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Weekly Report Romania

6 November 2012





The leu continues to appreciate; The Treasury sells 1.5 bn EUR in 7Y bonds

Macroeconomics: Residential building permits slide further (-8.4% YoY); unemployment remained unchanged 7.1% in September (Page 3-4)

The number of residential building permits has been declining by 8.4% YoY in September which is slightly a higher drop than in August (-8.1% YoY). This is a leading indicator in terms of the business cycle and looking at the 12M rolling data, the downtrend that has started in 2008 does not seem to reverse but it has certainly slowed down and according to national statistics apartments' price has increased in Q1 2012. Looking at a lagging indicator, we notice that the unemployment rate remained unchanged in September at 7.1% (seasonally adjusted data). The figure is much lower compared to December 2011 (7.5%) and there is a visible fall, in line with the slow recovery process.

FX markets: The leu continues to appreciate (Page 5)

The EUR/RON dropped to 4.53 last week as the Central Bank maintains its stance on limiting the liquidity, combined with direct interventions in the FX market. The challenge now is to maintain an optimal mix between capping liquidity (so that the money market rates do not increase dramatically) and the FX interventions (so that it does not bite into the FX reserves too much). Two important events generate risks outside the CB's power of reaction: the evolution of the debt crisis and the coming elections (9th December).

Government securities: The Treasury sold another 1.5 bn EUR in 7Y bonds (Page 6-7)

Yields have seen a moderate decline last week except for the 12M T-bills which saw a decline of 4bp in yield (NBR fixing). Given that the Central Bank announced to maintain a "firm" control of liquidity, money market rates will post an upside pressure which is likely to be transmitted to short end government securities yields as well. Last week, the Treasury managed to sell 1.5 bn EUR of 7Y bonds. The issue was priced at 370 bp over the midswaps and the final accepted yield stood at 5.04%. The yield was seen as being high, given that in September this year Romania sold 750 mn eur of June 2018 bonds at 5.1% and since then the CDS quotations have decreased by roughly 150 bp. Given the succes recorded in raising funds from international markets, the demand side pressure on yields for RON denominated securities has somehow decreased and consequently, the Treasury can afford to sell more bonds to extend the average maturity of the remaining portfolio.

MM: The Central Bank kept the policy rate unchanged; Inflation to fall below 3.5% YoY in H2 2013 (NBR) (Page 8-9)

Last week, the NBR continued to cap the liquidity provided at the weekly repo. The tightening of liquidity seems to be the preferred method of the Central Bank, for fighting leu's depreciation rather than base rate hike. The impact of the liquidity squeeze operated in August was much stronger on lending rates than the change in benchmark: new lending rates in RON jumped from 9.87% in July to 10.76% in September while ROBOR 3M jumped by 40 bp on average. At the Board meeting, the CB maintained the base rate as expected and it announced that the inflation rate will fall in the targeted band in H2 2013, therefore below 3.5% YoY.

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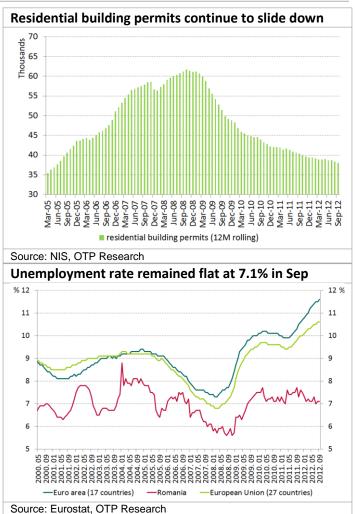


