



# J. Safra Sarasin Cross-Asset Weekly

29 November 2024

## Fiscal concerns on both sides of the Atlantic

Fiscal concerns have become even more prominent for investors following the Republican Sweep, which has heightened worries about unsustainable debt dynamics and rising bond yields in the US. To address these concerns, Donald Trump has tasked Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy with leading the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), aiming at reducing bureaucracy and federal spending. That said, extending the 2017 tax cuts alone could add \$5.3 trillion to the deficit over a decade. Efficiency gains together with tariffs would likely provide only a partial offset. Without deeper reforms to mandatory programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security – politically unpalatable moves – public finances are likely to worsen. Still, the true potential of DOGE lies in its ability to speed up the diffusion of cutting-edge technologies.

Over in Europe, the French minority government finds itself without a majority to push through its 2025 budget. Worse still, it could be toppled already next week through a no-confidence vote, opening the prospect for a longer period of uncertainty. Even if the government survives, it will remain inherently unstable. Therefore, it will be difficult to push through the necessary fiscal adjustment and forward-looking structural reforms to get France back on a sustainable debt path. Even if spreads on French government bonds have widened, they still do not offer compelling value.

Finally, we take stock of the equity market moves since the US election and review our sector and style preferences. US banks, which have been the best-performing industry since election day are starting to look expensive. Cyclical look more than fully priced for the recent recovery in US macro data, making the defensive end of the market more appealing, in our view. Lastly, due to a constructive economic outlook, value is well positioned to outperform growth in 2025, for the first time since 2022.

## This week's highlights

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## US macro

### DOGE – all bark and no bite?

**Donald Trump has tasked Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy with leading the Department of Government Efficiency, aiming to reduce bureaucracy and federal spending. While investors hope their efforts will spur growth, extending the 2017 tax cuts alone could add \$5.3 trillion to the deficit over a decade, with probably limited offsets from tariffs and efficiency gains. Without deeper reforms to mandatory programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security – politically unpalatable moves – public finances are likely to worsen, leaving discretionary spending further squeezed as mandatory outlays and interest payments rise. Still, the true potential of DOGE lies in its ability to speed up the diffusion of cutting-edge technologies.**

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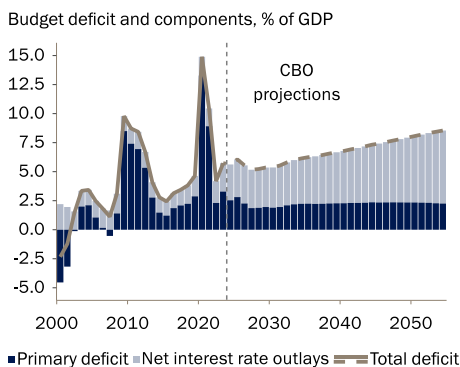
#### High hopes that DOGE will help reduce the deficit and lead to faster productivity growth

Donald Trump has appointed Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy, two prominent tech entrepreneurs, to lead the newly created Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). Despite its formal name, this "department" is an advisory body operating outside the federal government (raising concerns over potential conflicts of interest). Its stated mission is to "dismantle bureaucracy, slash excess regulations, cut wasteful spending, and restructure federal agencies". Investors appear cautiously optimistic. Many anticipate that aggressive deregulation and tax cuts could spur real economic growth, while reduced government spending might prevent fiscal recklessness. However, any meaningful impact on the deficit would require substantial reductions in mandatory spending—something Congress will probably struggle to support.

#### Promises meet fiscal reality

The budget deficit reached around 6.5% of GDP in 2024. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects that, under current laws, the deficit will remain, on average, at similar levels over the next decade, driving the debt-to-GDP ratio onto an unsustainable trajectory. The campaign's tax-cutting promises risk exacerbating the fiscal situation. According to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (CRFB), keeping these promises would push the deficit to 8.5% of GDP on average over the next decade, with a worst-case scenario of exceeding 10%. Extending the 2017 tax cuts alone – something that Congress will almost certainly do – would add \$5.3 trillion to the deficit over the next ten years, or roughly 1.5 percentage points of GDP annually. Proposed offsets, such as universal tariffs and reduced green subsidies, would cover only a fraction of this cost, especially if tariffs are wielded more for negotiation leverage than revenue generation (Exhibits 1-4).

