



## Trends in the new world COVID-19

Part of the debate that arose during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic revolved around the fact that the circumstances demanded that we all engage in an exercise of resilience with our minds set on returning to the "normalcy" we had prior to the health emergency; however, and as most will have already assumed as we approach the end of the first half of 2021, such a return will happen relatively, because, while it is true that consumption and activity will eventually recover pre-pandemic levels, some trends that emerged during the period of confinement are here to stay.

The recovery is expected to be faster as the vaccination campaigns progress. In the meantime, it is necessary for companies to have the capacity to adapt to the new situation to ensure their survival in a context such as the one observed in 2020, which closed with an economic contraction of 7.0% in Latin America, 3.5% in the USA and 2.0% in Europe.

At **Ecoanalítica** we have constantly advocated the collection of information as one more tool that will help overcome economic adversities; however, this must be added to adaptability and the ability to implement the necessary changes to overcome the economic situation. With this in mind, this report describes some trends that should be taken into account in the adaptation process. Among them, we highlight the deepening of the digital world, the role of the State in a health emergency, renewed labor practices and the new consumer awareness.

### The digital world.

The most palpable change is related to the adaptation of consumers to digital platforms for everyday activities. The arrival of the pandemic forced, for reasons of biosecurity and mobility restrictions, consumers to increase their online shopping and to turn to the use of digital platforms to keep their social interactions active.

While it is true that the use of digital platforms had become an essential element in everyday business before the pandemic, the need to use them due to the confinement has forced certain users to modify their buying habits and direct them to the network.

As a result, the accessibility of these platforms becomes a new essential aspect that companies must consider, especially if we take into account that consumers can select

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one supplier or another, when purchasing an item or service, depending on the one that offers a better experience and greater accessibility of the platforms. This concept of accessibility ranges from the presentation of a web page to customer service. As a result, it requires a greater investment -either in monetary resources or time- on the part of firms to improve that experience.

In any case, the arrival of the pandemic has accelerated the intensive use of the digital world and has even had a direct impact on consumers' preference for carrying out most of their activities from home in a post-pandemic context. It will be essential to join this new trend, not only to survive the current situation, but also to avoid falling behind competitors who are adopting it.

### Better from home.

The logic of consumers behind their preference to spend a greater amount of time at home can also be transferred to the workers of a company. While it is true that not all sectors lend themselves to the practice of teleworking, it has been observed that there is a persistent preference to continue working from home or to establish a work scheme that allows greater flexibility to cover part of their required hours remotely.

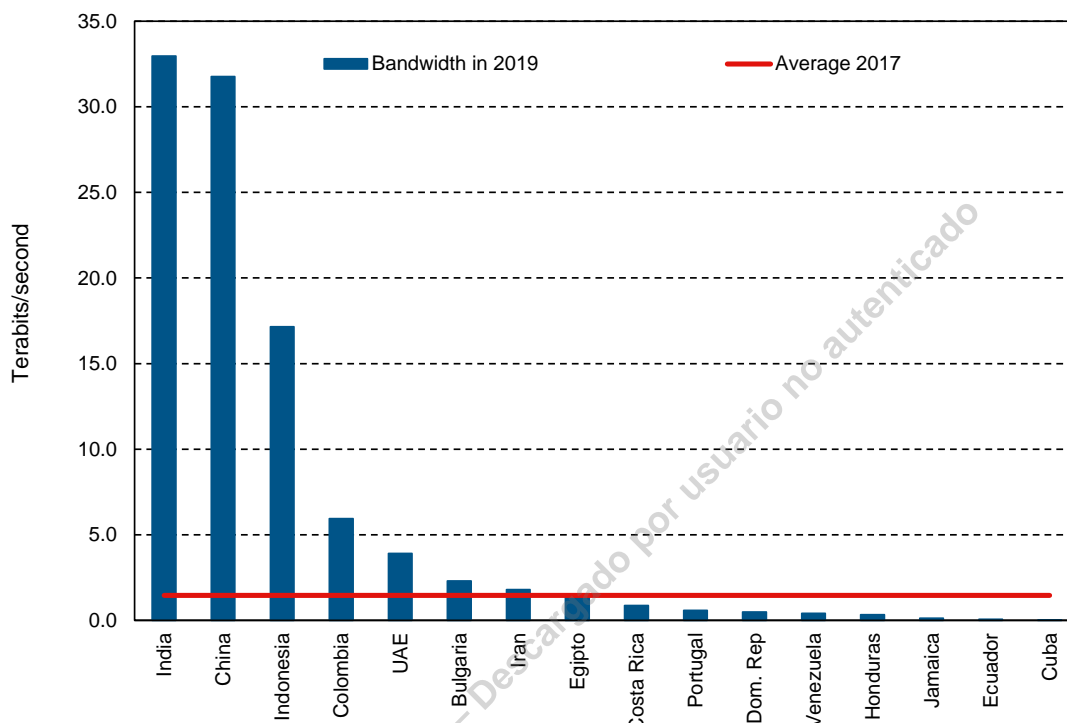
This is mainly possible for *white-collar*<sup>1</sup> workers, who perform administrative, organizational or sales tasks. A survey<sup>2</sup> conducted in the United States and published on the LiveCareer<sup>3</sup> website revealed that 30.0% of the sample might even quit if they were forced to return to a full-time, face-to-face work schedule.

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<sup>1</sup> Expression used to refer to professionals who perform tasks at a professional or semi-professional level, especially from an office. Can perform work in accounting, management, sales, coordination and similar áreas.

<sup>2</sup> USA Today. (2021). *Nearly 30% of working professionals would quit if they had to return to office after pandemic*.

<sup>3</sup> Platform where you can find professional guides prepared by human resources experts.

**Bandwidth in selected countries**


Note: Bandwidth is the volume of information that can be sent through a connection in a period of time. The data were selected according to their availability.

Sources: International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and Ecoanalítica.

Like consumers, these employees have become accustomed to the advantages of working from home: reduced transportation costs (by reducing the number of times they have to travel to the workplace<sup>4</sup>), lower risk of contagion and the possibility of combining home and work activities, particularly for those workers with children at home who have not yet returned to school.

A similar argument regarding investment in digital platforms arises in this case. Incentivizing the use of these tools could increase the comfort of workers, an aspect that could be fundamental in a business environment such as the current one, given the difficulty of finding and training a new employee to insert him or her into the organization's organizational chart.