Macroeconomics: Residential building permits slide further (-8.4% YoY); unemployment remained unchanged 7.1% in September

| | PERIOD | INDICATOR | FACT | CONSENSUS | PRIOR |
|--------|--------|---|------|-----------|-------|
| 29 Oct | Sep | Licenses for residential buildings (y-o-y, %) | -8,4 | | -8,1 |
| 31 Oct | Sep | ILO unemployment (%) | 7,1 | | 7,1 |
| 01 Nov | Oct | FX reserves (bn EUR) | 31,8 | | 32,4 |
| 02 Nov | Nov | Base rate decision (%) | 5,25 | 5,25 | 5,25 |
| 02 Nov | Sep | Producer Price Index (YoY, %) | 6,6 | | 7,2 |
| 05 Nov | Sep | Retail trade turnover index (y-o-y, %) | 3,0 | | 4,5 |
| 06 Nov | Sep | Net wage growth rate (y-o-y, %) | 5,1 | | 5,4 |
| 08 Nov | Sep | Households services turnover index (y-o-y, %) | | | -0,5 |
| 08 Nov | Sep | Construction works index (y-o-y, %) | | | 5,1 |
| 09 Nov | Sep | Exports (y-o-y, %) | | | 0,6 |
| 09 Nov | Sep | Imports (y-o-y,%) | | | 3,3 |
| 09 Nov | Sep | Industrial Production Index (y-o-y, %) | | | -1,7 |
| 09 Nov | Sep | Industrial trade turnover index (y-o-y, %) | | | 4,7 |
| 09 Nov | Sep | Index value of new orders in manufacturing (y-o-y, %) | | | -0,1 |

The number of residential building permits has been declining by 8.4% YoY in September which is slightly a higher drop than in August (-8.1% YoY). This is a leading indicator in terms of the business cycle and looking at the 12M rolling data, the downtrend that has started in 2008 does not seem to reverse but it has certainly slowed down and according to national statistics apartments price has increased in Q1 2012. Most of new residential buildings (64%) have been placed in rural areas in the last period. At national level, out of 8.5 mn dwellings, 4.6 mn are in the urban area, but between 2008-2011, less than half of the new ones have been built in urban areas. In those 3 years, the dwellings stock has increased by a mere 139 thousand.

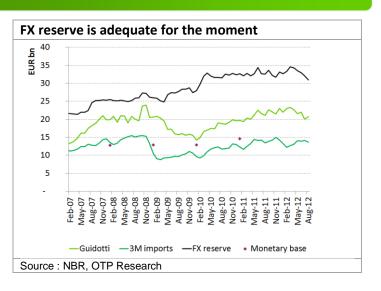
The unemployment rate remained unchanged in September at 7.1% (seasonally adjusted data). The figure is much lower compared to December 2011 (7.5%) and there is a visible fall, in line with the slow recovery process. Long term unemployment (12M or more) stood at 3.1% at the end of Q2 2012, lower than EU average (4.6%). However, the average time of unemployment is higher than EU average. Employment rate is lower than in the EU by 4 percentage points and raising it should be thought as a long term strategy for Romania, as it is one of the most important growth drivers, next to capital stock and productivity. Employment rate has been increasing in the past year from 57.9% (Q4 2011) to 60% in Q2 2012 due to industry and services while in agriculture a drop was recorded.







The FX reserve decreased by 657 mn EUR in October, to 31.8 bn EUR, inflows amounting to 2.3 bn EUR and outflows at 2.9 bn EUR. If we think of rules of thumb by which the adequacy of the reserves is measured, we notice that it is adequate for the moment, as it covers 1.5 times the short term external debt, more than twice the 3M imports and it is 2 times more than NBR's leu denominated liabilities (Dec 2011 last data). Thinking solely to the immediate needs to finance the external debt in the coming years, the FX reserve could come under pressure if the Treasury does not continue to tap international bond markets succesfully. In November, due payments in the account of external debt stand at 1.7 bn EUR. The NBR reported that at December 2011, 71.6% of the reserve was invested in government securities and the FX structure was 76.7% in EUR. Consequently, the reserve modifies also according to the evolution of the price of the bonds cumulated with the impacts coming from the FX movements (23% of the reserve is denominated in other currencies than euro).



