# Market Pulse April 2025

## **Equity Market Outlook**

The FTSE MPF All World Index lost 3.7% in March. The first quarter of 2025 has been a turbulent period for investors, marked by a confluence of economic, geopolitical, and market challenges in the United States. Escalating global tensions and President Donald Trump's trade tariffs have increased the risk of stagflation for the world's largest economy, which may then affect global growth. In February, the J.P.Morgan Global Composite Purchasing Managers' Index fell to 51.5 from 51.8 a month ago.

## North America

In March, the Standard and Poor's 500 Index ended the month with 5.8% loss. The Consumer Discretionary Sub-index plummeted by 9%. Both sets of consumer sentiment indicators complied by University of Chicago and Conference Board in March were weaker than market expectation, raising concern that American consumers may start tightening their purse string.

Technology sector was also under heavy selling pressure with the Nasdaq Composite Index down by more than 8% in March. The equity market faced significant volatility amid ongoing trade tensions and geopolitical uncertainties. The lack of clarity on tariff implementation, negotiations, and potential escalation or exemptions have heightened investor uncertainty.

## **Europe**

The Euro Stoxx Index went down by 3.1% in March. Germany's fiscal stimulus, increased European Union defense spending, and post-election policy changes are cushioning the impact of the trade tensions with the United States. At the March policy meeting, the European Central Bank cut the three key policy interest rates by another 25 basis points and said its monetary policy is becoming meaningfully less restrictive.

## China & HK

In March, the Hang Seng Index went up marginally by 0.8% and outperformed other major equity indices. The rally was mainly driven by the financial sub-index after China's Minister of Finance announcing capital injection plan for state-owned banks and Chinese life insurers reporting solid quarterly earnings. The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index jumped by 1.2% in March. Market sentiment was also lifted by the Two Sessions which rolled out polices to support domestic consumption and technology advancement.

The CSI 300 Index ended the month of March almost flat. China's economic momentum has been recovering. In March, the official composite purchasing managers' index rose to a three-month high of 51.4. Both the manufacturing and the non-manufacturing sub-indices were better than expected. China equities can be relatively defensive in the trade dispute with potential policy support.

### Bond Market Outlook

The FTSE MPF World Government Bond Index rose 0.7% in March. Volatility in equity markets, ongoing trade tensions and geopolitical uncertainties have led to a shift towards safe-haven assets like gold and United States Treasuries. In March, the 10-year United States Treasury yield hovered around 4.28% as Trump tariffs raised fears of stagflation, a mix of sluggish economic growth and stubbornly high inflation.



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