#### Exhibit 1: Deficit is on an upward trajectory



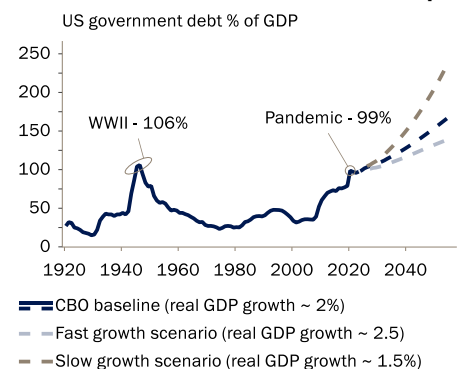
Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 28.11.2024

#### Exhibit 2: Deficit under different scenarios

Budget deficit % GDP:	CBO baseline	With Trump's campaign promises	Excluding tariffs revenue
2026	6	6.9	7.8
2027	5.5	7.5	8.4
2028	5.9	7.9	8.7
2029	5.7	7.8	8.6
2030	6.2	8.4	9.2
2031	6.2	8.4	9.2
2032	6.5	8.8	9.5
2033	7.1	9.6	10.3
2034	6.9	9.6	10.3
2035	7	9.8	10.4
Average	6.3	8.5	9.2

Source: CRFB, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 28.11.2024

#### Exhibit 3: Gov. debt on a unsustainable path



Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 28.11.2024

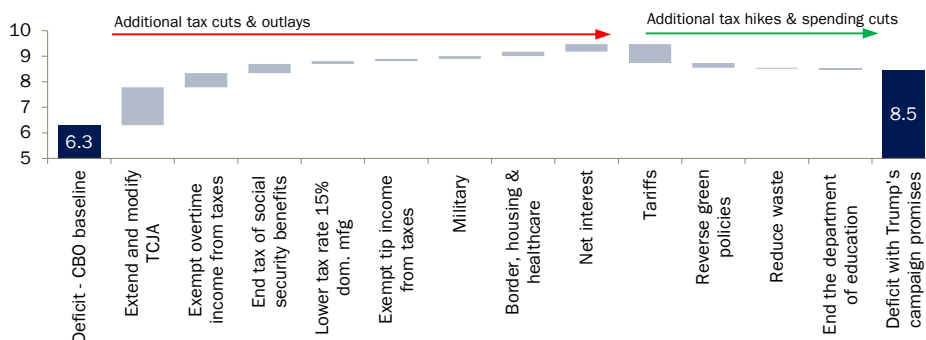


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## Exhibit 4: Trump has offered many tax cuts but not many ways to finance them

Impact of Trump's proposals on budget deficit compared to CBO baseline, % GDP, FY 2026 - FY 2035



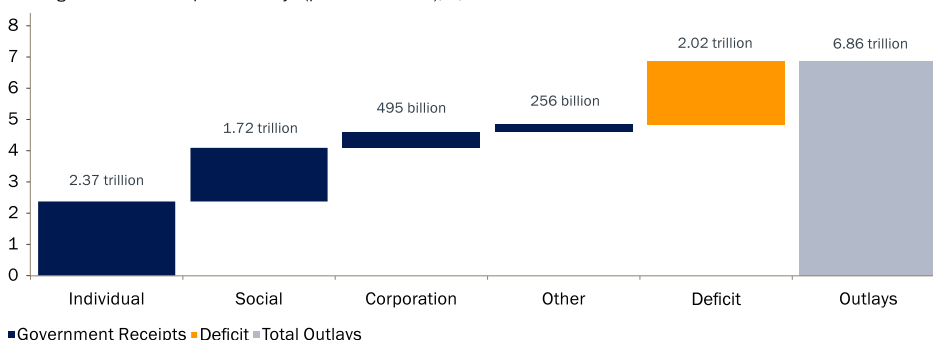
Source: Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (CRFB), Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 25.11.2024