All this leads to management having to catch up with these trends in order to evolve towards new exercises where speed in the incorporation of new technologies and in decision-making is as key as flexibility when adopting new measures. In managerial

<sup>4</sup> This is even more relevant in the Venezuelan case, given the increase in gasoline prices and its scarcity.

terms, the new situation has given a new perspective to the exhaustive use of these tools, since it allows daily operations to be carried out, maintaining connectivity and also taking advantage of the benefits in terms of time savings and cost cutting.

### The Government plays

On the other hand, the health crisis highlighted the role of the government as a dam to contain the crisis. Faced with the need to halt activity for reasons of containment, the State had to take the lead in rescuing or maintaining key national industries, investing in mass vaccination programs and supporting its citizens with transfers that would allow them to mitigate the loss of income.

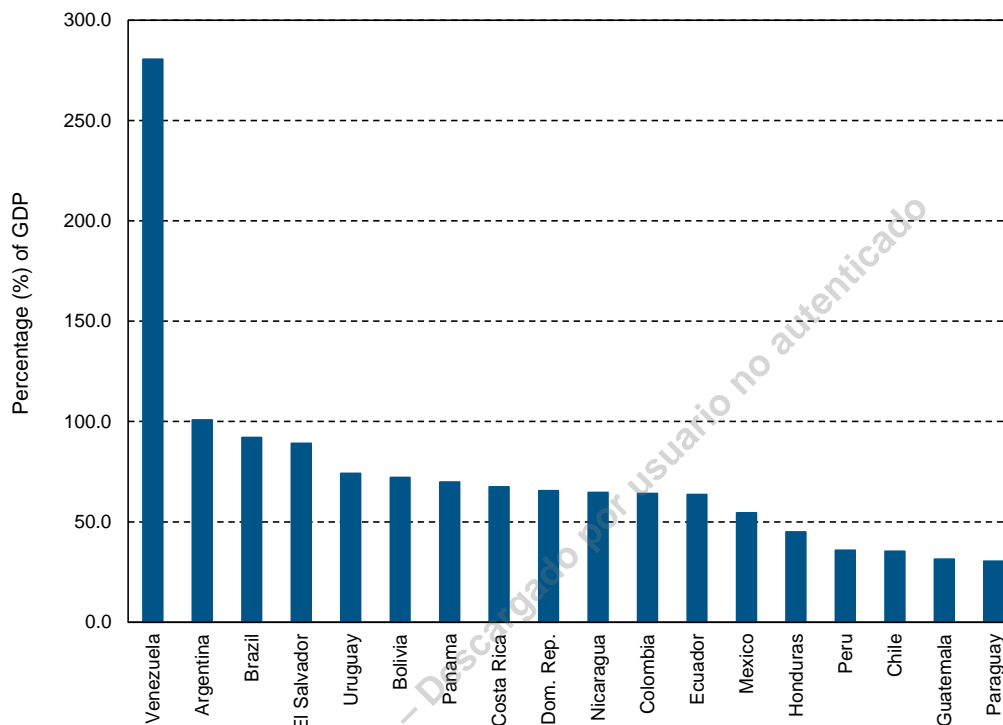
However, just as the importance of the State was highlighted in these expenditures that it had to incur to safeguard national economies, its revenue generation capacity should not be neglected. An element that takes on greater importance in Latin America, where the countries' fiscal deficit levels (an average of 8.3% of GDP) limit the monetary financing of spending, their high levels of debt (72.0% of GDP)<sup>5</sup> would make them cautious to take advantage of the low interest rates present in the market.

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<sup>5</sup> Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo. (2021). *Informe macroeconómico de América Latina y el Caribe 2021*.

Year 17. Number 15. Week II  
 May 2021

### Public debt in 2020



Sources: FocusEconomics and Ecoanalítica.

Against this backdrop, there has been debate on the need to implement tax reforms in the countries of the region in order to finance the expenses derived from the pandemic, which are not expected to disappear in the short term. This constitutes an additional challenge in terms of governance and communication, as observed in Colombia recently.

Even so, debate will persist about necessary tax reforms, especially as vaccination plans are delayed, the possibility of imposing new confinements and the economic recovery in these countries drags on this year. In all these respects, the decisions made by governments will be critical to firms' activities in the short term.

#### Go further.

Perhaps one of the most noteworthy elements is the new awareness that the consumer has acquired. Firstly, it is observed how the social responsibility assumed by the company could be a fundamental factor considered by the consumer when choosing a product or service, although it was already an aspect taken into consideration before the pandemic.

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A study by Markstein and Certus Insight conducted in 2019<sup>6</sup> revealed that 46.0% of its respondents gave great importance to how brands related to environmental and social issues.

This is an aspect that became more relevant during the pandemic and became a trend, identified by Deloitte<sup>7</sup>, for the future. Users observe the actions that companies take with their communities and their brand image, which could not only differentiate them when it comes to offering their products, but also when it comes to building their reputation and generating loyalty. Here, a key aspect is the way in which companies disclose activities that go beyond the products or services they offer.

A second aspect is to recognize the importance of local businesses. With the disruption of the global supply chain as a result of the pandemic, new costs in terms of travel, health and mobility constraints have arisen for consumers to consider. As a result, the supply of goods from nearby communities has become more important. In addition, consumers themselves recognize the difficulties faced by smaller businesses, so they support them on social networks as a way to repay the satisfaction achieved with the purchase of the product. An awareness of support for local businesses that could last over time.