Medium-term macroeconomic forecast

| Main macroeconomic indicators | | | Fa | ict | | | Fore | ecast |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
| Real GDP | 7,9% | 6,3% | 7,3% | -6,6% | -1,6% | 2,5% | 0,9% | 1,9% |
| Actual individual consumption of households | 10,6% | 10,5% | 8,9% | -9,1% | -0,3% | 0,7% | 1,7% | 1,8% |
| Households consumption expenditure | 12,9% | 12,0% | 9,0% | -10,4% | -0,4% | 1,4% | 1,8% | 1,8% |
| Government consumption | -11,5% | 2,5% | 6,2% | 9,5% | -10,0% | -3,4% | -0,5% | 1,1% |
| Gross fixed capital formation | 19,9% | 30,3% | 15,6% | -28,1% | -2,1% | 6,3% | 9,9% | 4,6% |
| Exports | 10,4% | 7,8% | 8,3% | -6,4% | 14,0% | 9,9% | 0,0% | 7,1% |
| Imports | 22,6% | 27,3% | 7,9% | -20,5% | 11,9% | 10,5% | 1,3% | 7,1% |
| Consumer prices (avg.) | 6,6% | 4,8% | 7,8% | 5,6% | 6,1% | 5,8% | 3,0% | 4,1% |
| Budget Balance (GDP%, ESA 95) | -2,2% | -2,9% | -5,7% | -9,0% | -6,8% | -5,2% | -3,6% | -3,3% |
| Public debt (GDP %) | 12,4% | 12,8% | 13,4% | 23,6% | 31,0% | 33,3% | 35,0% | 36,6% |
| CA balance (% GDP) | -10,5% | -13,4% | -11,6% | -4,2% | -4,4% | -4,2% | -4,4% | -4,6% |
| CA balance (bn EUR) | -10,2 | -16,8 | -16,2 | -4,9 | -5,5 | -5,7 | -6,1 | -6,6 |
| Jnemployment | 7,3% | 6,4% | 5,8% | 6,9% | 7,3% | 7,4% | 7,1% | 6,9% |
| Nominal wage growth | 18,4% | 21,8% | 26,1% | 4,8% | 3,1% | 6,5%* | 4,5% | 4,4% |
| Real wage growth | 9,0% | 14,7% | 16,5% | -1,5% | -3,7% | 0,5%* | 1,5% | 0,3% |
| Key interest rate (avg.) | 8,6% | 7,5% | 9,7% | 9,1% | 6,5% | 6,2% | 5,33% | 5,25% |
| Key interest rate (e.o.p.) | 8,8% | 7,5% | 10,3% | 8,0% | 6,3% | 6,0% | 5,25% | 5,25% |
| EUR/RON (avg.) | 3,52 | 3,34 | 3,68 | 4,24 | 4,21 | 4,24 | 4,45 | 4,47 |
| EUR/RON (e.o.p.) | 3.38 | 3,61 | 3,99 | 4,23 | 4,28 | 4,32 | 4,50 | 4,43 |

Source: Eurostat, OTP Research

Note: * forecast



FX markets: The leu continues to appreciate

The EUR/RON dropped to 4.53 last week as the Central Bank maintains its stance on limiting the liquidity, combined with direct interventions in the FX market (as stated by the CB governor last week at the press conference following the Board meeting on monetary policy issues). This approach is effective for the moment and the CB managed to convince markets that it will continue whenever leu's volatility will be triggered by factors outside fundamentals. The CB is in a power position now also due to the succes recorded by the Treasury in the past months to raise funds on the international markets and also domestic markets (the euro denominated bonds sold at the end of October). The challenge now is to maintain an optimal mix between capping liquidity (so that the money market rates do not increase dramatically) and the FX interventions (so that it does not bite into the FX reserves too much). In 2013, total payments (interest and principal) due to the IMF are as follows:

| Total payments to the IMF amount to 5.1 bn EUR in 2013 | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|---------|---------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Q1 2013 | Q2 2013 | Q3 2013 | Q4 2013 | | | | | |
| 997 | 1.309 | 1.300 | 1.516 | | | | | |
| Sources: IMF, OTP Research Note: we used the following parity 1 XDR=1,19274 EUR | | | | | | | | |

