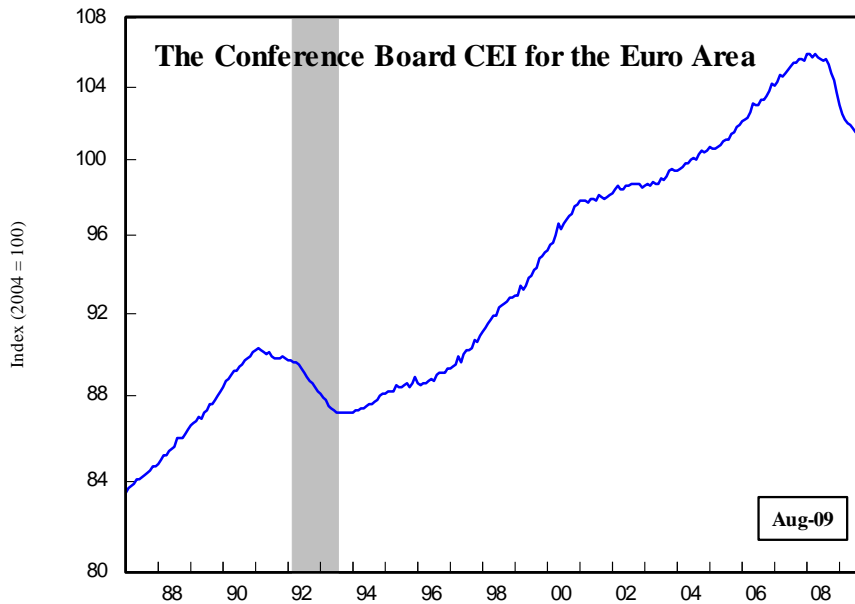
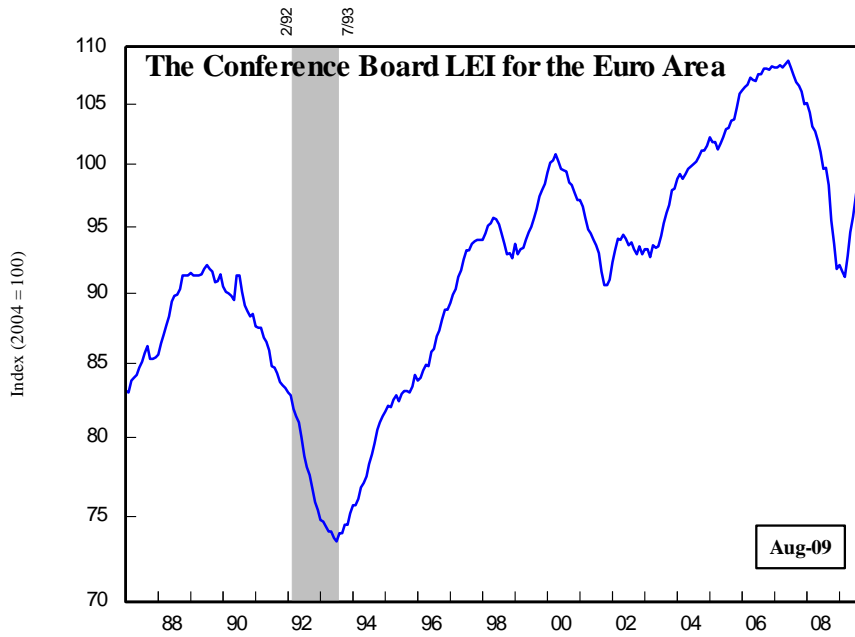
CALCULATION NOTE--The percent change in the index does not always equal the sum of the net contributions of the individual components (because of rounding effects and base value differences).

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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