### Waiting for change

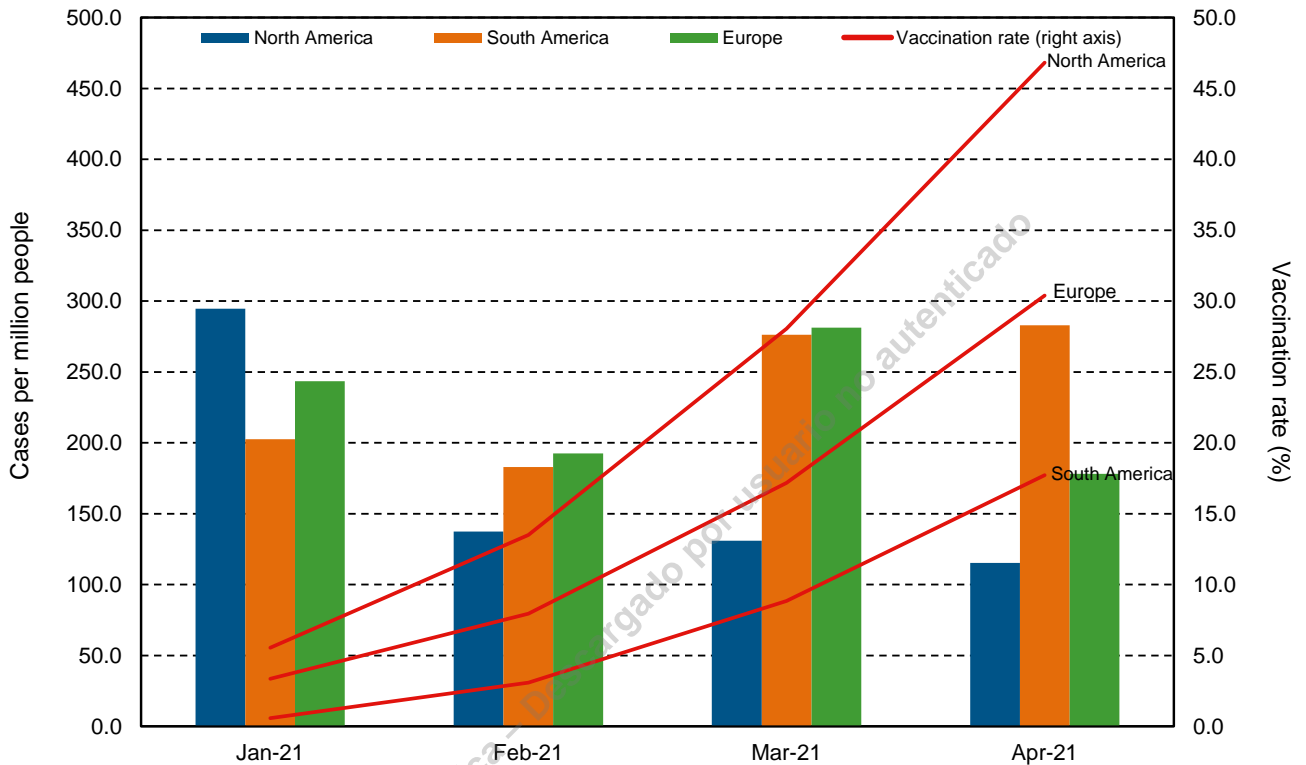
These aspects we have highlighted serve to return to a point we mentioned at the beginning of the report: flexibility and the ability to implement changes in the company if necessary. While it is important to identify these and other new trends, there must also be the ability to put the knowledge gained into practice in the necessary measures.

In addition, vaccination plans continue to be a very important aspect to consider during 2021, at least. As each country approaches herd immunity levels, there will be fewer restrictions and more openness to different economic activities.

<sup>6</sup> Business Wire. (2019). *Consumers Expect the Brands they Support to be Socially Responsible*.

<sup>7</sup> Deloitte Digital. (2020). *Covid-19 Induced Business Trends: Preparing for the new normal*.

**Cases vs. vaccination rate**



Sources: Our World in Data and Ecoanalítica.

Therefore, it is to be expected that all sectors will evolve at a different pace as restrictions are gradually lifted. In these time intervals, firms must acclimatize their workplaces for the return to their activities and incorporate the necessary strategies to deal with the situation, taking into account that there are changes that are here to stay.

**Jhoan F. Castellano.**

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Year 17. Number 15. Week II  
 May 2021

## WEEKLY INDICATORS

Weekly Economic Indicators			
	2nd Week May	Weekly chg. (%)	Depre/Apre (pp) <sup>1</sup>
<b>FX Boards (VES/USD)<sup>2</sup></b>	2,836,352.97	0.2	0.2
	5th Week April	Weekly chg. (pp)	Annual chg. (pp)
<b>Lending Interest Rate (%)</b>	56.0	-3.9	16.3
	2nd Week May	Weekly chg. (pp)	Annual chg. (pp)
<b>Overnight Interest Rate (%)</b>	111.2	-19.3	8.5
	1st Week May	Weekly chg. (%)	Annual chg. (%)
<b>International Reserves (USD Bn)</b>	6.249	-1.3	-3.1
	5th Week April	Weekly chg. (%)	Annual chg. (%)
<b>Monetary Liquidity (MM VES)</b>	1,270,527,762.00	7.5	1,483.2
Price of International Oil Baskets (USD/bl)			
	5th Week April	Weekly chg. (%)	Annual chg. (%)
<b>WTI</b>	63.5	2.1	265.0
<b>Brent</b>	67.0	2.5	254.8
Price of the Venezuelan oil basket (USD/bl)			
	5th Week July	Weekly chg. (%)	Annual chg. (%)
<b>Weekly Average</b>	22.4	0.0	-61.9
<b>Annual Average</b>	28.8	-0.7	-51.7

Sources: BCV, MENPET, ONT and Ecoanalítica

\* Annual variation of accumulated expenditure.