### Can DOGE deliver?

Elon Musk has suggested that DOGE could save as much as \$2 trillion from the \$7 trillion annual federal budget, enough to eliminate the deficit entirely (Exhibit 4). While this figure is unrealistic, even a credible plan to save \$300 billion annually would be a noteworthy achievement, partially offsetting the cost of extending the 2017 tax cuts. Numerous think tanks have long identified feasible paths to achieve such savings without harming the economy or households. Yet these proposals have consistently failed to gain traction in Congress.

## Exhibit 4: \$2tn amounts to the entire Federal government's deficit

US government receipts vs outlays (past 12 months), \$, trillion



Source: CBO, Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 26.11.2024

### Mandatory programs which are on auto pilot account for the bulk of government spending

To understand why, consider the composition of federal spending. It falls into three categories: mandatory spending, discretionary spending, and interest payments. The first one is pre-determined by laws and operated largely independently of the annual budget process. The second one is decided and adjusted annually through the appropriations process, giving Congress more control over these expenditures. Net interest rate payments are obviously largely out of the government's control, beyond its ability to rein in deficits. Mandatory spending accounts for around 60% of total expenditures. Of this, health programs (Medicare and Medicaid) and Social Security together make up about 70%, with each representing roughly an equal share. Net interest on the debt adds another 15%. That leaves only 25% of the budget for discretionary spending, which is roughly split between defence and non-defence programs (Exhibit 5).

### Net interest payments will rise significantly over the next decades

The CBO projects that the share of spending on health programs and interest payments will rise significantly in the coming decades, driven by an ageing population and growing

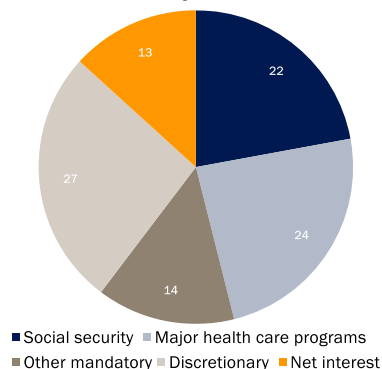


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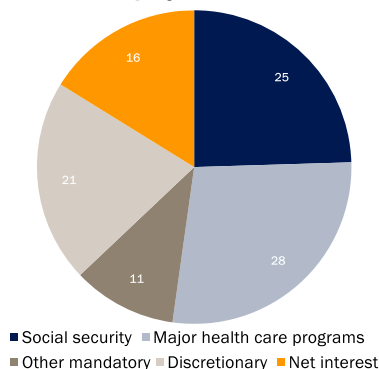
debt. By 2035, discretionary spending is expected to shrink to a fifth of the budget, leaving even less room for manoeuvre (Exhibit 6-7).

**Exhibit 5: 2024 outlays as % of total**



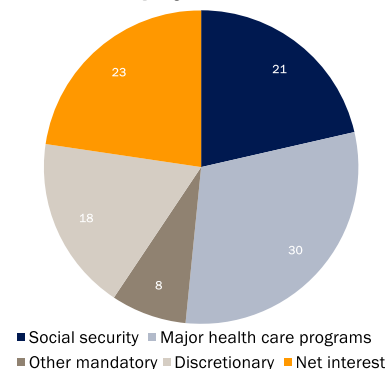
Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 26.11.2024

**Exhibit 6: CBO's projections for 2035**



Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 26.11.2024

**Exhibit 7: CBO's projections for 2053**



Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 26.11.2024

## Reforming the bureaucracy will help but can only be part of the solution

Musk and Ramaswamy have floated ideas such as automating government services to reduce payroll costs. But salaries and benefits for federal employees amount to about \$380 billion annually – only a small fraction of total spending. Cutting red tape and reducing waste might yield modest savings, but they will not cover the cost of extending the 2017 tax cuts, let alone stabilise public finances.

