

BUSINESS & FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

European Markets Tumble Again On Virus Jitters

European markets ended lower on Tuesday, as stocks fell sharply for a second successive session this week, amid mounting worries about the impact of the rapidly spreading coronavirus in Italy and a few other parts of the globe.

According to reports, the pace of new coronavirus infections slowed in China. South Korea said it aims to test more than 200,000 members of a church at the center of a surge in coronavirus cases.

Countries around the world have reportedly stepped up efforts to prevent a pandemic, with the U.S. pledging \$2.5 billion to fight the disease. The World Health Organization said it has sent a mission to Italy to "support Italian authorities in understanding the situation," citing concerns with the outbreak. With several markets in the region falling and stocks from across several sectors reeling under pressure, the pan European Stock 600 tumbled 1.76%.

Among the major indices in Europe, the U.K.'s FTSE 100 and France's CAC 40 both declined 1.94%, Germany's DAX ended down 1.88% and Switzerland's SMI ended down 2.19%.

Among other markets in Europe, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain and Sweden ended sharply lower. Norway and Turkey ended with modest losses, while Greece and Ukraine closed on a firm note.

In France, BNP Paribas declined nearly 5%. Technip, Societe Generale, Credit Agricole, Engie, Accor, Safran, Renault, Michelin, Publicis Groupe, Dassault Systemes and Capgemini lost 2 to 4%.

In the German market, MTU Aero, Continental, Allianz, RWE, Muench.Rueckvers, Linde, Wirecard, HeidelbergCement, Deutsche Telekom and E.ON ended lower by 2 to 4%. Beiersdorf, BASF, Deutsche Bank, Deutsche Post and Fresenius also declined sharply.

In the British market, Carnival, Meggitt, TUI, Legal & General Group and Associated British Foods lost 4 to 6%. NMC Health rallied 3.8% and Bunzi ended stronger by about 2.5%.

In economic news, the German economy stagnated in the fourth quarter, in line with the initial estimate, as the positive contribution to growth from investment was nullified by foreign trade, detailed data from Destatis revealed.

Gross domestic product remained flat sequentially after expanding 0.2% in the previous quarter. The statistical office confirmed the flash estimate released on February 14.

Consequently, price-adjusted GDP grew 0.6% in 2019. On a non-adjusted basis, GDP rose 0.3% year-on-year after a 1.1% expansion in the third quarter.

France's manufacturing confidence remained stable in February, survey results from the statistical office Insee showed on Tuesday.