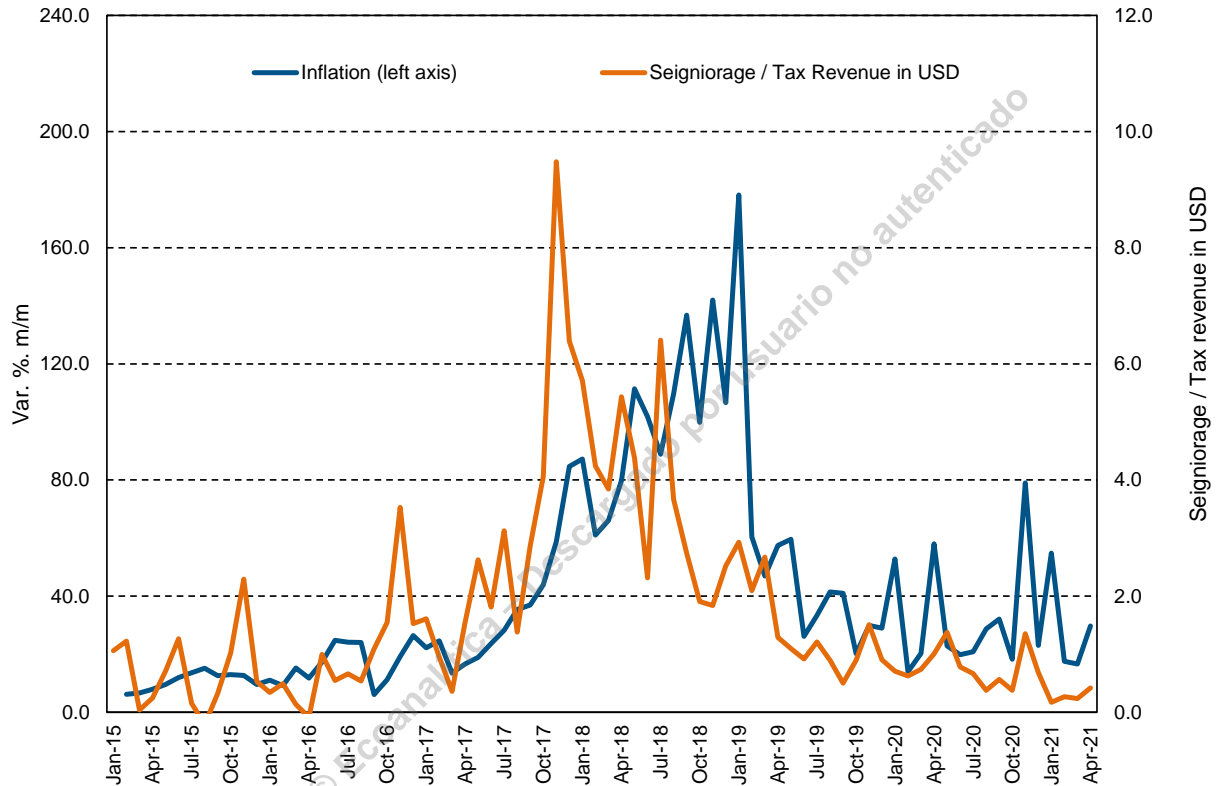
<sup>1</sup> Depreciation (+)/Appreciation (-)<sup>2</sup> FX Borads' average exchange rate

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CHART OF THE WEEK: “THE FEUDAL LORD PAYMENTS”.

Relationship between inflation and seigniorage



Sources: SENIAT, BCV and Ecoanalítica.

In the feudal age, the *seigneur* (French for lord) had the exclusive right in his fief to mint money, which were usually coins of precious metals; the term seigniorage is derived from this conception. Seigniorage is understood as the income obtained by issuing money.

Currently, governments reserve the right to issue money; thus, they receive revenue by financing government spending with new money. When the government prints money, it increases the money supply, which generates inflation, as the money supply expands at a faster rate than the growth rate of the economy. This process is called inflationary taxation.

Thus, the hyperinflationary process is a direct result of the increase in seigniorage as a proportion of tax revenue which, when combined with an extremely low demand for

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money, causes both the velocity of circulation and the quantity of money in the economy to be more suboptimal for achieving price stability.

Seigniorage, therefore, is a mechanism for governments to control inflationary taxes, and the Venezuelan case is no exception. On average, monthly seigniorage was 0.9 times tax collection in 2016; 3.0 times in 2017; 3.8 times in 2018; 1.4 times in 2019; 0.8 times in 2020 and 0.3 times so far in 2021. In parallel, average monthly inflation was 16.7% in 2016, 34.0% in 2017, 99.3% in 2018, 52.0% in 2019, 32.5% in 2020 and 29.7% so far this year.

Although price variations are not solely due to changes in the monetary financing of public spending, there is evidence of the relationship between lower financing of public spending, which triggers a lower increase in the money supply, and a less accelerated inflation in recent months.

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**ECONOMIC TIPS**

**COVID-19 in Venezuela.** According to governmental figures as of May 6, the country accumulated 210,948 registered cases of coronavirus and 2,228 deaths. At the same time, as of April 12, the last date available, it is estimated that 0.88% of the population has received at least one dose of some vaccine.

**Unconfined against the pandemic.** The week of May 9-16 was managed under a scheme of relaxation of containment measures, in accordance with the "7+7" scheme that the national authorities have adopted in response to the pandemic. During this week, containment measures were relaxed and all sectors of the economy maintained their activity under the relevant biosecurity standards.

**And we expect it to get worse (I).** Oscar Meza, director of the Center for Documentation and Social Analysis of the Venezuelan Federation of Teachers (Cendas), reported that in April, the basic family food basket increased 38% in price with respect to March, and projected that the price increase in May will be much higher.

**And we expect it to get worse (II).** In this sense, Meza detailed that "*in the case of May is when we see the effect of the salary increase, (...) this nominal increase will trigger the price of the dollar and prices in general and of course it will feed back hyperinflation*".

**Omnipresent vigilantes (I).** The National Superintendence for the Defense of Socioeconomic Rights (Sundde) made 1,429 price adjustments in April. These adjustments are due to non-compliance with the prices set in the list of 27 products published by the National Government and non-compliance with the use of the official exchange rate published by the Central Bank of Venezuela to carry out transactions in foreign currency.

**Omnipresent vigilantes (II).** In addition, the Sundde urged compliance with the quarantine to 18,313 commercial premises. In these cases, the immediate closure of open premises was ordered and compliance with biosafety standards in authorized sites was demanded.

**Omnipresent vigilantes (III).** For his part, Juan Iriarte, Intendant for the Protection of Socioeconomic Rights of Sundde, expressed that in addition to the control of prices and exchange rate, it is also monitored that the merchant does not exceed a profit margin of 30%, in accordance with the provisions of the Organic Law of Fair Prices.

Year 17. Number 15. Week II  
May 2021

**Reactivated.** According to the Venezuelan Finance Observatory of the National Assembly belonging to the Government of Juan Guaidó, economic activity grew 18.9% in the first quarter of the year, compared to the last quarter of 2020, and presented a drop of 33.7% with respect to the first quarter of 2020.

**Bonuses and more bonuses (I).** The Government announced the delivery of the "Hogares de la Patria" bonus and the "100% Escolaridad" bonus. The amount of the former increases according to the number of members of each family and ranges between VES 720,000 and VES 2,700,000.

**Vouchers and more vouchers (II).** In the case of the "100% Escolaridad" voucher, VES 900,000 is added to the transfer in case a minor in the family is in school and VES 720,000 will be added for each additional member in school.

**Money tables.** For the first week of May, the average money desk rate was VES 2,836,353.0/USD, representing an appreciation of 0.2% over the previous week.

**Liquid?** Liquidity was VES 1,270,527,762.0 million for the week of April 28, a variation of 7.5% in nominal terms with respect to the previous week and 1,483.2% with respect to last year.