## Changing access to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security is essential to rein in spending but is unlikely to happen

Substantial reforms of mandatory programs, especially Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, is the only viable way to reduce spending. For example, [the Wharton Budget Model](#) shows that gradually raising the full Social Security retirement age and Medicare eligibility age from 67 to 70 over the next decade could reduce annual spending by 1.5% over the next 30 years. Such changes could boost national savings, increase the capital stock and raise wages, benefiting most age groups and income levels. Yet these reforms remain politically toxic, given their unpopularity with voters.

## The Treasury's tightrope

Scott Bessent, nominated as Treasury Secretary, has called for reducing the deficit to 3% of GDP by 2028. Achieving this would require far deeper spending cuts than outlined—particularly if the 2017 tax cuts are extended. Such austerity measures were conspicuously absent from Trump's campaign rhetoric and would likely provoke a voter backlash in the midterms. More plausibly, spending cuts proposed by DOGE, coupled with reduced green subsidies and modest tariff revenue, might only partially offset the cost of extending the 2017 tax cuts. The likely outcome is some further widening of the deficit. This also means that meaningful further tax cuts are improbable, as even some Republicans are likely to balk at measures that would significantly worsen the nation's already precarious fiscal position.

## DOGE is unlikely to result in much lower government spending but could speed up the diffusion of cutting-edge technologies

The true potential of DOGE lies in its ability to transform the machinery of government, from drug regulation to military procurement. Reforms in these areas could accelerate the adoption and spread of cutting-edge technologies, driving productivity growth. Achieving this would mark a significant success in its own right.



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## Euro area fixed income

### French government already close to the brink

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**Unsurprisingly, the French minority government finds itself without a majority to push through its 2025 budget. Worse still, it could be toppled in the coming weeks through a no-confidence vote, opening the prospect for a longer period of uncertainty, before new elections can be called (June 2025 at the earliest). Even if the current government survives, it will remain inherently unstable, making it very difficult to push through necessary fiscal adjustment and forward-looking structural reforms. Although spreads on French OATs have widened, they do not offer compelling value here.**

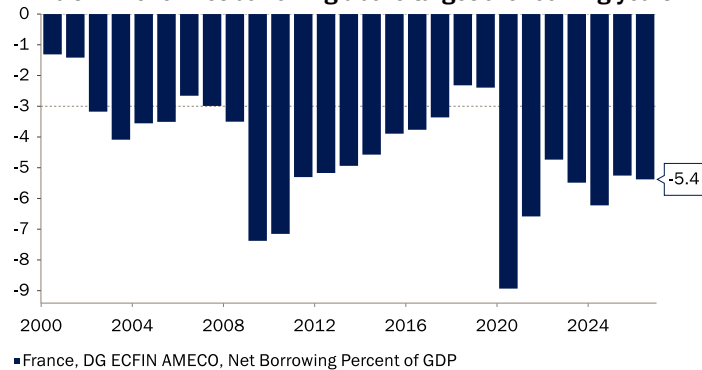
#### The 2025 budget proves to be a major stumbling block for the new French government

It is not all that unexpected. Christian Barnier's centrist minority government, which was only formed in September, finds itself without a majority to push through its 2025 budget by the end of the year. The budget proposal is looking for EUR 60bn of fiscal adjustments in order to bring France's public finances on a more sustainable trajectory. The far-right Rassemblement National (RN) has so far tolerated the government. But its president Marine Le Pen has objected to the deficit reduction plans and, together with the left, has threatened to support a no-confidence vote against the current government should it invoke Section 3 of Article 49 of the French Constitution. The '49.3' allows the government to force passage of a law without a vote.