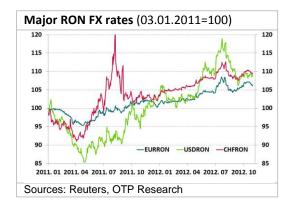
Outside NBR's power of reaction there are two important factors: the evolution of the debt crisis and the coming elections on 9th of December. The tension between the President and the PM has been put to silence lately and it has hurt the ruling coalition popularity. After taking note of international reaction in response to several steps taken by the USL on the occasion of the referendum, the USL coalition regained part of the lost popularity. However, we may witness more power play post elections related to new fiscal measures, which could trigger volatility in the leu, but ultimately, new measures (if any) should fit into the criteria set by the IMF in the stand by agreement.

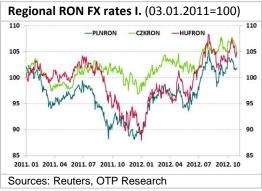
| USL still stro | ng in the polls | | | | |
|------------------|--|--|--|--|--------------|
| DATE | INSTITUTE | USL | ARD | PPDD | UDMR |
| Oct-12 | IMAS | 57.4% | 16.0% | 14.9% | 6.4% |
| | Public Affairs | 52.1% | 21.3% | 11.7% | 6.0% |
| Sep-12 | IMAS | 55.0% | 17.8% | 15.5% | 5.3% |
| Aug-12 | IMAS | 57.1% | 17.8% | 14.1% | 5.8% |
| Aug-12 | IRES | 54.0% | 23.0% | 10.0% | 5.0% |
| Jul-12 Jun-12 | CURS | 63.0% 66.6% | 19.0% 12.7% | 9.0% 9.8% | 6.0% 4.3% |
| PPDD= People' | Social Liberal Uni S Party, UDMR= T Conds to liquid | he Democratic | | | |
| | onus to ilquiu | пу сар | | | |
| 요 430 | | 7, | | | 4,70 |
| 410 | | | h | | 4.65 |
| 390 | | \ \\\\\ | | · | - 4,65 |
| 370 | | <i>\\</i> | -\-\-\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\ | | 4,60 |
| 350 | 1 | | <u> </u> | \ | 4,60 |
| 330 | \ ~ | | / '\ | Many | 4,55 |
| | | J | 1 | \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ | 4,55 |
| 310 | | <u></u> | | | 4,50 |
| 290 | | | ···/···········/////////////////////// | M V V | ., -, - |
| 270 | \\ | | VY | | 4,45 |
| 250 | | | | | |
| 230 | | | | | 4,40 |
| | 7 | 1 | | | |
| 210 | non- | | | 1/5 | 4,35 |
| 190 | ·V | | | V | |
| 170 | | 1 1 1 1 | | | 4,30 |
| 02.01.12 | 30.01.12 13.02.12 27.02.12 12.03.12 26.03.12 09.04.12 | 23.04.12 07.05.12 21.05.12 04.06.12 18.06.12 | 02.07.12 16.07.12 30.07.12 13.08.12 27.08.12 | 10.09.12 24.09.12 08.10.12 22.10.12 | |
| 10. 11. | 0.02 | .00 .00 .00 .00 .00 | 70.07 | 09 09 01 01 11 | |
| 02 | 30 13 27 27 26 09 | 23 27 27 28 28 28 28 | 02 16 30 13 27 | 10 24 25 25 25 25 25 25 25 25 25 25 25 25 25 | |
| | | | R/RON bid (r.h.s) | | |

