



Multi-asset market outlook
Shiny objects, solid returns

February 2026

General overview

Dollar debasement rally continues into the new year

Multi asset	1mo	3mo	YTD	1yr	3yr	5yr
Oil Index (USD)	14.2%	8.7%	14.2%	2.6%	5.7%	17.5%
Gold (USD)	8.8%	18.0%	8.8%	65.8%	33.6%	19.8%
Emerging Markets (LC)	8.8%	9.8%	8.8%	40.6%	18.5%	7.6%
GSCI Commodities (USD)	8.4%	6.2%	8.4%	-0.5%	4.0%	16.2%
Emerging Markets (UH, EUR)	7.5%	6.2%	7.5%	24.8%	13.2%	5.8%
Global real estate (UH, EUR)	3.0%	1.5%	3.0%	-2.5%	4.4%	6.3%
MSCI World local currency	1.7%	2.5%	1.7%	16.4%	19.0%	13.5%
MSCI World (H, EUR)	1.6%	2.1%	1.6%	14.7%	17.4%	11.9%
MSCI World (UH, EUR)	0.9%	0.3%	0.9%	4.5%	15.7%	13.3%
Global high yield (H, EUR)	0.6%	1.5%	0.6%	7.2%	8.2%	2.9%
Global inflation-linked bonds (H, EUR)	0.6%	-0.1%	0.6%	2.0%	0.3%	-2.6%
Global investment grade bonds (H, EUR)	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	4.6%	3.4%	-1.1%
EMD local currency (UH, EUR)	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%	1.4%	3.9%	2.0%
Cash (EUR)	0.2%	0.5%	0.2%	2.2%	3.2%	1.9%
Global Gov Bonds (H, EUR)	-0.1%	-0.7%	-0.1%	1.4%	1.0%	-2.4%
EMD hard currency (UH, EUR)	-0.6%	-1.5%	-0.6%	-2.3%	5.0%	1.8%

Market whiplash at the end of the month

- > Global equities stuttered as the Federal Reserve maintained interest rates at 3.50-3.75%, while the nomination of Kevin Warsh as the next Fed chair sparked a hawkish repricing. Big Tech earnings provided a mixed narrative; Apple's record revenue was overshadowed by Microsoft's increase in AI infrastructure capex.
- > Emerging market equities and debt initially outperformed on a softening greenback, but late-month risk aversion erased those gains, as geopolitical tensions mounted. In fixed income, government bond yields climbed, while credit spreads remained tight, giving some solace to investors.
- > The most dramatic movers were commodities. Oil jumped on increased geopolitical risk in Venezuela and Iran, and gold surged to a record USD 5,625/oz before a brutal liquidation on the last day of month, while silver suffered a staggering 28% one-day crash. Currencies mirrored this turbulence, with the US dollar rebounding.

Source: Robeco, Bloomberg. Returns are in euros.