#### The new fiscal adjustments consist of spending cuts and tax hikes

Barnier's budget proposal essentially consists of 40bn of spending cuts across all ministries and 20bn worth of "exceptional and temporary tax hikes". The overall budgetary adjustment would reduce the 2025 fiscal deficit to about 5% from more than 6% this year, but would lead to deficits significantly above 3% for 2024-28 (Exhibit 1). Planned job reductions in the education sector, the delay to the inflation adjustment for pensions and a halt to reimbursements of patients for certain drugs are the most contentious. The tax increases for private individuals will be limited in time and will mainly concern high incomes earners. The planned increase in the electricity tax that was specifically singled out by Marine Le Pen has already been cancelled as a concession to the RN. On the corporate side, more than four hundred of the biggest corporations that have a turnover of more than EUR 1bn will be subject to a 20% corporate tax, that will be reduced after 2025.

**Exhibit 1: French net borrowing above target over coming years**



Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 27.11.2024

**Exhibit 2: French yield spread to Germany has risen further**



Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 27.11.2024



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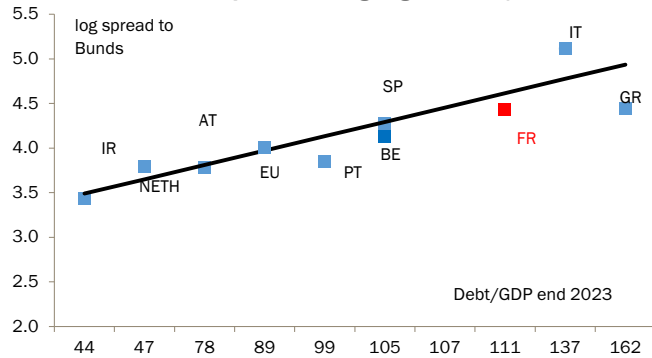
**The current budget will not go through without more watering down. In the worst case, the government could fall already next week**

The current budget is an attempt to square the circle given that the government is dependent on support from either the far-right or far-left. The budget proposal was therefore not very ambitious and probably too optimistic in its assumptions to begin with. But even so, it will likely not go through without more watering down under the current parliamentary set-up. In the worst case, the current government could fall already next week, without agreement on a new budget. In that case, the current government would immediately be reduced to a caretaker government and would only be able to conduct day-to-day business. Therefore, a longer period of uncertainty would likely follow, before new elections can be called (June 2025 at the earliest). During this period, no meaningful legislation and hence no fiscal adjustment would likely take place. This would be the worst-case scenario for French assets and would likely push up their risk premia significantly.

**Current uncertainty is reflected in increasing risk premia for French assets**

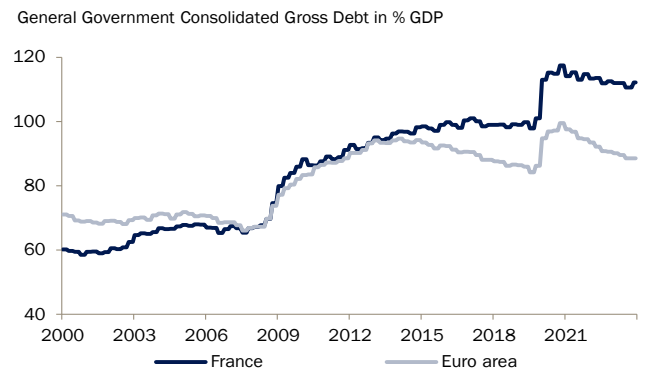
This uncertainty is already reflected in increasing risk premia for French assets, French government bonds in particular. The spread of 10-year French OATs to Germany has widened to 85bp, though it still doesn't look very generous given France's high debt/GDP ratio (Exhibits 2, 3). Absent a visible effort to consolidate government finances, the debt to GDP ratio would diverge even more from the euro area average (Exhibit 4). Therefore, the pressure on French government bonds is unlikely to disappear, with the risk of a further increase in relative borrowing costs. The ECB is unlikely to offer support in case French bond spreads increase further. While the ECB is equipped with policy instruments to intervene in bond markets, it would require a serious effort to adhere to EU fiscal rules.

