

WorldWatch Headlines: May

Welcome to our latest compilation of WorldWatch Headlines, taken from the most recently published Country Insight Snapshot reports. These headlines highlight the key development our analysts identified for each country when they updated the report.

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Africa

Algeria	The IMF criticises the government's economic policies.
Angola	An investment law revision aims to help boost private investment.
Botswana	A presidential visit exchange with Zimbabwe demonstrates warming bilateral relations.
Cameroon	Port expansion and upgrade plans are pursued by an international logistics company.
Congo, D.R.	A new mining code imposes more onerous and costly regulations.
Cote d'Ivoire	The ruling coalition wins a landslide victory in senatorial elections.
Ethiopia	Reforms could make progress under the new prime minister.
Gabon	The near-term economic outlook improves.
Ghana	Figures for 2017 suggest an improvement in the deficit.
Kenya	The central bank trims the benchmark interest rate to boost credit and growth.
Libya	Increasing oil revenues help to narrow the budget deficit.
Malawi	Inflation retreats to a six-year low.
Mauritius	The benchmark interest rate is on hold.
Morocco	Rising unemployment increases fears of further socioeconomic tensions.
Mozambique	Economic growth slips to a 15-year low in 2017.
Namibia	President Geingob clears the way for an intensified anti-corruption drive.
Nigeria	Another Eurobond issue raises USD2.5bn in foreign financing.
Senegal	A new sovereign bond raises USD2.2bn.
Sierra Leone	The indecisive first-round presidential poll increases political tension.
South Africa	South Africa retains its investment grade status.
Sudan	The central bank devalues the Sudanese pound for the second time in 2018.
Tanzania	New local content regulations are imposed on firms serving the mining sector.
Tunisia	Macroeconomic vulnerabilities remain significant.
Uganda	The central bank cuts its key policy rate to boost economic growth.
Zambia	New bulk cargo regulations aim to reduce road damage.
Zimbabwe	The government repeals the controversial indigenisation law.

Asia Pacific

Afghanistan	The president makes a surprise offer to recognise the Taliban.
Australia	US import tariffs aimed at China will have a considerable effect on Australia.
Bangladesh	The development of imported coal and LNG terminals will reduce energy self-sufficiency.
Cambodia	Relations with key foreign donors deteriorate.
China	Proposed China-US trade tariffs would not inevitably have severe impacts on their economies.
Fiji	A succession of devastating cyclones strike Fiji.
Hong Kong (S.A.R.)	The interest rate differential with the US depresses the Hong Kong dollar.
India	Near-term payment risks rise due to a ban on cheap trade finance.
Indonesia	The improved external debt profile still has vulnerabilities.
Japan	Short-term growth and inflation will be weak, but sustainable.

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Korea (South)	Summit diplomacy plans extend the Olympics detente.
Malaysia	Economic progress should help the ruling coalition in the imminent elections.
Myanmar	An increased minimum wage will not halt the garment industry's growth.
Nepal	The communists are elected to a five-year term of government.
New Zealand	Regulations prove effective at cooling the housing market.
Pakistan	Tensions dominate the political landscape.
Papua New Guinea	Gas operators unveil a plan to double production in Papua New Guinea.
Philippines	Inflation breaches the central bank's target band.
Singapore	The Monetary Authority of Singapore tightens its policy stance for the first time in six years.
Sri Lanka	Violent attacks prompt an island-wide state of emergency.
Taiwan	Modest growth is due amid structural headwinds and trade war fears.
Thailand	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Thailand due to an upshift in export performance.
Vietnam	Financial sector reform will bring many benefits to the economy.

Eastern Europe

Albania	The lek has strengthened significantly.
Azerbaijan	Economic growth is modest in the first two months of the year.
Belarus	Local elections highlight the continued democratic deficit.
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Bosnia & Herzegovina over EU accession prospects.
Bulgaria	Higher economic growth will be driven by strong domestic and external demand.
Croatia	Negative indicators suggest that the economy is slowing.
Czech Republic	Economic growth will slow in 2018-19 as monetary policy tightens.
Estonia	Growth is set to moderate in the coming years.
Georgia	Georgia's free-trade agreement with China has now come into effect.
Hungary	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades Hungary's country risk rating as the economy is growing rapidly.
Kazakhstan	Manufacturing and services underpinned solid growth in the early months of this year.
Kyrgyz Republic	The release of further IMF funding signals confidence in the country's prospects.
Latvia	The financial sector is shaken by accusations of money laundering and bribery.
Lithuania	Economic activity continues to expand at a satisfactory pace.
Macedonia	The Greek and Macedonian governments are keen to resolve the divisive 'name issue'.
Poland	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades Poland's country risk rating due to a continuing strong economic performance.
Romania	Corruption is worsening as malpractice constraints are removed.
Russian Federation	Robust private spending and higher investment drove growth in 2017.
Serbia	Data for Q4 indicates that economic growth is accelerating.
Slovak Republic	Slovakia is facing a potential collapse of government.
Slovenia	The strategically important new Koper-Divaca railway line is at risk.
Tajikistan	The economy strengthens in 2017 but the outlook remains challenging.
Turkmenistan	A big hike in gas prices reflects pressure on the fiscal finances.
Ukraine	Economic growth is rising towards 3.0%, but downside risks remain.
Uzbekistan	The government prepares to issue its first Eurobond.