All market data to 31 January 2026 unless mentioned otherwise

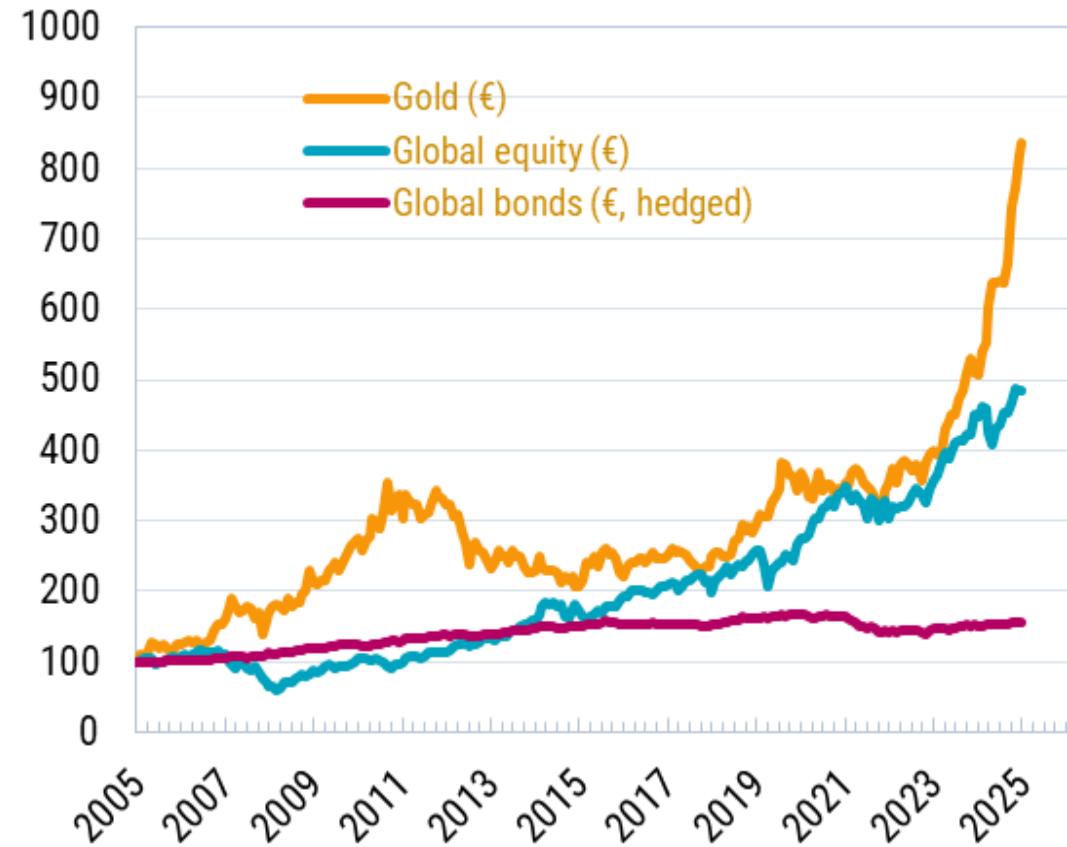
Theme of the month

Shiny objects, solid returns

Commodities in a multi-asset portfolio

- > In September 2024, we provided reasons why gold could be a good long-term investment. After an amazing run of strong returns for shiny objects followed by a headline-grabbing correction, it is a good time to take stock.
- > In September 2025 we raised our return estimate for commodities from 4.75% to 5.25% (in EUR) for two reasons: (1) Increased demand for metals to facilitate electrification, building new infrastructure and for defense spending, and (2) Higher inflation expectations combined with high (US) debt reduces the appeal of traditional safe havens such as US Treasuries.
- > Without any running yield, demand/supply analysis remains key to determining the outlook of an asset class whose intrinsic value is impossible to calculate. The marginal cost of production can put a floor under valuations. For gold and silver this is a long way down, with marginal production cost around USD 1,700 (spot USD 5,000) and USD 20 (spot USD 90) per ounce. Copper has better support, with marginal cost around USD 5/oz versus spot USD 6/oz.

A remarkable world: Gold better than equities over past 20 years



Source: Robeco, Bloomberg

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Theme of the month

The shinier, the better the returns: stay with gold, avoid oil

Risk-return characteristics justify a shiny allocation; avoid the black stuff

- > In the table, we compare the long-term returns of gold, silver, copper and oil. Using our regular framework of return and volatility, commodities (BCOM) have generated a 5.7% return in EUR over the past 50 years.
- > Within this broad category, gold and silver have climbed 7.2% and 6.0% respectively, while oil only rose 3.2%. Gold is the safer commodity, with 17% volatility, while silver and oil are well above 30% volatility. Also, the shiny metals have low correlations with equities and bonds. Copper has generated a 5.2% return at 25% volatility.
- > What silver, oil and copper all have in common is that their returns are more correlated with equities than gold. This makes sense, as they are at least partially more dependent on the state of the global economy.
- > The conclusion for long-term investors is that it makes sense to have a structural allocation in a multi-asset portfolio to a non-yielding asset class like commodities. The shinier the metal, the better the returns. There is little reason to hold non-shiny black oil.

Gold is a great diversifier with a high Sharpe Ratio

50 years in commodities (1976-2025)

	Return in euros	Volatility	Corr. with equity	Sharpe Ratio
Gold	7.2%	17.4%	0.10	0.28
Silver	6.0%	31.7%	0.19	0.23
Oil	3.2%	33.9%	0.18	0.16
Comm	5.7%	15.0%	0.34	0.21
Bonds	5.3%	4.9%	0.10	0.35
Equities	10.2%	14.9%	1.00	0.49

Gold's correlation with bonds was -0.02
Oil and commodities were negative at -0.15 and -0.20 resp.