**Exhibit 3: OAT-Bund spread still tight given debt/GDP ratio**



Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 27.11.2024

**Exhibit 4: French debt/GDP ratio materially worse than EA average**



Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 27.11.2024

**Worst case still avoidable**

The worst outcome of a falling government can still be avoided. The RN could end up supporting the government after all: (1) In her comments after the first meeting with Barnier, Marine Le Pen mentioned other areas where she wants to extract concessions from the government, namely the upcoming immigration law and electoral reform. To get those concessions, the current government needs to remain in place. (2) There is still room for negotiations about details of the state and social security budgets to make it more palatable for the RN. While the planned increase in the electricity tax has now been taken off the table, negotiations with regard to the delay to inflation adjustment for pensions, the reimbursement for certain drugs and a proposal relating to corporate tax relief are ongoing.

**French OATs do not offer compelling value**

That said, it will be very difficult to push through the necessary fiscal adjustment and forward-looking structural reforms with the current composition of parliament. Even if the current government survives, the OAT-Bund spread might not tighten meaningfully as the government will remain inherently unstable and event risks will be high. In case the government were to fall, the French bond spread could move meaningfully higher. So for now, French OATs do not offer compelling value.



# J. Safra Sarasin

## Cross-Asset Weekly

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### Global equities

## Taking stock of the Trump trades

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**We take stock of market moves since the US election and review our sector and style preferences. US banks, which have been the best-performing industry since election day are starting to look expensive. Their valuations have recovered back to typical cycle peaks, suggesting more limited upside in the coming weeks. Cyclical have extended their outperformance vs defensives by another 3% since election day. They are more than fully priced for the recent recovery in US macro data, making the defensive end of the market look more appealing, in our view. Lastly, we re-iterate our preference for value over growth stocks, which have both seen similar gains since election day. A constructive economic outlook coupled with challenging valuations of global growth stocks puts value in a decent spot to outperform growth in 2025, for the first time since 2022.**

#### Markets piled into Trump trades after the election

The sea change the presidential election may bring to US and global politics could be observed in markets since November 6. A sharp rotation into assets which are being perceived as Trump policy winners stands in contrast to assets which are deemed to be losers of his policy agenda. Since election day, the highest returns could be observed in the fringes of the market, where earnings don't matter or don't exist. Tesla and Bitcoin have been among the biggest beneficiaries over recent weeks. As a result, Tesla's PE has risen to almost 100x 12-month forward earnings, while Bitcoin has touched a new all-time high, which is almost 50% above its previous peak (Exhibit 1).

#### US banks and small caps among major beneficiaries from Trump policies

More fundamentals-based has been the move in US banks, which have gained almost 15% since election day, more than any other US industry. Less regulation, more moderate capital requirements and a more inflationary macro environment are expected to boost their earnings over the coming years. US small cap performance also stands out, delivering almost double the return of the S&P 500 since election day. Small caps are set to be key winners from potential corporate tax cuts while they are also less affected by the potential introduction of additional tariffs, given their domestic sales and cost footprint.

#### Health care and non-US equities took a hit due to cabinet candidates and tariff risks

Other sectors and regions did not fare as well. Health care for example, took a hit after the president-elect announced his nomination for the health secretary, an outspoken vaccine sceptic. Equities outside the US also had a much harder time, as they are the prime target of US tariffs. This has been visible in the euro area, where equities declined by 2% since the election and in emerging markets, where the MSCI EM dropped by 5% over recent weeks. The appreciation in the US dollar certainly did not help in this regard, adding further pressure on EM equities and currencies.

We think the first chapter of this post-election rotation is coming to an end and it is time to reassess.

