

WorldWatch Headlines: April

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Africa

Algeria	There are signs of political change at the heart of the establishment.
Angola	Plans are announced to develop new oil-refining facilities.
Botswana	The opposition coalition is bolstered by the entry of a new party.
Cameroon	New deep-water port facilities are close to receiving their first commercial shipments.
Congo, D.R.	International mining companies are showing a renewed interest in the country's mining assets.
Cote d'Ivoire	Infrastructure development and trade policies are driving rapid growth.
Ethiopia	Corruption is adversely affecting the business environment and social stability.
Gabon	High-profile politicians are arrested amid a corruption crackdown.
Ghana	The government announces budget measures to tackle the fiscal deficit.
Kenya	The 2017/18 Budget targets an increase in household spending and much greater business investment.
Libya	Armed clashes and protests continue to curtail oil production.
Malawi	Much-awaited exchange rate stability allows inflation to cool.
Mauritius	The new prime minister emphasises policy continuity.
Morocco	The king steps in to unblock the political logjam.
Mozambique	The central bank moves to modernise the monetary policy framework.
Namibia	A mining sector recovery will boost economic growth in 2017.
Nigeria	A modest recovery in economic growth is anticipated following a full-year recession.
Senegal	The country's corruption score improves to an all-time high.
Sierra Leone	Escalating price pressures add to business overheads and transaction costs.
South Africa	International ratings agencies downgrade South African sovereign debt to 'junk' status.
Sudan	The easing of sanctions by the US raises interest from foreign investors.
Tanzania	The government imposes an export ban on unprocessed metals to boost local value addition.
Tunisia	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Tunisia amid better tourism prospects.
Uganda	The pipeline for large infrastructure projects will drive construction activity and economic growth.
Zambia	Annual consumer price inflation eases considerably as the currency stabilises.
Zimbabwe	The tobacco marketing season may offer temporary relief from FX shortages.

Asia Pacific

Afghanistan	The IMF forecasts slightly higher growth in 2017 due to increased agricultural output.
Australia	Rising household debt and unimproved labour market drivers will limit growth.
Bangladesh	The country's political environment outlook is deteriorating rapidly.
Cambodia	New political legislation marks a significant retreat from democracy.

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China	North China aims to reinvent its growth model, in a special zone south of Beijing.
Fiji	The central bank maintains rock-bottom interest rates.
Hong Kong	Real GDP grows ahead of expectations in Q4 2016.
India	State election results open the way for Prime Minister Modi's populist and economic reform agendas.
Indonesia	A damaging dispute in the mining sector disrupts copper output.
Japan	The Bank of Japan holds interest rates steady as inflation expectations remain weak.
Korea (South)	The impeachment crisis is resolved, but regional political risks remain.
Malaysia	Public finance sustainability improves amid higher oil prices and better collection.
Myanmar	Abuses in Rakhine state and slowing FDI weigh on government credibility.
Nepal	Investment should receive a boost after USD13.5bn was pledged by donors in March.
New Zealand	Inventory-buildup helps to mask slower growth in Q4 GDP.
Pakistan	Militant attacks still threaten the security gains made over the past eight years.
Papua New Guinea	Real GDP growth will accelerate due to increased energy sector activity and higher commodity prices.
Philippines	Companies should expect higher input and borrowing costs in 2017.
Singapore	Demand for manufactured products helps to boost the economy's momentum.
Sri Lanka	The authorities are preparing for an intensification of the worst drought since the 1970s.
Taiwan	Data relating to industry, exports and the economy is broadly encouraging for 2017.
Thailand	Growth should pick up modestly this year against a background of increased external risks.
Vietnam	Officials show concern over exports' heavy dependence on foreign direct investment.

Eastern Europe

Albania	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Albania's country risk rating as political stability declines.
Azerbaijan	Following a contraction in 2016, the economy should pick up slightly as oil prices rise.
Belarus	Rare instances of civil protest are allowed to go ahead.
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Politics become increasingly fraught as Serbs boycott the central government institutions.
Bulgaria	The GERB party wins the snap general election but falls short of an outright majority.
Croatia	High public debt is a burden on the economy, but it is starting to decline.
Czech Republic	Real GDP moderates in 2016, but domestic demand remains strong.
Estonia	The growth rate picks up, but there are still risks for the small, open economy.
Georgia	The IMF approves in principle a three-year Extended Fund Facility worth around USD285m.
Hungary	New legislation aims to weaken the foreign-owned supermarket sector.
Kazakhstan	Continuation of the easing inflation trend gives the central bank room to further cut rates.
Kyrgyz Republic	Potentially destabilising political jockeying escalates ahead of the presidential election.
Latvia	Amendments to the Energy Law officially open up Latvia's gas market to competition.
Lithuania	Emigration from Lithuania has picked up pace in recent quarters.
Macedonia	The integrity of the state is put at risk over Albanian participation in government.
Poland	Relations between Warsaw and Brussels remain strained.
Romania	The supply of credit is rising, but some factors continue to constrain growth.