Source: Robeco, Bloomberg

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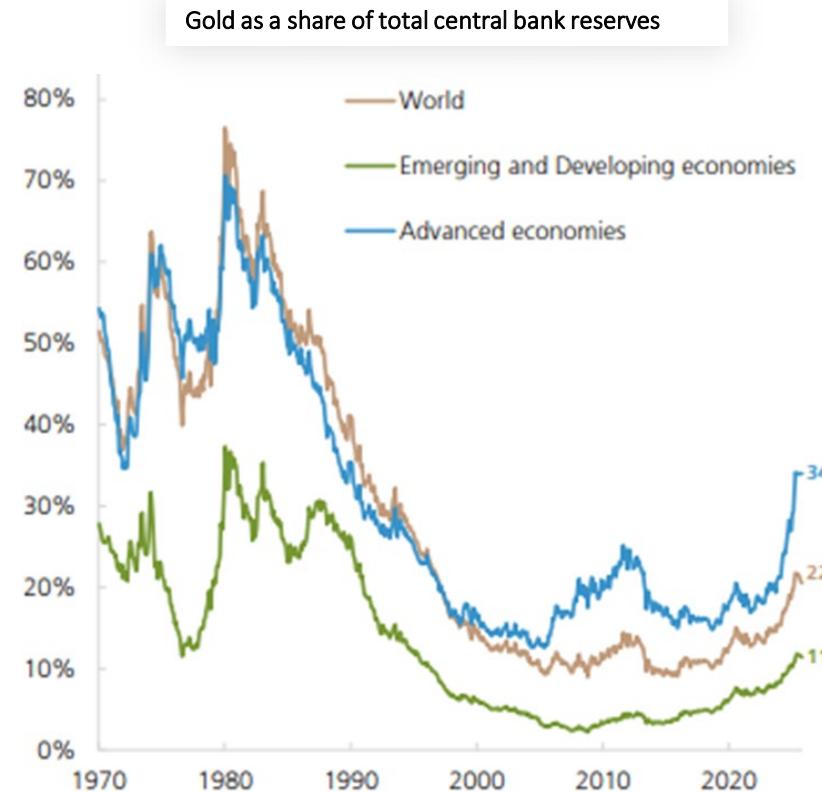
Theme of the month

Gold: Central banks have been buyers but can turn sellers

2026: No debasement but central bank sales are a risk

- > Worries about the Fed's independence have faded, taking out some of the marginal buyers who believed the financial system, as we know it, was coming to an end. We don't see a return of the Gold Standard.
- > Central banks have been buyers since 2009 and now hold 17% of all the world's gold. The US holds 80% of its forex reserves in gold and holds 4% of all gold. Overall, central banks have seen gold as a percentage of forex reserves go from 10% to more than 30% over the past decade, and many emerging market banks that still own relatively little gold have been buying for over a decade now.
- > What if a Western central bank decided to test the waters and started to sell some of its ballooning reserves of gold? The question here is what would be the alternative, especially given the current bullying coming from the US, which means it is hard to see a European central bank turn around and switch gold into US Treasuries.
- > Conversely, Trump – never afraid of launching controversial ideas – could use a revaluation of US gold (held by the Treasury) as a quick way to artificially wash away poor debt dynamics.

Central banks are overallocated: Back to the Gold Standard?



Source: Bloomberg, UBS (end 2025)

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Theme of the month

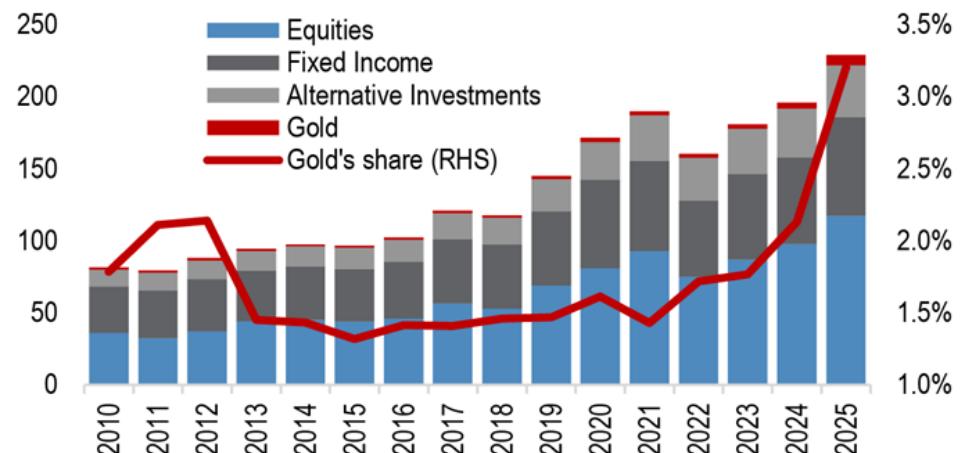
Retail infatuation with shiny objects bears risk

Retail buyers can do more but we are cautious near-term

- > For retail investors, it is remarkable that exposure remains low at an estimated 3.5% because many multi-asset portfolios have no allocation to commodities and have stuck to the 60% equities and 40% bond allocation that has worked so well in the early part of this century.
- > In 2025, gold prices have been driven exponentially higher by (Chinese) momentum traders, and a shakeout like the one seen in late January was inevitable. With more weak holders lured by the siren song of shiny objects, there is a fair chance of more selling in 2026. At current prices with a bullish consensus, profit taking makes sense.