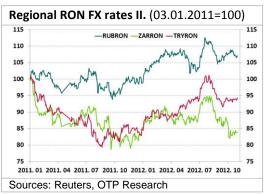
Sources: Reuters, OTP Research

| Last data: 1.11. | 2012 | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----|----------------|----|------------|
| | | F | X BID | | |
| | Value | We | eekly chg. (%) | YT | D chg. (%) |
| EURRON | 4,53 | 1 | -0,62 | 1 | 4,87 |
| USDRON | 3,50 | 1 | -0,72 | 1 | 5,05 |
| CHFRON | 3,76 | 1 | -0,34 | 1 | 5,71 |
| RONJPY | 4,37 | 1 | -0,51 | 1 | 0,87 |
| RONPLN | 1,10 | 1 | 0,15 | ⇧ | 6,54 |
| 100HUFRON | 1,60 | 1 | -1,44 | • | 17,34 |
| RONCZK | 0,18 | 1 | -1,64 | 1 | 6,59 |
| RONRUB | 0,11 | 1 | -0,53 | • | 8,11 |
| RONRSD | 0,04 | 1 | -0,66 | Û | -1,36 |
| DONRON | 2 22 | п | 0.64 | ^ | E 09 |

Source: Reuters





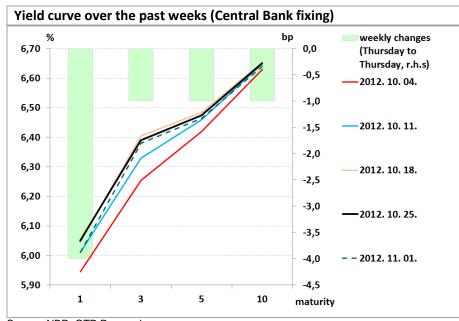




Government securities: The Treasury sold another 1.5 bn EUR in 7Y bonds

Yields have seen a moderate decline last week except for the 12M T-bills which saw a decline of 4bp in yield (NBR fixing). The volumes traded on the secondary market (wihout NBR) were lower for RON denominated securities compared to the previous week as there was no auction held by the Ministry of Finance and the CB keeps limiting the repo injections (for which it requires collateral).

Given that the Central Bank announced to maintain a "firm" control of liquidity, money market rates will post an upside pressure which is likely to be transmitted to short end government securities yields as well.



Source: NBR, OTP Research

Last data: 1.11.2012 Value (%) Weekly chg. (bp) YTD chg. (bp) 5.94 -31 6M 1 -0.5 1 12M 6.01 -4.0 Û -37 -76 3Y 6,38 -1.0 1 5Y 1 -79 6,47 -1,010Y -69 6.64 Value (bp) Weekly chg. (bp) YTD chg. (bp) **GERROM 3Y** 1 -66 621 -10 GERROM 5Y 588 1 -1.01 -62 **GERROM 10Y** 506 J -1.0 Û -45 3Y -5Y 9 4 0.0 Û -2 5Y -10Y 18 10 3Y-10Y 26 0.0 7 FLY 3-5-10 9 0,0 12 Value (bp) Weekly chg. (bp) YTD chg. (bp) 3Y EURO 143 1 -229 -6.45Y EURO -6.6 -201 Source: Reuters Central bank benchmark fixing yields (%) 7,5 7,0 7,0 6,5 6,0 5,0 2011.02 2011.03 2011.03 2011.04 2011.05 2011.05 2011.07 2011.09 2011.10 2011.11 2011.11 Sources: NBR, OTP Research Slope of the yield curve (bp) 60 50 50 _5Y-10Y 40 30 2011. Sources: NBR. OTP Research FLY 3-5-10 (bp) -FLY 3-5-10 -10 2011.05
2011.06
2011.07
2011.08
2011.10
2011.11
2011.11
2011.12 2012.05 2012.03 2012.04 Sources: NBR, OTP Research



Sources: Ministry of Finance, OTP Research



Auctions

Last week, the Treasury managed to sell 1.5 bn EUR of 7Y **bonds.** The issue was priced at 370 bp over the midswaps and the final accepted yield stood at 5.04%. The yield was seen as being high, given that in September this year Romania sold 750 mn eur of June 2018 bonds at 5.1% and since then the CDS quotations have decreased by roughly 150 bp. However, we must add that since 1st November there is an EU ban of "naked" CDS positions. In September and October, many CDS positions have been closed and this has driven down the quotations. Therefore, the 5.04% yield may have not been in fact too high. The issue attracted a wide interest from investors and it was oversubscribed over 3 times, total bids amounting to 4.7 bn EUR. Accroding to Reuters, the geopraphic distribution was as follows: 27% went to Austria and Germany, 23% to UK and 35% to remaining Europe, US and offshore took 10% and Asia& others took 5%. By investor type, 48% went to fund managers, banks and retail took 22 %, insurance and pension funds bought 17% of the issue and hedge funds 13%.