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Middle East

Bahrain	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Bahrain due to a huge oil and gas find.
Egypt	President Sisi's re-election highlights the country's democracy deficit.
Iran	Currency rates are unified to fulfil a long-delayed promise to the IMF.
Iraq	Pro-Iranian militia leaders look to contest parliamentary elections in May.
Israel	Relations with Iran enter a dangerous new phase.
Jordan	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Jordan due to weak macroeconomic data.
Kuwait	Opposition activists are released on bail.
Lebanon	A donor conference raises significant pledges in return for key structural reforms.
Oman	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Oman due to improved gas production.
Qatar	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Qatar on the back of continued US support.
Saudi Arabia	The outcomes of the Kingdom's assertive foreign policy have been mixed.
Syria	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Syria following the Western military attack in April.
UAE	The economy contracts in the largest emirate, Abu Dhabi.
Yemen	Some Yemeni deportees from Saudi Arabia have joined the Houthi rebels.

The Americas

Argentina	The government switches to a gradual approach to structural reform.
Bolivia	The external deficit is at a record high.
Brazil	Lula's surrender to police opens up the presidential race.
Canada	Foreign direct investment into Canada falls to a seven-year low.
Chile	Police and security reforms will be President Pinera's first priority.
Colombia	The centre-right candidate leads in polls ahead of May's presidential election.
Costa Rica	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Costa Rica's country risk rating due to concerns over public sector probity.
Cuba	The new president is expected to maintain the current political model.
Dominican Republic	Growth in Q4 is boosted by stronger private consumption and investment.
Ecuador	A referendum on limiting presidential terms is comfortably approved.
El Salvador	The ruling party's defeat in the legislative elections will exacerbate political gridlock.
Guatemala	Improving external demand conditions will keep economic growth solid.
Honduras	New corruption allegations threaten more damage to the president's reputation.
Jamaica	The IMF issues a generally-positive third review.
Mexico	The outlook for an updated NAFTA pact is improving.
Nicaragua	International pressure continues to rise.
Panama	Public works projects and favourable global trade dynamics will keep growth momentum solid.
Paraguay	Strong domestic demand bolsters economic activity.
Peru	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Peru as new ministerial appointments are well received.
Trinidad & Tobago	A modest economic recovery is projected for 2018.
USA	The slow start to 2018 will not derail stronger growth in the coming months.
Uruguay	Exports are driving growth, and investment is forecast to pick up in 2018.
Venezuela	Army officers are purged as the president tightens his grip on power.

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Western Europe

Austria	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades Austria's country risk rating on the back of solid growth rates.
Belgium	Expanding exports should sustain the short-term economic upturn.
Cyprus	Real GDP expands at its highest rate for ten years in 2017.
Denmark	Denmark is facing the threat of mass strike action.
Finland	Growth is powered by strong expansion in both exports and investments.
France	Industrial action could disrupt supply chains and business travel.
Germany	Forward-looking indicators have started to ease.
Greece	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades Greece's country risk rating due to improving macroeconomic conditions.
Iceland	The number of visitors rises significantly as the tourism boom continues.
Ireland	Political uncertainty remains elevated.
Italy	The political stalemate continues after March's inconclusive election.
Luxembourg	The business-environment quality is affirmed as outstanding.
Malta	The economy grew again in Q4, albeit more slowly.
Netherlands	A right-wing party makes political inroads as its popularity rises.
Norway	The offshore economy contraction in Q4 proves only temporary.
Portugal	A new rail link should boost trade and investment potential.
Spain	The arrest of Carles Puidgemont triggers a new wave of political tension.
Sweden	The far-right nationalist vote may play a critical role in September's election.
Switzerland	Succession problems will be faced by a number of companies in the coming years.
Turkey	Snap presidential and parliamentary elections are called for 24 June.
United Kingdom	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for the UK from 'deteriorating' to 'stable'.

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