## OIL TIPS

**Limited.** Citgo's Lake Charles refinery in Louisiana, which was producing 425 kb/d, has had to reduce production rates just after Colonial Pipeline reported that it had to shut down its refined products system to take care of a data theft by a group of hackers called DarkSide.

**To lessen the impact.** The U.S. government has been monitoring gasoline supply shortages in the Southeast as Colonial Pipeline works to restore pipelines and terminals that supply nearly half of the fuel consumed on the U.S. Atlantic Coast.

**A new projection...** OPEC has raised its members' crude oil demand projection by more than 200 kb/d for this year and cut non-OPEC supply by a similar amount to keep the global oil demand estimate unchanged.

**...Up and down.** OPEC now forecasts demand for its own crude to average 27.7 mb/d in 2021, almost 5.2 mb/d higher than last year. This upward revision is supported by a

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Year 17. Number 15. Week II  
May 2021

downgrade in non-OPEC supply, which is now expected to grow by 700 kb/d to 63.6 mb/d.

**Underway.** Australian and UK-listed resources firm BHP commenced oil production at the Ruby Oil and Gas Project offshore Trinidad and Tobago. Ruby will have the capacity to produce 16 kb/d of crude oil and 80 mpc/d of gas.

**Serious drop.** The Colombian Fuel Retailers Association, Fendipetróleo, reported that fuel sales nationwide have dropped by 30% due to anti-government protests, looting and road blockades. This figure had not decreased so much since February when 138 kb/d of gasoline and 117 kb/d of diesel were registered.

**Conditioned...** The United States could lift sanctions against Iran's oil sector before the country's presidential election next month, but it depends on a "*political decision*" by Tehran, a senior U.S. official said?

**or threatened?** Talks held between U.S. and Iranian negotiators over the past month "crystallized the choices" that must be made to return to mutual compliance with the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

**Despite shutdown.** Canada's Enbridge plans to continue operating its 540 kb/d Line 5 crude oil and natural gas pipeline system despite a deadline imposed by a Michigan state shutdown order next week.

**Good performance.** U.S. oil company HollyFrontier Corporation agreed to acquire Shell's 145 kb/d Pudget Sound refinery in Anacortes, Washington. HollyFrontier currently has 375 kb/d capacity and, at the end of August 2020, stopped its 52 kb/d refinery in Chayenne, Wyoming, to convert to renewable diesel production.

**A distant recovery.** US-based TC Energy suffered a severe setback in having to pay USD 2.2 MM in taxes in the first quarter of 2021 for its 830 kb/d Keystone XL crude oil pipeline, after President Joe Biden rescinded a key cross-border permit earlier this year.

**Costly plans.** PDVSA plans to resume the development of 14 natural gas fields throughout the country. For this purpose, it will grant licenses with full private participation, in accordance with the Organic Law of Gaseous Hydrocarbons, which will allow the incorporation of 3.1 mpc/d.

**In decline.** OPEC reported a significant drop in Venezuela's production in April of 15.4% with respect to March; however, exports remained constant at approximately 700 kb/d.

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**We continue to go backwards (I).** José Bodas, general secretary of the United Federation of Oil Workers of Venezuela (Futpv), stated that today the production of fuel and oil in the country is similar to that of 1940, which represents a setback of 81 years in the Venezuelan oil industry.

**We are still going backwards (II).** "We are talking about 650 kb/d or 700 kb/d at the best of times. The state of our drills, the lack of investment and the lack of maintenance has caused the production of gasoline, diesel and oil to reach these levels", Bodas detailed to *Radio Fe y Alegría*.

**Various amounts...** PDVSA expects to reactivate a series of projects for which an investment of approximately US\$9.7 MM is needed, which the company expects to achieve by allowing private companies to export its natural gas production.

**... that seem unattainable.** At least US\$ 58 billion would be needed to return to 1998 oil production levels. PDVSA would also need USD 7.65 MMM to reactivate refineries, pipelines and terminals that were mostly inactive.

## SECTORIAL TIPS

**Diesel and sowings (I).** Last Monday, May 10, the Agricultural and Livestock Union of the Andes (Unagandes) reported that the sustained shortage of diesel has affected the sowing capacity, since it has prevented more than 90% of the producers from plowing the land at the most important time of the year for the productive cycle: the "winter" season that is about to begin.

**Diesel and crops (II).** The president of Unagandes, Antonio Escalona, specified that losses of approximately 50 tons of vegetables are being reported in the Andean states and that the production capacities of chicken meat and eggs have been reduced to 48% and 26%, respectively.

**Teaching in extinction.** At least 90% of teachers nationwide have been forced to abandon their profession and take up other jobs due to the low remuneration they receive, according to Luis Arroyo, president of the Teachers' Association of Lara State.

**Recurrent accidents (I).** The second labor accident of the year occurred at Siderúrgica del Orinoco (Sidor) last Sunday, May 9, when a spill occurred after the failure of the liquid steel outlet system.

Year 17. Number 15. Week II  
May 2021

**Recurring accidents (II).** In view of this fact, an informant and worker at Acería de Palanquillas, the plant where the incident occurred, confirmed that Sidor is not in a position to guarantee the appropriate inputs to sustain an efficient and safe production process for the life and integrity of its workers.

**A slight recovery (I).** According to what was reported by the president of the Chamber of the Pharmaceutical Industry (Cifar), Tito López, the sector experienced a "*slight recovery*" of 19% of its economic activity by the end of 2020 with respect to the previous year.

**A slight recovery (II).** In addition, he assured that, despite the fact that the prices of pharmaceutical products in Venezuela remain below the average of neighboring countries such as Colombia and Brazil, demand has not been boosted to a greater extent due to low local wages, which is an obstacle for Venezuelans.

**They fell short (I).** The president of the College of Physicians of Lara State, René Rivas, informed that the process of immunization of health sector workers against Coronavirus has slowed down in that state.

**They fell short (II).** As of May 10, at least 754 registered free practicing physicians have not been vaccinated in Lara. Rivas commented that "*we have not seen any further action on the part of the authorities in wanting to comply with this procedure, which is a national and international obligation*".

**Opening of routes.** In line with the flexible scheme for the week of May 10-16, the Vice Minister of Land Transportation, Claudio Farías, announced the opening of urban and suburban routes and related terminals throughout the country, except for the states of Táchira and Bolívar.