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Russian Federation	Widespread anti-corruption protests constitute the most significant challenge to the regime since 2011-12.
Serbia	Economic growth will accelerate in both of the next two years.
Slovak Republic	The evolving EU will have significant consequences for the country's long-term economic development.
Slovenia	The country's long-term development will be affected by the evolution of the EU.
Tajikistan	Challenges cloud the outlook despite official data suggesting strong growth in 2016.
Turkmenistan	The incumbent, Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov, secures another term as president with nearly 98% of the vote.
Ukraine	Kiev announces an official trade blockade of rebel-held territory in Donbas.
Uzbekistan	Reforms are delayed because of disagreements between the president and the deputy prime minister.

Middle East

Bahrain	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Bahrain's country risk rating amid escalating violence.
Egypt	Saudi Arabia resumes petroleum supplies as tensions with Egypt ease.
Iran	The central bank's latest data release highlights the political nature of official statistics.
Iraq	The reconquest of west Mosul is moving ahead more rapidly than expected.
Israel	Growth is forecast to remain strong, helped in particular by investment and exports.
Jordan	The weakest growth this century and rapidly-rising inflation increase short-term risk.
Kuwait	The country makes its long-awaited inaugural bond issuance of USD8bn.
Lebanon	Factionalism prevents the passage of vital legislation, undermining the risk outlook.
Oman	The government successfully issues both domestic and international bonds to help ease liquidity.
Qatar	Government borrowing accelerates, causing stress in the banking system.
Saudi Arabia	Saudi ramps up its efforts in Asia to attract trade and investment.
Syria	Al-Qaeda gains momentum in the country.
UAE	Dubai increases its investment inflows, helping reduce the UAE's dependency on oil and gas revenues.
Yemen	Prospects for ending the conflict remain weak despite plans to re-open peace talks.

The Americas

Argentina	Mounting labour discontent elevates political risks ahead of elections.
Bolivia	A new coca law could boost the narcotics trade and social unrest.
Brazil	The government presses ahead with simplifying the notoriously onerous tax code.
Canada	Domestic consumption and a strengthening labour market continue to support economic growth.
Chile	Economic data disappoints and the copper mine strike ends without resolution.
Colombia	The central bank continues monetary easing as inflation cools.
Costa Rica	The government abandons its fiscal reform package.
Cuba	The economy is set to contract for the second consecutive year.
Dominican Republic	The central bank votes to keep its main interest rate on hold.
Ecuador	Government candidate Lenin Moreno is heading for presidential victory following a run off.

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El Salvador	Congress extends the extraordinary anti-gang measures amid the continuing downward trend in homicides.
Guatemala	The unseating of another magistrate deals a further blow to the Supreme Court.
Honduras	Despite opposition attempts to unite, the president remains favourite to win the November polls.
Jamaica	The real GDP growth forecast increases for both 2017 and 2018.
Mexico	Growth will slow considerably as fiscal stimulus is ruled out.
Nicaragua	International pressure mounts concerning human rights and abuse of power.
Panama	Flagging global trade and demand drag economic growth to its slowest pace in six years.
Paraguay	Political uncertainty rises amid renewed manoeuvres to introduce presidential re-election.
Peru	The government unveils a stimulus package to jump-start the flagging economy.
Trinidad & Tobago	The near-term outlook remains downbeat as external and domestic market uncertainties persist.
USA	The Republican Party's majority does not guarantee smooth policy passage.
Uruguay	The growth forecast is revised upwards due to a stronger than expected recovery and a fall in inflation.
Venezuela	Political parties - except the ruling PSUV - begin the re-registration process.

Western Europe

Austria	The economic outlook is still encouraging, but consumer prices are maintaining their upward movement.
Belgium	Intensifying external challenges hinder the country's economic growth.
Cyprus	The Cypriot economy expands further in 2016.
Denmark	The governing coalition is increasingly unsustainable, and could collapse.
Finland	Rising government debt leaves Finland in breach of EU rules, risking punitive action.
France	Political risk remains elevated in the run up to the presidential election.
Germany	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Germany due to growing optimism, both economically and politically.
Greece	Austerity is set to constrain market potential in 2017-18.
Iceland	Economic growth is expected to remain strong, driven partly by growing demand.
Ireland	Political risk is on the rise as early elections look likely.
Italy	The economy continues its trend of growing at a faster pace.
Luxembourg	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Luxembourg as economic conditions continue to improve.
Malta	Growth outpaced the euro-area average in 2016, but Brexit weighs on the outlook.
Netherlands	VVD comes top in the elections, but will need support to form a coalition.
Norway	The government will not add more stimulus, as the economy is ready to self-sustain.
Portugal	The economy grows in 2016 while unemployment reduces slightly.
Spain	The economy gathers momentum, but rising inflation could constrain growth.
Sweden	Borrowing costs are expected to remain low over the course of 2017.
Switzerland	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Switzerland as economic prospects improve.
Turkey	FX risk will remain elevated as the central bank attempts to reinvigorate the economy.
United Kingdom	Political risk continues to rise sharply as the Brexit date is set for March 2019.

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