Your Weekly Newsletter !

ALMA EUROPE

Week 11

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MARKET TREND

INDEX	16/03/2026	YTD	COMMO	16/03/2026	1Y	CURRENCIES	16/03/2026	YTD	BONDS	16/03/2026	1Y	▲
S&P500	6,632.19	-3.12%	**GOLD**	4,987.31	67.06%	**EUR-USD**	1.144	-2.59%	US 10 Y	4.30%		-1
NASDAQ	22,105.36	-4.89%	**SILVER**	78.74	133.25%	**GBP-USD**	1.324	-1.64%	UK 10 Y	4.83%		14
DOW JONES	46,558.47	-3.13%	**WTI**	93.96	48.81%	**USD-CAD**	1.370	0.06%	AUS 10 Y	4.97%		51
EURO STOXX	5,705.22	-2.48%	**NAT. GAS**	3.11	-22.25%	**CHF-USD**	1.266	0.23%	SW 10 Y	0.47%		-34
HANG SENG	25,800.21	0.66%	**CORN**	464.50	-1.43%	**USD-CNY**	6.899	-1.38%	NOR 10 Y	4.25%		1
TA-125	4,118.09	12.67%	**COFFEE**	285.15	-14.32%	**USD-ILS**	3.137	-1.23%	ISR 10 Y	3.98%		-34

Overview:

Over the past week, global equity markets were mostly weaker and more defensive: in the U.S., the S&P 500 fell from 6,740.02 on March 6 to 6,632.19 on March 13 (about -1.6%), as higher oil prices and the Iran conflict kept pressure on inflation expectations and reduced hopes for near-term rate cuts. In Europe, the STOXX 600 slipped from 606.86 to 595.85 (about -1.8%), with energy stocks holding up better than the broader market. In Israel, the TA-125 dropped from 4,329.54 to 4,118.09 (about -4.9%), making it one of the weaker markets of the week. In Asia, performance was mixed: Japan's Nikkei 225 fell from 55,620.84 to 53,819.61 (about -3.2%), while Hong Kong's Hang Seng edged up from 25,358.56 to 25,465.60 and China's CSI 300 rose slightly from 4,660.44 to 4,669.14, suggesting Chinese markets were relatively more resilient than Japan. Overall, last week's tone was clearly risk-off, with geopolitics, oil, inflation, and interest-rate uncertainty driving sentiment more than company earnings.

WORLDWIDE TOP NEWS

- The Middle East crisis dominated the week, with the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran intensifying and disrupting shipping and energy markets.
- The International Energy Agency announced a record emergency release of more than 400 million barrels to calm oil markets shaken by the conflict.
- Ukraine said it was ready for new peace talks with Russia, but Kyiv said momentum had slowed as global attention shifted to the Iran war.
- Israel and Lebanon moved closer to possible talks on a more durable ceasefire and the future of Hezbollah's arms.
- Ethiopia declared national mourning after deadly landslides in the south killed dozens and displaced thousands.
- In Canada, Prime Minister Mark Carney moved closer to a parliamentary majority after an opposition lawmaker defected to the Liberals.
- Pope Leo sharply condemned the violence in the Iran war and called for an immediate ceasefire.

REAL ESTATE

- U.S. existing home sales unexpectedly rose 1.7% in February to a 4.09 million annual pace, helped by lower mortgage rates and slightly better affordability.
- President Trump signed two housing executive orders aimed at cutting red tape for homebuilding and easing mortgage access to support affordability.
- The average 30-year U.S. mortgage rate rose to 6.11%, with bond-market volatility linked to the Iran war adding fresh pressure to housing finance.
- UK banks pulled 308 mortgage products in a single day, the biggest withdrawal since 2022, as market turmoil pushed up funding costs.
- Britain's housing market lost momentum, with new buyer enquiries falling sharply as Middle East tensions and worries over higher mortgage rates hit confidence.
- China's housing downturn worsened, with a Reuters poll showing home prices now expected to fall 4.0% in 2026 before stabilizing in 2027.
- India's property market stayed strong at the top end, with forecasts for about 5% annual home-price growth through 2028 driven by luxury housing demand.

