

WorldWatch Headlines: May 2019

Welcome to our latest compilation of WorldWatch Headlines, taken from the most recently published Country Insight Snapshot reports. These headlines highlight the key development our analysts identified for each country when they updated the report.

Dun & Bradstreet Country Information gives detailed analysis, forecasting and commentary on 132 Countries. For an in-depth view, please see the full D&B Country Insight Reports available on D&B platforms. For more information, visit: www.dnb.co.uk/country-insight

Africa

Algeria	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Algeria's country risk rating as the political crisis escalates.
Angola	The authorities take steps to improve the commercial banking sector's credibility.
Botswana	An attempt to replace President Masisi as BDP leader has failed.
Cameroon	The regional central bank keeps its benchmark interest rate on hold.
Congo, D.R.	The dominant party strengthens its grip on power in state elections.
Cote d'Ivoire	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades Cote d'Ivoire's country risk rating based on a robust GDP growth outlook.
Ethiopia	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades Ethiopia's country risk rating on the back of a positive reform agenda.
Gabon	The president makes a brief return after an attempted coup is foiled.
Ghana	Inflation levels fall and the policy rate is lowered.
Kenya	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades Kenya's country risk rating amid economic reforms and improving political stability.
Libya	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Libya following increased military activity.
Malawi	Nine candidates vie for the presidency ahead of the election in May.
Mauritius	Mauritius signs a continuity agreement with the UK to mitigate the impact of Brexit.
Morocco	A new fisheries agreement with the EU represents a diplomatic victory.
Mozambique	Energy companies secure more LNG sales contracts.
Namibia	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Namibia as the central bank keeps interest rates on hold.
Nigeria	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Nigeria following February's general election.
Senegal	President Sall wins a second term.
Sierra Leone	Commissioning at the Marampa iron ore mine has been restarted.
South Africa	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for South Africa as the ongoing reform agenda should receive a post-election boost.
Sudan	The political situation remains unstable as the president is removed from power.
Tanzania	Public spending and infrastructure investment spurs economic growth.
Tunisia	An interest rate hike will not cool inflation.
Uganda	The IMF provides an upbeat assessment of the short-term economic outlook.
Zambia	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Zambia after regulatory and fiscal changes unsettle the mining sector.
Zimbabwe	Inflation soars to a ten-year high.

Asia Pacific

Afghanistan	The government's exclusion from peace talks raises concerns.
Australia	A dramatic Q4 slowdown confirms that growth will weaken in 2019.
Bangladesh	Non-performing loans heighten banking sector risk.
Cambodia	Japanese investors eye infrastructure opportunities.
China	The shocks of 2018 are still working their way through the economy.

Fiji	The government intervenes to stop an environmentally-destructive tourist development.
Hong Kong (S.A.R)	The Hong Kong Monetary Authority intervenes to support the HKD.
India	Weak rural demand restrains the economic outlook ahead of the upcoming election.
Indonesia	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Indonesia due to the significantly-improved global liquidity environment.
Japan	Japan's large domestic economy shields it from falling exports to Asia.
Korea (South)	Fiscal stimulus is urged by the IMF.
Malaysia	The economy will slow in 2019 due to weaker exports growth.
Myanmar	Imminent electricity price-hikes loom.
Nepal	Economic growth remains buoyant.
New Zealand	The terror alert has been set to high in the wake of the Christchurch terror attack.
Pakistan	Tax reforms aim to boost revenue and investment prospects.
Papua New Guinea	More normal levels of resource output will contribute to higher growth.
Philippines	Inflationary pressures fall dramatically.
Singapore	Economic growth slows to its lowest rate since 2009.
Sri Lanka	The political scene stabilises, but the economic outlook remains challenging.
Taiwan	Exports depress the growth outlook but the economy should be resilient.
Thailand	Bleak January trade figures will result in a modest growth reduction.
Vietnam	Economic growth remained strong in Q1.