#### Banks are looking expensive after rally

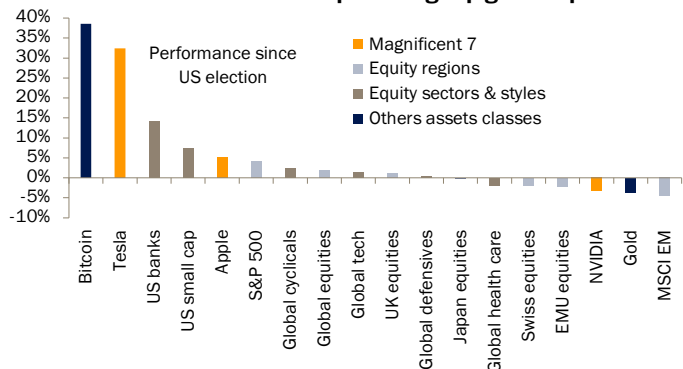
We had communicated before the election that the banking sector would be one of the biggest beneficiaries of a potential Trump presidency and upgraded financials to most preferred on the back of the election result. The performance since election day has largely reflected this view. While the sector is in a much better place than before COVID, given structurally higher yields and the corresponding steady stream of interest income, the fact that US banks are now trading at previous valuation peaks makes us more cautious on the sector in the short-term (Exhibit 2).



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**Exhibit 1: US banks and small caps among top gainers post-election**



Source: LSEG, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 27.11.2024

**Exhibit 2: US banks price-to-book ratio back at 10-year highs**

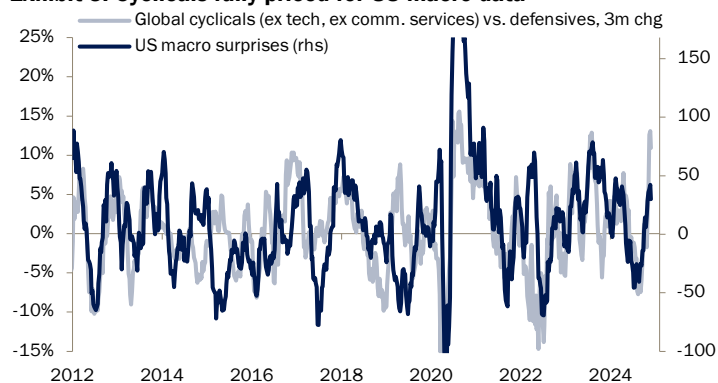


Source: LSEG, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 27.11.2024

## Defensives looking attractive vs cyclicals after cyclical rally over recent months

We had also neutralised our cyclicals vs defensives preference at the beginning of November. This was less of a reaction to the election outcome, but rather based on the fact that i) cyclicals had already outperformed by around 10% from the beginning of September until the beginning of November and ii) cyclicals vs defensives were largely priced for the rebound in macro momentum. Global cyclicals have outperformed defensives by another 3% since election day and extended their gap to the levels implied by US macro surprises (Exhibit 3). While the US cycle is likely to hold up in 2025, a further sharp rise in macro surprises is unlikely, which would be required for further cyclicals outperformance (Exhibit 4). Short-term upside for cyclicals vs defensives thus appears limited, with defensive looking increasingly attractive.

**Exhibit 3: Cyclicals fully priced for US macro data**



Source: LSEG, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 27.11.2024

**Exhibit 4: Unlikely to see better US macro surprises in near term**



Source: LSEG, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 27.11.2024

## We reiterate medium-term preference for value over growth

Lastly, we reiterate our preference for value over growth, which has a structural component to it. A more inflationary policy stance, coupled with challenging valuations for growth stocks and an increasing focus on AI end-consumer capitalisation, suggest that 2025 could be the first year since 2022 in which value outperforms growth.