BANKING & FINANCE

- The Federal Reserve unveiled a plan to ease big-bank capital rules, potentially freeing up about $175 billion in excess capital for Wall Street banks.
- Morgan Stanley restricted redemptions at one of its private credit funds after investors sought to withdraw nearly 11% of shares.
- Rising oil prices from the Iran conflict pushed markets to scale back expectations for ECB and Bank of England rate cuts and even price in possible hikes later on.
- Raiffeisen neared a deal worth about €550 million to buy BBVA's Romanian unit, one of the notable European banking deals of the week.
- JPMorgan warned that HSBC and Standard Chartered are the European banks most exposed to the Middle East conflict.
- The Iran-driven oil shock forced Asian central banks to rethink policy as they balanced growth risks against inflation and currency pressure.
- State Bank of India prepared to raise up to 100 billion rupees through infrastructure bonds after a 16-month pause.

TECHNOLOGY

- The U.S. Senate approved ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Microsoft Copilot for official use by Senate staff, marking a notable step in government adoption of AI tools.
- The U.S. Commerce Department withdrew a planned rule on AI chip exports, showing internal debate over how Washington should control advanced chip flows.
- Mira Murati's startup Thinking Machines Lab secured a multi-year Nvidia partnership, including a major investment and at least one gigawatt of next-generation AI processors.
- Switzerland's ABB partnered with Nvidia to improve industrial robot training by making simulated factory environments more realistic.
- French startup Scintil Photonics began customer testing of laser chips designed to move data inside AI servers using light instead of electrical signals.
- China's ByteDance was reported to be assembling computing power with top Nvidia chips outside China to accelerate its global AI efforts.
- Taiwanese tech suppliers Pegatron and GlobalWafers said the Middle East war had not yet disrupted their operations, easing near-term supply-chain concerns.

Key Economic Indicators:

- U.S. consumer inflation held at 2.4% year-on-year in February, with core CPI at 2.5% and headline prices up 0.2% month-on-month.
- U.S. personal income rose 0.4% in January, disposable income rose 0.9%, consumer spending rose 0.4%, and the saving rate stood at 4.5%.
- U.S. consumer sentiment slipped to 55.5 in early March from 56.6 in February as higher gasoline prices weighed on households.
- Euro zone industrial production fell 1.5% month-on-month in January, far weaker than the expected 0.6% increase.
- UK GDP was flat in January, missing expectations for 0.2% growth, while growth over the three months to January was 0.2%.
- German inflation eased to 2.0% in February from 2.1% in January, confirming a slight cooling in price pressures.
- China's consumer inflation accelerated to 1.3% year-on-year in February, while producer prices remained in deflation at -0.9%.
- China's new bank lending slowed sharply to 900 billion yuan in February from 4.71 trillion yuan in January, underscoring weak credit demand.
- Japan's real wages rose 1.4% year-on-year in January, the first increase in 13 months, while nominal wages grew 3.0%.
- India's retail inflation quickened to 3.21% year-on-year in February from a revised 2.74% in January, but stayed within the central bank's tolerance band.

Outlook:

The outlook for March 16–20, 2026 is for another volatile, policy-driven week. The main market theme remains the Iran war and oil shock, with crude still above $100 and investors watching whether disruption around the Strait of Hormuz eases or worsens, because that is feeding both inflation fears and growth concerns. In the U.S., the Federal Reserve is widely expected to hold rates at 3.50%–3.75% on March 18, so the real focus will be Jerome Powell's tone on whether higher energy prices delay any rate cuts that economists had mostly expected around June. In Europe, the Bank of England is expected to keep Bank Rate at 3.75% on March 19 and likely sound more cautious on future easing, which could keep UK bonds, the pound, and rate-sensitive shares under pressure. In Asia, the Bank of Japan is expected to leave rates at 0.75% on March 19 while preserving a tightening bias, and China's stronger-than-expected industrial output and retail sales may offer some support to regional sentiment even as energy costs rise. Overall, the week's bias looks defensive: energy and inflation-sensitive assets may stay firm, currencies and bonds could move sharply on central-bank language, and equities are likely to remain highly sensitive to both oil prices and Middle East headlines.

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