Eastern Europe

Albania	The political environment worsens rapidly as demonstrations turn violent.
Azerbaijan	Efforts to resolve the status of Nagorno-Karabakh are in the balance.
Belarus	Moscow pushes for deeper integration between Russia and Belarus.
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Bosnian Croats mount a concerted challenge to the integrity of the state.
Bulgaria	Economic growth is set to weaken.
Croatia	Growth will slow over the forecast period as the external environment deteriorates.
Czech Republic	Western Europe's economic downturn is affecting the Czech Republic.
Estonia	The political environment deteriorates as the political landscape shifts.
Georgia	The country elects its first female president.
Hungary	Relations with the EU are becoming increasingly strained.
Kazakhstan	President Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan's sole leader since independence, steps down.
Kyrgyz Republic	Economic growth should pick up in the short term.
Latvia	Legal amendments to combat money laundering are proposed.
Lithuania	The outcome of the forthcoming presidential election is difficult to call.
Macedonia	The country's name has changed to the Republic of North Macedonia.
Poland	The EU starts infringement proceedings over the issue of judicial independence.
Romania	Relations between Romania and the EU continue to sour.
Russian Federation	The credit environment outlook has improved.
Serbia	Serbia is opening up its economy to new emerging markets.
Slovak Republic	The political environment improves following President Caputova's election win.
Slovenia	Disputes with Croatia and Hungary could have negative repercussions.
Tajikistan	Official figures show robust GDP growth in 2018.
Turkmenistan	The oil and gas sector will continue to drive growth.
Ukraine	Volodymyr Zelensky is elected president in a landslide victory.

Uzbekistan A slowdown is forecast after a year of growth.

Middle East

Bahrain Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Bahrain's country risk rating after a sharp cut in oil price forecasts.

Egypt Fresh opportunities open up for portfolio investors.

Iran The transfer risk remains elevated.

Iraq Iraq agrees to join a new round of OPEC-led cuts in oil production.

Israel President Trump signals that Israel's Golan Heights sovereignty should be recognised.

Jordan Growth remains anaemic, putting pressure on businesses.

Kuwait Stronger oil prices boost the outlook.

Lebanon The draft budget for 2019 aims at slashing government spending.

Oman Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Oman's country risk rating after a sharp cut in oil price forecasts.

Qatar Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Qatar due to weaker oil price forecasts.

Saudi Arabia Economic data highlights the Saudi economy's vulnerability to oil price changes.

Syria The economy is gaining momentum.

UAE Latest data reveals weak growth.

Yemen The ceasefire in Hodeidah could collapse at any time.

The Americas

Argentina Consumer prices rise sharply.

Bolivia The government announces measures to increase domestic liquidity.

Brazil There is no progress on the crucial pension reform.

Canada Housing market risk remains elevated and is still growing.

Chile Monetary tightening continues.

Colombia Economic activity is gathering pace as inflation remains within target range.

Costa Rica Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Costa Rica due to the passage of a tax reform.

Cuba Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Cuba as new US sanctions are set to have a severe impact.

Dominican Republic Economic growth remains robust.

Ecuador The new economic plan is a move away from the previous government's leftism.

El Salvador President Bukele wins a landslide election victory.

Guatemala Political stability is being put at risk.

Honduras Rising inflation pressures prompt the first rate hike in years.

Jamaica Real GDP growth is set to slow as a result of weaker external conditions.

Mexico The economy decelerates in Q1 following a feeble end to 2018.

Nicaragua The risk of deep recession turning to economic collapse is real.

Panama The opposition candidate is ahead in the run-up to presidential elections.

Paraguay Both public infrastructure spending and private investment will spur economic activity.

Peru Robust investment spending will help to boost economic activity.

Trinidad & Tobago Growth will be driven in the near term by the natural gas sector.

USA The rate cycle has probably peaked, changing the calculus for the US economy.

Uruguay With elections in October 2019, the ruling Broad Front coalition loses ground.

Venezuela President Maduro clings to power as political and insecurity risks remain extremely high.

Western Europe

Austria Growth is set to decelerate due to weaker external conditions.

Belgium	Economic growth slows as uncertainty rises at home and abroad.
Cyprus	The economy recorded strong quarterly growth again in Q4 2018.
Denmark	The central bank has been forced to intervene in the currency markets.
Finland	The government resigns over failed reforms.
France	The credit environment outlook deteriorates amid high debt levels.
Germany	Economic woes persist, with a GDP growth forecast of 0.9% in 2019.
Greece	Greece is to be granted debt relief following the implementation of its reform commitments.
Iceland	Despite faster economic growth, the number of insolvencies increased in 2018.
Ireland	The European Council agrees to delay Brexit until the end of October.
Italy	We have revised down our 2019 growth forecast for Italy.
Luxembourg	An economic slowdown will soften the country's credit expansion.
Malta	Economic growth will slow due to deteriorating external conditions.
Netherlands	The economy loses steam in the first quarter.
Norway	The booming onshore economy will buoy up growth in 2019.
Portugal	Public finances rally.
Spain	Prime Minister Sanchez's Socialist Party could be re-elected.
Sweden	Interest rates look more likely to remain on hold.
Switzerland	Growth forecasts are downgraded again.
Turkey	The AKP fares poorly in the hotly-contested municipal elections.
United Kingdom	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for the UK as Brexit is delayed by several months.