**More than a thousand hours (I).** The non-governmental organization Promedehum assured in its latest report that, according to the monitoring carried out from March 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, the city of Merida was, on average, 1,623 hours (67.6 continuous days) without electric service.

**More than one thousand hours (II).** Promedehum reported that the Venezuelan Government authorized the sale of approximately USD 37 MMM, between 2000 and 2014, for the development and operation of the national electricity system, of which the organization estimated an overpricing of USD 23 MMM.

**Unions raise their voices.** Last week, workers unions from all over the country demonstrated in response to the nominal increase of the integral minimum wage. In

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Year 17. Number 15. Week II  
May 2021

Nueva Esparta, Aragua, Guárico and Táchira, union leaders and representatives disagreed with Nicolás Maduro's latest salary modification and pointed out that this inefficient measure had repercussions in the increase of the workers' diaspora and shortages in public services.

## INTERNATIONAL TIPS

**Vaccination against COVID-19 (I).** The path to global immunity against coronavirus is progressing unevenly across regions. The gap in the vaccination process between richer and poorer countries continues to widen, so that the goal of achieving global immunity is in jeopardy.

**Vaccination against COVID-19 (II).** While in North America at least one dose has already been administered to more than 51 people per 100 inhabitants, in Oceania and Africa less than 10 per 100 inhabitants have received at least one dose. According to *Our World in Data*, on the African continent only 1.54 people per 100 inhabitants have received at least one dose of COVID-19.

**New methods (I).** *Alphabet Inc's* Google has launched international money transfer partnerships with remittance firms Wise and Western Union Co (WU.N) for users of its U.S. payments app.

**New methods (II).** *Google Pay* users in the U.S. can now transfer money to app customers in India and Singapore. Plans are to expand to the 80 countries available through Wise and 200 through Western Union by the end of the year.

**Loss of value? (I).** The US dollar hit two-and-a-half month lows on Monday as a US jobs report prompted investors to unwind their long dollar positions.

**Loss of value? (II).** The U.S. created slightly more than a quarter of the jobs economists had forecast last month and the unemployment rate unexpectedly rose, raising uncertainty about whether the Fed will consider moving up the tightening policy timeline in the coming months.

**Alerta roja.** The U.S. Government declared a regional state of emergency following a cyber-attack that completely disconnected the Colonial Pipeline system and stole more than 100 GB of information. This system transports more than 2.5 million barrels per day, 45% of the supply of diesel, gasoline and jet fuel consumed by East Coast aircraft.

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Year 17. Number 15. Week II  
May 2021

**They divorce from one...** Thierry Breton, Internal Market Commissioner of the European Commission, announced that they decided not to renew the contract with AstraZeneca Laboratories for the supply of COVID-19 vaccines as of June, considering that it has not respected its supply commitments nor has it had a reliable plan to guarantee successive deliveries.

**... marry another.** Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced the approval of a new contract with the multinational Pfizer, from which they expect to purchase up to 1.8 billion doses between 2021 and 2023, of which 900 million doses are already guaranteed.

**The growth race (I).** According to projections by Goldman Sachs, the European Union is projected to lead the post-pandemic economic recovery process with an annual output growth of 13% by the end of 2021 compared to the US, for which a maximum of 10.5% is estimated.

**The growth race (II).** In its most recent projections, the International Monetary Fund revealed that it expects the United States to close 2021 with a growth of 6.4% and the Euro Zone with 4.4%, although it expects the latter to have an economic expansion of 3.8% next year to exceed the 3.5% projected for the US.

**New requirements.** Germany hopes that a quick agreement will be reached for a COVID19 certificate to allow citizens to travel easily in the European Union, as more and more countries are opening up amid falling infection rates.

**Slowly.** The Central Bank of Chile reported that the country's economic activity grew 6.4% in March compared to March 2020, this being its best record since April 2018 with growth in all items.

## POLITICAL TIPS

**For some, more of the same...** On Tuesday, May 4, the National Assembly of 2020 swore in the five rectors of the National Electoral Council who will be in office for seven years. According to the civil association Súmate, 60% of the main and alternate rectors of the CNE are linked to the PSUV.

**... for others not.** Fedecámaras issued a statement in which it affirms that the appointment of the new authorities of the CNE *"is an important step in the difficult, but necessary, task of recovering the confidence of the vote and the guarantee of the*

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*electoral processes of the country" and that "it is only the beginning of a process that seeks the democratic reinstitutionalization of Venezuela".*

**Reaction from the United States (I).** The U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela, James Story, assured that the appointment of the new CNE is insufficient to guarantee free and fair elections in the country and considers that Nicolás Maduro should give in on issues such as the lifting of the disqualifications against opposition leaders, the cessation of repression and the release of all political prisoners.

**The reaction of the United States (II).** Julie Chung, the State Department's Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Western Hemisphere, stated that *"the United States supports a comprehensive, negotiated solution to the crisis in Venezuela that addresses all aspects of the conditions necessary for free and fair elections. It is up to Venezuelans to decide whether the new National Electoral Council contributes to this end"*.

**Change of signs.** Acceso a la Justicia revealed that the Government modified the ruling that obliges Venezuelan NGOs to register with the anti-terrorism office, eliminating the requirement to disclose the list of their beneficiaries, the time periods for registration and evaluation of the organizations' collections and the penal norm for non-compliance set forth in the ruling.

**Money on behalf of Venezuelans.** U.S. authorities have succeeded in seizing approximately USD 1.5 billion from corruption in Venezuela, according to court documents, and Senators Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio have introduced a bill that would allow the confiscated funds to be used for the benefit of Venezuelans.

**Peruvian solidarity.** More than 6,000 Venezuelan migrants have been vaccinated against COVID-19 in Peru, according to figures from the Peruvian Ministry of Health. Nancy Arellano, founder of the NGO Veneactiva, states *"That Venezuelan migrants can access vaccination whether they are in Peru regularly or not shows great support from the government"*.

**The Venezuelan vote: fundamental (I).** Isabel Díaz Ayuso, president of the Community of Madrid, affirmed that her triumph in the elections at the beginning of the month *"has been possible thanks, among others, to the support of thousands of Venezuelans and Latin Americans who, fleeing from communist tyrannies, have found freedom in Madrid"*.

**The Venezuelan vote: fundamental (II).** A research published in the American Behavioral Scientist on the Latin American vote in Spain revealed that the Venezuelan community is the one that most attends voting in that European nation. According to La

Voz de América, "*Although not all Venezuelans are eligible to vote, those who can vote participate very actively*".