The siren song of glitter and momentum

Gold holdings of private investors as % of stock of total financial assets

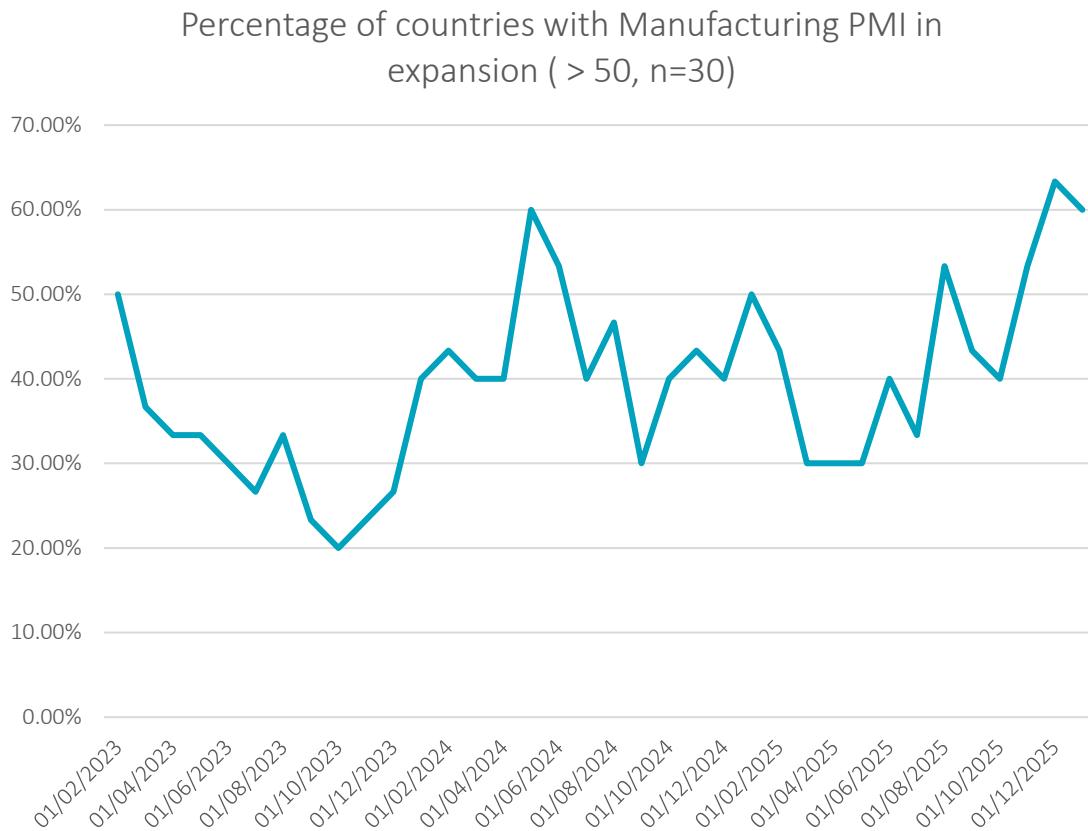


Source: JP Morgan

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Green shoots for the 'synchronized shift'

