



THE CONFERENCE BOARD

FOR RELEASE: 10:00 A.M. CET, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2009

The Conference Board®
France Business Cycle IndicatorsSM
**THE CONFERENCE BOARD LEADING ECONOMIC INDEX™
(LEI) FOR FRANCE**
AND RELATED COMPOSITE ECONOMIC INDEXES FOR FEBRUARY 2009

Brussels, Apr. 22, 2009...The Conference Board Leading Economic Index™ (LEI) for France declined 0.7 percent and The Conference Board Coincident Economic Index™ (CEI) decreased 0.2 percent in February.

- The Conference Board LEI for France declined in February and index levels for September 2008 through January 2009 were revised downward as new quarterly data became available for the ratio of the deflator of value added to unit labor cost component. In February, industrial new orders, new unemployment claims (inverted), stock prices, and building permits contributed negatively to the index. Between August 2008 and February 2009, the leading economic index declined 6.0 percent (a -11.7 percent annual rate), well below the 2.1 percent decline (a -4.2 percent annual rate) during the previous six-month period. In addition, the weaknesses among the leading indicators remained widespread in recent months.
- The Conference Board CEI for France, a measure of current economic activity, declined for the sixth consecutive month in February, as a result of negative contributions from employment, personal consumption, and industrial production. In addition, the weaknesses among the coincident indicators have remained widespread in recent months. The six-month change in the coincident economic index has fallen to -1.2 percent (a -2.4 percent annual rate), down from -0.6 percent (a -1.1 percent annual rate) between February and August 2008. Meanwhile, real GDP declined at a 1.9 percent average annual rate in the last half of 2008 (declining at a 4.4 percent annual rate in the fourth quarter of 2008), its lowest average annual rate over two quarters since 1993.
- The decline in The Conference Board LEI for France has been the deepest since the 1974-75 downturn. As a result of persistent and widespread weakness among its components, the index has fallen 9.5 percent from its most recent peak in October 2007. Meanwhile, The Conference Board CEI for France has decreased 1.8 percent from its most recent peak in February 2008. The recent behavior of the composite economic indexes suggests that the contraction in economic activity is likely to continue through the first half of 2009 and that economic conditions could deteriorate further in the near term.

LEADING INDICATORS. Two of the seven components of The Conference Board LEI for France increased in February. The positive contributors to the index— in order from the largest positive contributor to the smallest— are the yield spread and production expectations. The negative contributors to the index— beginning with the largest negative contributor— are industrial new orders, inverted new unemployment claims, the stock price index, building permits (residential), and the ratio of the deflator of manufacturing value added to unit labor cost for manufacturing*.

Please visit our website at <http://www.conference-board.org/economics/bci>
Also visit the web site of our research associate in France: <http://www.rexecode.fr/index.jsv>
The next release is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 2009 at 10:00 A.M.CET (4:00 A.M. New York)

With the decrease of 0.7 percent in February, The Conference Board LEI for France now stands at 99.4 (2004=100). Based on revised data, the index declined 0.1 percent in January and declined 1.0 percent in December. During the six-month span through February, the leading economic index decreased 6.0 percent, and one of the seven components increased (diffusion index, six-month span equals 14.3 percent).

COINCIDENT INDICATORS. One of the four components of The Conference Board CEI for France increased in February. The positive contributor to the index was the wage and salaries* component. Employment*, personal consumption, and industrial production declined in February.

With the decrease of 0.2 percent in February, The Conference Board CEI for France now stands at 104.5 (2004=100). Based on revised data, this index decreased 0.2 percent in January and decreased 0.2 percent in December. During the six-month period through February, the coincident economic index decreased 1.2 percent, with one of the four series making a positive contribution (diffusion index, six-month span equals 25.0 percent).

About The Conference Board

For over 90 years, The Conference Board has created and disseminated knowledge about management and the marketplace to help businesses strengthen their performance and better serve society. The Conference Board operates as a global independent membership organization working in the public interest. It publishes information and analysis, makes economics-based forecasts and assesses trends, and facilitates learning by creating dynamic communities of interest that bring together senior executives from around the world. The Conference Board is a not-for-profit organization and holds 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status in the United States. For additional information about The Conference Board and how it can meet your needs, visit our website at www.conference-board.org.

Summary Table of Composite Indexes

	2008	2009		6-month
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Aug. to Feb
Leading index	100.2 p	100.1 p	99.4 p	
Percent Change	-1.0 p	-0.1 p	-0.7 p	-6.0 p
Diffusion	14.3	35.7	28.6	14.3
Coincident Index	104.9 p	104.7 p	104.5 p	
Percent Change	-0.2 p	-0.2 p	-0.2 p	-1.2 p
Diffusion	25.0	50.0	25.0	25.0

n.a. Not available p Preliminary r Revised
 Indexes equal 100 in 2004

Source: The Conference Board All Rights Reserved

For more information:

The Conference Board Europe: + 32 2 675 5405

Email: indicators@conference-board.org

Website: <http://www.conference-board.org/economics/bci/>