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## Economic Calendar

### Week of 02/12 – 06/12/2024

Country	Time	Item	Date	Unit	Consensus Forecast	Prev.
<b>Monday, 02.12.2024</b>						
US	16:00	ISM Manufacturing	Nov	Index	48.00	46.50
	16:00	ISM New Orders	Nov	Index	--	47.10
<b>Tuesday, 03.12.2024</b>						
US	16:00	JOLTS Job Openings	Oct	1'000	--	7443k
<b>Wednesday, 04.12.2024</b>						
EU	11:00	PPI MoM	Oct	mom	---	0.60%
	11:00	PPI YoY	Oct	yoy	--	-3.40%
US	16:00	ISM Services Index	Nov	Index	55.40	56.00
	16:00	ISM Services Employment	Nov	Index	--	53.00
	20:00	Federal Reserve Beige Book				
<b>Thursday, 05.12.2024</b>						
EU	11:00	Retail Sales MoM	Oct	mom	--	0.50%
	11:00	Retail Sales YoY	Oct	yoy	--	2.90%
US	14:30	Initial Jobless Claims	Nov30	1'000	--	213k
	14:30	Continuing Claims	Nov23	1'000	--	1097k
<b>Friday, 06.12.2024</b>						
US	14:30	Change in Nonfarm Payrolls	Nov	1'000	190k	12k
	14:30	Change in Private Payrolls	Nov	1'000	200k	-28k
	14:30	Change in Manufact. Payrolls	Nov	1'000	30k	-46k
	16:00	U. of Mich. Expectations	Nov	Index	--	76.90
	16:00	U. of Mich. 5-10 Yr Inflation	Nov	%	--	3.20%

Source: Bloomberg, J. Safra Sarasin as of 28.11.2024



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### Market Performance

#### Global Markets in Local Currencies

<b>Government Bonds</b>	<b>Current value</b>	<b>Δ 1W (bp)</b>	<b>Δ YTD (bp)</b>	<b>TR YTD in %</b>
Swiss Eidgenosse 10 year (%)	0.31	-5	-39	4.0
German Bund 10 year (%)	2.13	-12	10	1.5
UK Gilt 10 year (%)	4.28	-19	74	-1.5
US Treasury 10 year (%)	4.22	-18	34	1.4
French OAT - Bund, spread (bp)	82	2	28	
Italian BTP - Bund, spread (bp)	122	-4	-46	

<b>Stock Markets</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>P/E ratio</b>	<b>1W TR in %</b>	<b>TR YTD in %</b>
SMI - Switzerland	11'710	17.9	1.0	8.6
DAX - Germany	19'426	14.8	1.5	16.0
MSCI Italy	1'064	9.7	-0.3	11.1
IBEX - Spain	11'611	11.0	0.1	20.0
DJ Euro Stoxx 50 - Eurozone	4'759	14.0	0.1	8.7
MSCI UK	2'363	12.2	1.6	10.8
S&P 500 - USA	5'999	25.4	1.4	27.3
Nasdaq 100 - USA	20'744	32.8	0.4	24.2
MSCI Emerging Markets	1'080	13.5	-0.5	8.2

<b>Forex - Crossrates</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>3M implied volatility</b>	<b>1W in %</b>	<b>YTD in %</b>
USD-CHF	0.88	7.5	-1.4	4.7
EUR-CHF	0.93	6.1	0.1	0.3
GBP-CHF	1.12	7.1	0.0	4.6
EUR-USD	1.06	7.9	1.5	-4.2
GBP-USD	1.27	7.9	1.5	-0.1
USD-JPY	150.0	11.2	-3.1	6.4
EUR-GBP	0.83	4.9	0.0	-4.1
EUR-SEK	11.52	6.0	0.2	3.4
EUR-NOK	11.65	7.6	1.0	3.8

<b>Commodities</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>3M realised volatility</b>	<b>1W in %</b>	<b>YTD in %</b>
Bloomberg Commodity Index	98	13.1	-0.1	-0.2
Brent crude oil - USD / barrel	74	27.2	-1.9	-5.0
Gold bullion - USD / Troy ounce	2'665	21.5	-0.2	29.2

Source: J. Safra Sarasin, Bloomberg as of 28.11.2024



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