Two rating agencies place Romania in the investment grade category (Moody's and Fitch) while S&P places Romania just below the investment grade category.

This year, Romania sold 2.25 bn USD and another 750 mn EUR. Given the succes recorded in raising funds from international markets, the demand side pressure on yields for RON denominated securities has somehow decreased and consequently, the Treasury can afford to sell more bonds to extend the average maturity of the remaining portfolio. In November, the Ministry of Finance plans to sell 3.6 bn RON out of which, 2 bn RON are planned bonds issues, compared to previous months when the amount planned for bonds was much lower, given the high yields required by banks. According to Ministry of Finance data, the average maturity of RON denominated securities of the remaining portfolio stood at 1.74 years in August from 1.9 years in June and July.

| ISIN | Auctio | on date | Settlement c | Maturity | Months | Indicative target amount (RON) |
|--|--|--|---|---------------|----------------------|--|
| RO1213CTN | 0P5 05.11 | 1.2012 | 07.11.2012 | 06.11.2013 | 12 | 800.000.000 |
| RO1213CTN | 0Q3 12.11 | .2012 | 14.11.2012 | 13.11.2013 | 12 | 800.000.000 |
| Bonds au | uctions | in N | lovemb | er | | |
| | Auction | Settleme | | er Years | Cupon % | Indicative target amount |
| ISIN | Auction | Settleme | nt Maturity | Years | | |
| Bonds au ISIN RO1214DBN068 RO1215DBN073 | Auction 08.11.2012 | Settleme | nt Maturity 12 28.07.2014 | Years 2 | % | (RON) |
| ISIN RO1214DBN068 RO1215DBN073 | Auction 08.11.2012 15.11.2012 | Settleme 12.11.20 19.11.20 | nt Maturity 112 28.07.2014 112 26.10.2015 | Years 2 3 | % 5,85 | (RON) 500.000.000 |
| ISIN RO1214DBN068 RO1215DBN073 RO1214DBN068 | Auction 08.11.2012 15.11.2012 19.11.2012 | 12.11.20 19.11.20 21.11.20 | nt Maturity 12 28.07.2014 12 26.10.2015 112 28.07.2014 | Years 2 3 2 | % 5,85 5,80 | (RON) 500.000.000 300.000.000 |
| ISIN RO1214DBN068 | 08.11.2012 15.11.2012 19.11.2012 22.11.2012 | 12.11.20 19.11.20 21.11.20 26.11.20 | nt Maturity 12 28.07.2014 12 26.10.2015 12 28.07.2014 12 26.07.2017 | Years 2 3 2 5 | 5,85 5,80 5,85 | (RON) 500.000.000 300.000.000 500.000.000 |

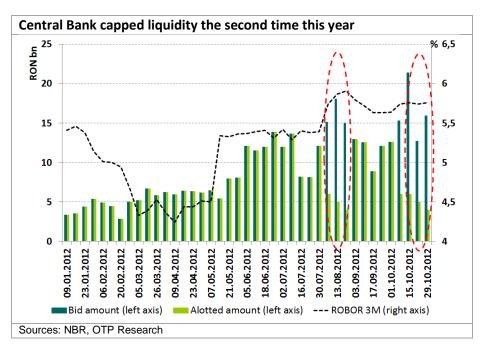


MM: The Central Bank kept the policy rate unchanged; Inflation to fall below 3.5% YoY in H2 2013 (NBR)

Last week, the NBR continued to cap the liquidity provided at the weekly repo. The total allocated amount stood at 4 bn RON while banks asked for 15.9 bn RON, more than the previous time. The tightening of liquidity seems to be the preferred method of the Central Bank, for fighting leu's depreciation rather than base rate hike. For the moment, this resulted in the increase in the ROBOR ON rate from 4.7% on average in September to 5.1% in October. The squeeze was not yet felt in the ROBOR 3M rate (benchmark for loan contracts) yet, if we look at the monthly averages. By comparison, a base rate change managed to modify the level of the ROBOR 3M rate in the first month after the change as well if we look at this year's data.

