

BUSINESS & FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

European Shares Mixed Ahead Of Fed Minutes

Mounting worries about a long drawn U.S.-China trade war and growing uncertainty about Brexit dragged down European stocks to a negative close on Wednesday.

Investors were also looking ahead to the release of the minutes of the U.S. Federal Reserve's latest monetary policy meeting.

For much of the trading session, movements remained sluggish with investors largely staying cautious and refraining from making significant moves.

The pan European Stoxx 600 ended down 0.008%. Among the major indices in Europe, the U.K.'s FTSE 100 edged up 0.07%, Germany's DAX gained 0.21% and Switzerland's SMI added 0.22%, while France's CAC 40 ended lower by 0.12%.

Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Turkey ended weak. Denmark, Ireland, Iceland, Poland and Russia closed on the positive side.

In the British market, Metro Bank shares soared 15.2%. Among the stocks in the FTSE 100 index, Smurfit rose 5.5%, Smith gained 3.75%, Hikma Pharma ended 3.1% up and Coca Cola surged up 3%. Mondi ended stronger by 2.75%.

Royal Mail rallied 5%, riding on an announcement from the company that it would introduce a second daily delivery of parcels that would be fully operational by 2023.

Growth plans spelt out by the company lifted shares of IG Group Holdings by as much as 12.5%. Marks & Spencer shares declined more than 9% after the company reported a 10% drop in full-year profit. EasyJet, Persimmon, Taylor Wimpey and Hargreaves Lansdown lost 4.4 to 5.8%.

In Germany, Wirecard gained nearly 5%. Adidas, SAP, Linde, Fresenius, Beiersdorf and Thyssenkrupp ended higher by 1 to 2.3%. Lufthansa, Daimler, Vonovia, Deutsche Post, BMW and HeidelbergCement ended with sharp to moderate losses.

Shares of Commerzbank dropped ahead of its AGM after the collapse of merger talks with Deutsche Bank. Shares of Deutsche Bank also ended sharply lower.

In France, Technip, Credit Agricole, ArcelorMittal, Peugeot, Total, Unibail Rodamco, STMicroElectronics and BNP Paribas lost 1 to 2.4%. Atos gained about 2.6%. Capgemini, Air Liquide and Sanofi also ended on a firm note.

In economic releases, U.K. consumer price inflation accelerated in April, while output price inflation eased slightly, figures from the Office for National Statistics revealed. Worries about U.S.-China trade dispute have increased after a report from the South China Morning Post said China is re-examining the entire bilateral economic relationship between the U.S. and China.