More countries are showing an expanding manufacturing sector



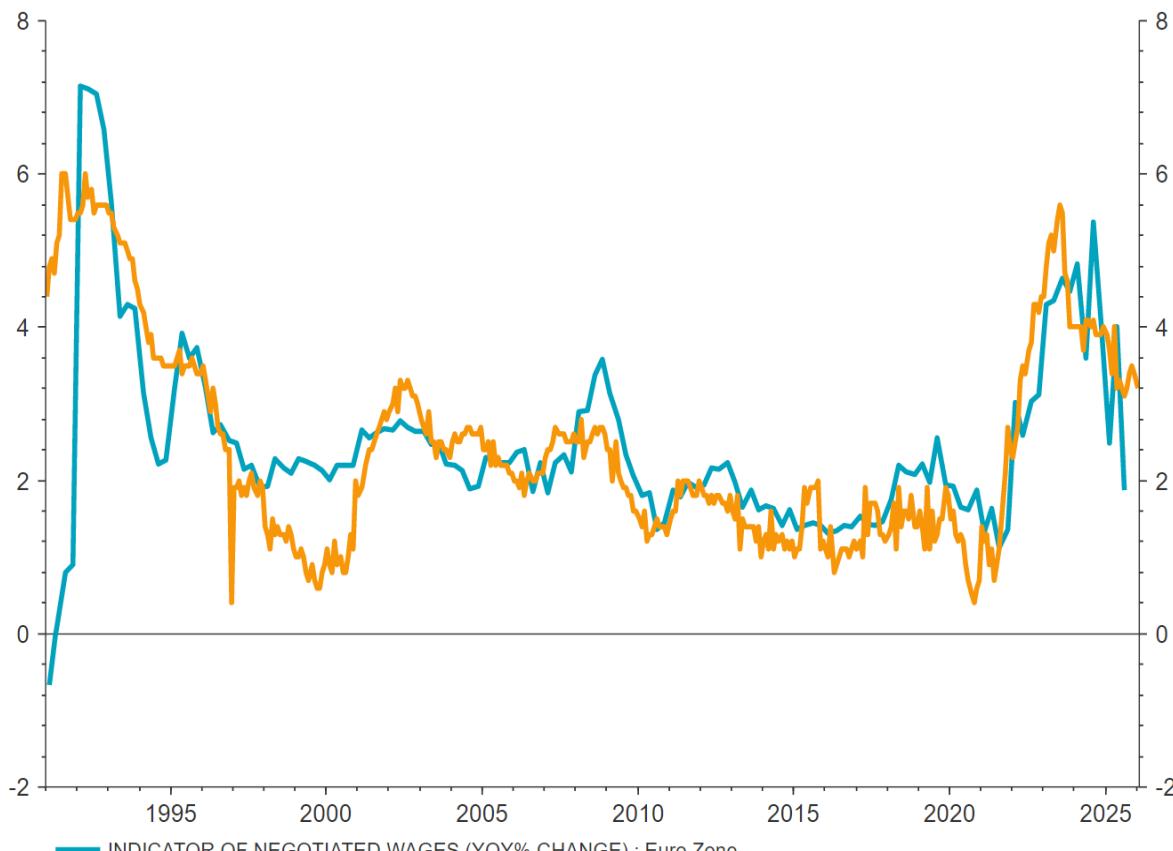
Green shoots for the 'synchronized shift'

- > In our 2026 outlook base case, formulated last November, we expected to see a 'synchronized shift'; a global cyclical upswing bearing similarities with 2017, when 80% of G20 economies enjoyed accelerating expansion.
- > So far, there have been nascent signs of broadening economic growth. The percentage of countries with a Manufacturing PMI crossing the 50 threshold (signaling expansion) accelerated from 40% to above 60% in the past few months.
- > A pick-up in industrial activity was not only evidenced by the ISM Manufacturing PMI jumping from 47.9 to 52.6, but also a surge in the new orders index. In further evidence, copper and other industrial metals had a very strong start to the year.
- > Looking ahead, we expect the lagged effect of past easing, a gradual rollout of defense spending in Europe, fading tariff policy uncertainty, lower energy prices and tax rebates under the US OBBBA to support a sustained expansion in developed markets.

Source: LSEG Datastream, Robeco. All market data to 31 January 2026 unless mentioned otherwise.

Shifting monetary sands

Wage growth moderation brings near-term Eurozone services disinflation



Source: Robeco. All market data to 31 December 2025 unless mentioned otherwise

Kevin Warsh nominated as new Fed chair; a Fed overhaul?

- The start of 2026 was marked by the important nomination of the new Fed chair by President Trump, Kevin Warsh. While Warsh is viewed as hawkish on inflation, saying “inflation is a choice”, and is a proponent of balance sheet reduction, he might prove to be more pragmatic on the latter. His potential appointment now awaits Senate approval.
- After succeeding Powell in May, the Fed will likely deliver another two rate cuts in 2026. This will see the Fed end up at the lower end of the neutral policy band, running the US economy hot.
- While Warsh expects a productivity boom to create disinflation and discard the Phillips curve framework, any future disappointments concerning the magnitude of an AI-driven supply side boost for the US economy would risk the Fed starting to lag further behind the curve.
- The ECB and BoE kept rates on hold. While the ECB did discuss euro strength as a source of disinflation (January CPI came in below the 2% ECB target at 1.7%), it did not express concern. At the margin, this lowers the risk of another ECB cut into a cyclical expansion in 2026.

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