

BUSINESS & FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

European Shares Hold Steady After Inflation Data

European stocks inched higher on Wednesday as oil prices fell back and investors turned their attention to a slew of central bank meetings due this week for policy cues. Upcoming U.S.-China trade talks also remained on investors' radar.

The Federal Reserve is expected to announce a rate cut of at least 25 basis point to prop up slowing economic growth at the end of a two-day policy meeting later in the day.

In economic releases, Eurozone inflation held stable in August at its lowest level in nearly three years, latest data from the Eurostat showed, confirming the preliminary estimates released on August 30.

Headline inflation was 1 percent in August, the same as in July. The rate was the lowest since November 2016.

U.K. consumer price inflation eased to a 32-month low in August as computer games and clothing turned cheaper, data from the Office for National Statistics showed.

Consumer price inflation eased to 1.7 percent from 2.1 percent in July. The rate was forecast to ease moderately to 1.9 percent.

The pan European Stock 600 was up 0.15 percent at 389.89 after ending largely unchanged the previous day.

The German DAX, France's CAC 40 index and the U.K.'s FTSE 100 all were up around 0.1 percent.

Swiss luxury goods group Richemont slumped 5.1 percent as UBS downgraded its ratings, saying the luxury sector is nearing the end of the cycle. Swatch shares tumbled 3.7 percent.

Cement giant LafargeHolcim advanced 1.6 percent. The company said it would invest 160 million Swiss francs into advanced equipment as well as technologies to increase the use of low-carbon fuels and recycled materials in the company's processes and products.

Automakers were broadly higher even as industry data showed Europe's passenger car registrations declined in August on high base effect. Passenger car registrations contracted 8.4 percent year-on-year, reversing a 1.4 percent rise in July.

Shares of Wirecard rallied 2.6 percent after the provider of electronic payment and risk management applications announced that it has formalized strategic cooperation agreement with SoftBank Group Corp.

French utility EDF jumped 2.8 percent after saying it sees no need to close any of its nuclear reactors for the moment following the discovery of problems with weldings.

Kingfisher shares tumbled 3.5 percent as the British home improvement retailer reported a 6.4 percent fall in underlying first half profit.