**Ready to be vaccinated?** Doctor Julio Castro, representative of the commission delegated to the National Vaccination Technical Board, assured that, if the payment to the Covax mechanism is completed, the first batch of vaccines could arrive in the country between June and July.

**International solidarity.** Fifty freezers sent by Unicef have arrived in the country to keep the COVID-19 vaccines at the required temperature. Each of the freezers will allow the storage of about 85,000 doses, and the organization will send 50 more in another flight whose date has not yet been confirmed.

**Strong accusations.** The president of Ecuador, Lenín Moreno, blamed Nicolás Maduro for financing violent actions in the recent protests in Colombia, and added that he had informed his Colombian counterpart, Iván Duque, of having detected interference on the part of the Venezuelan.

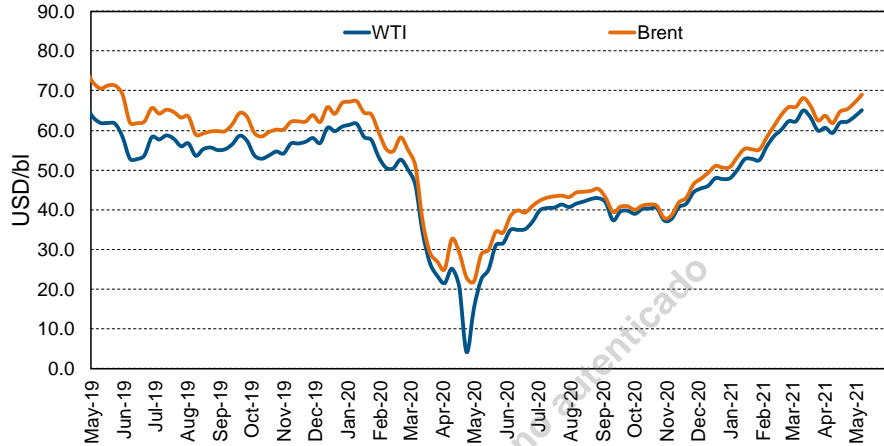
**No peace in Venezuela (I).** The NGO Espacio Público, dedicated to the defense of freedom of expression, documented 36 violations to freedom of expression in April. The organization pointed out that "*among the most frequent aggressions were: censorship, intimidation and threats*" and added that 32% of the victims are journalists, 23% are media and 14% are "*citizens in general*".

**No peace in Venezuela (II).** The NGO Fundaredes warned of an increase in crime in Venezuela's border states. In its report Curva de la Violencia, the organization pointed out that part of the homicides occurred in the midst of armed confrontations and there was "*direct participation of Venezuelan state officials*".

**Help to fellow citizens.** Authorities of the Government of the Canary Islands signed an agreement to collaborate with their citizens in Venezuela in the processing of aid that the Spanish authorities made available to them, such as benefits from the Spain Health Foundation, food cards and medicine cards.