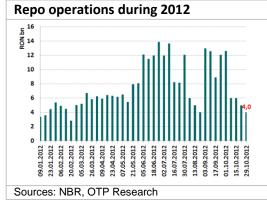
The impact of the first liquidity squeeze was much stronger on lending rates than the change in benchmark: new lending rates in RON jumped from 9.87% in July to 10.76% in September (while ROBOR 3M changed by 40 by on average) and the most affected were the households sector where the jump was close to 1%.

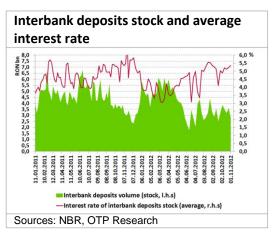
At the Board meeting, the Central Bank maintained the base rate as expected and it announced that according to its revised projection which will be published in the next inflation report, the inflation rate will fall in the targeted band in H2 2013, therefore below 3.5% YoY. The target is tighter next year: 2.5% compared to 3% this year.



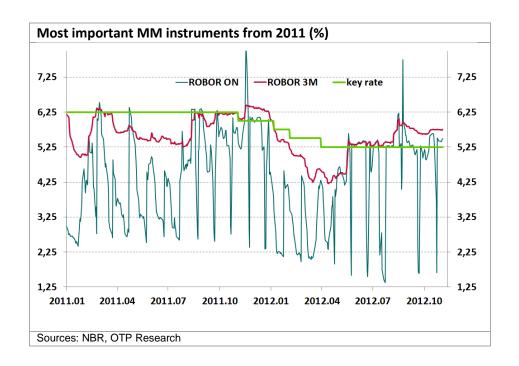
| Last data: 1.1 | 1.2012 | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|--------|----------------|
| | MID IN | ΓER | EST RATES | | |
| | Value (%) | W | eekly chg. (bp) | Υ | TD chg. (bp) |
| repo rate | 5,25 | \Rightarrow | 0 | Û | -75 |
| ROBOR ON | 5,46 | \Rightarrow | 0 | 1 | 93 |
| ROBOR 3M | 5,73 | 1 | -2 | 1 | -32 |
| ROBOR 6M | 6,07 | 1 | -3 | 1 | -46 |
| ROBOR 9M | 6,11 | 1 | -3 | 1 | -50 |
| ROBOR 1Y | 6,14 | 1 | -4 | 1 | -52 |
| | | RE | РО | Jh. J. | |
| | Value (mn RON) | W | ly chg. (mn RON) | YT | D chg. (mn RON |
| repo amount | 3.999,7 | | -1000,2 | - | 2.711,3 |
| | INTERB | ANI | K DEPOSITS | | |
| | Value (mn RON) | W | ly chg. (mn RON) | YT | D chg. (mn RON |
| outstanding | 2.778,3 | | -832,9 | | -1249,2 |
| | MID S | WA | P POINTS | | |
| | Value (bp) | W | eekly chg. (bp) | Y | TD chg. (bp) |
| USDRON 1W | 35 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| USDRON 1M | 156 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 7 |
| USDRON 3M | 398 | 1 | -18 | • | 151 |
| EURRON 1W | 49 | • | 3 | • | 8 |
| EURRON 1M | 204 | 1 | -3 | • | 59 |
| EURRON 3M | 637 | • | 9 | ⇧ | 127 |
| | MID EUF | BA | SIS SWAPS | | |
| | Value (bp) | W | eekly chg. (bp) | Y | TD chg. (bp) |
| EURRON 1Y | -88 | 0 | 0 | • | 68 |
| EURRON 3Y | -88 | \$ | 0 | û | 68 |
| EURRON 5Y | -88 | 0 | 0 | • | 63 |

Source: Reuters









WEEKLY REPORT - ROMANIA



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