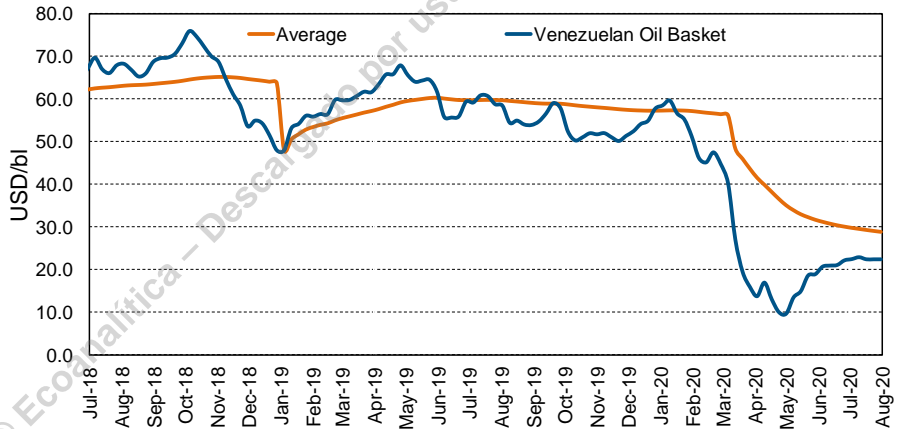
**ECONOMIC INDICATORS**

**Oil Prices  
(WTI and Brent)**



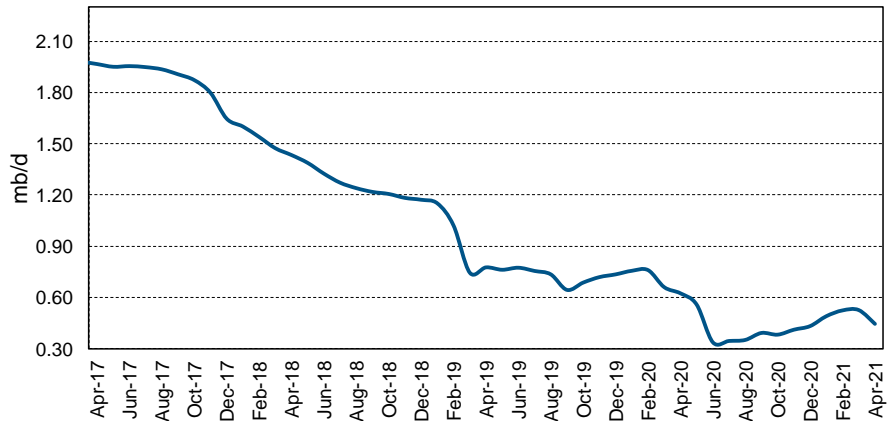
Sources: Menpet and Ecoanalítica

**Oil Price  
(Venezuelan Basket)**



Sources: Menpet and Ecoanalítica

**Oil Production  
(Secondary sources)**

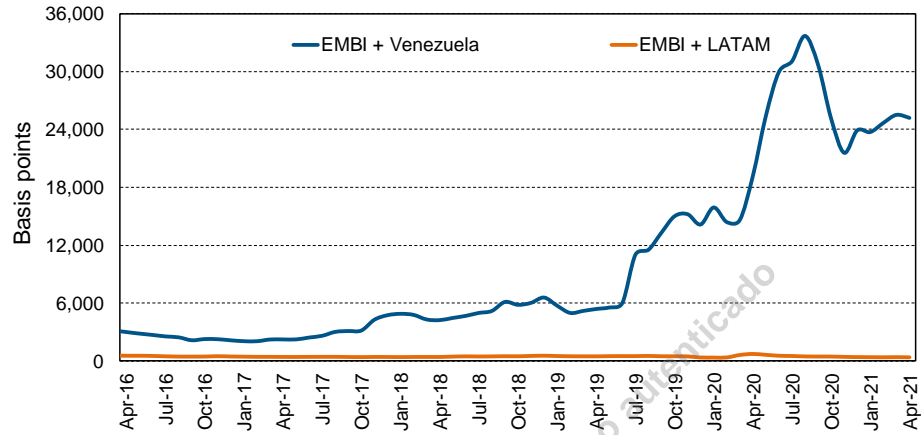


Sources: OPEC and Ecoanalítica

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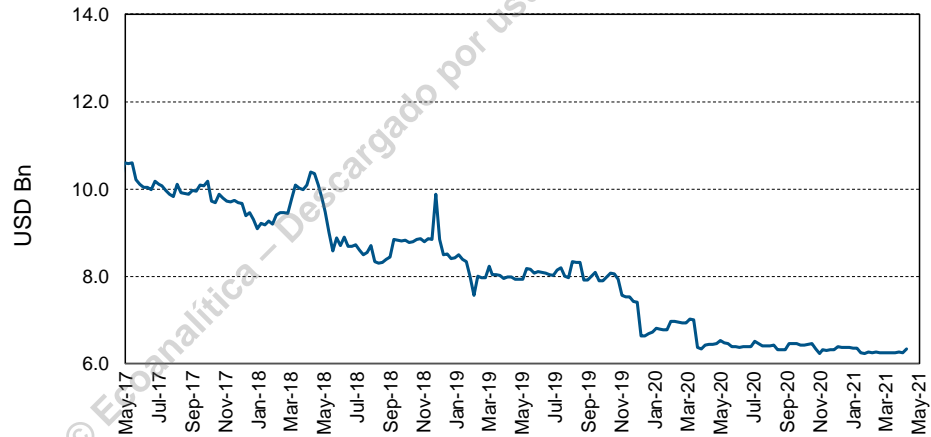
**ECONOMIC INDICATORS**

**EMBI**



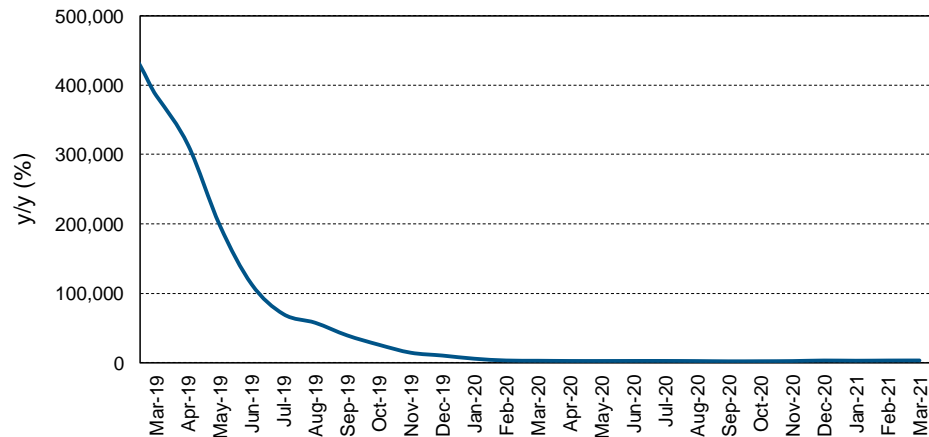
Sources: BCRP and Ecoanalítica

**FX Reserves (BCV)**



Sources: BCV and Ecoanalítica

**Inflation (BCV)**



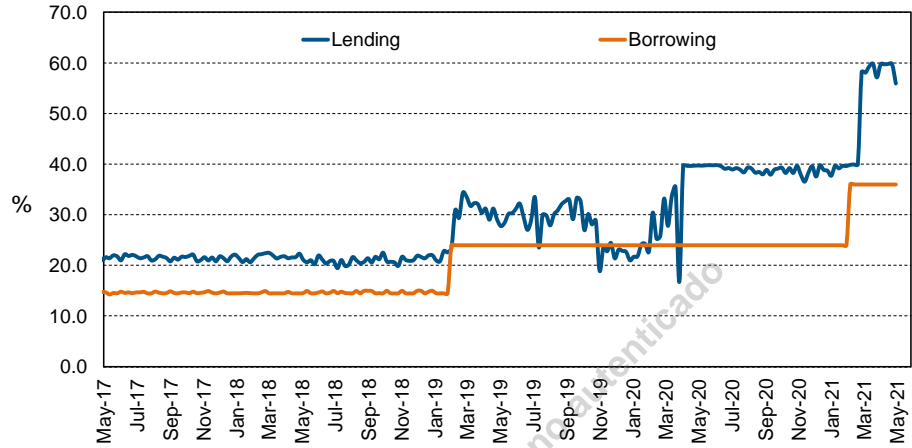
Sources: BCV and Ecoanalítica

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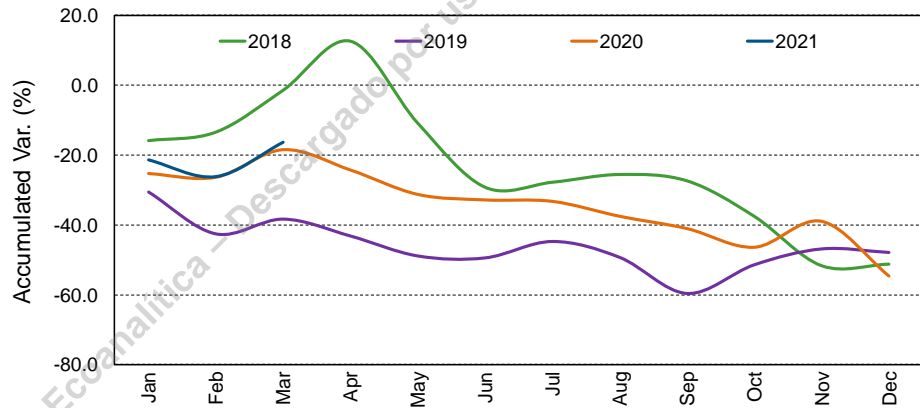
**ECONOMIC INDICATORS**

**Interest Rate  
(Six major banks)**



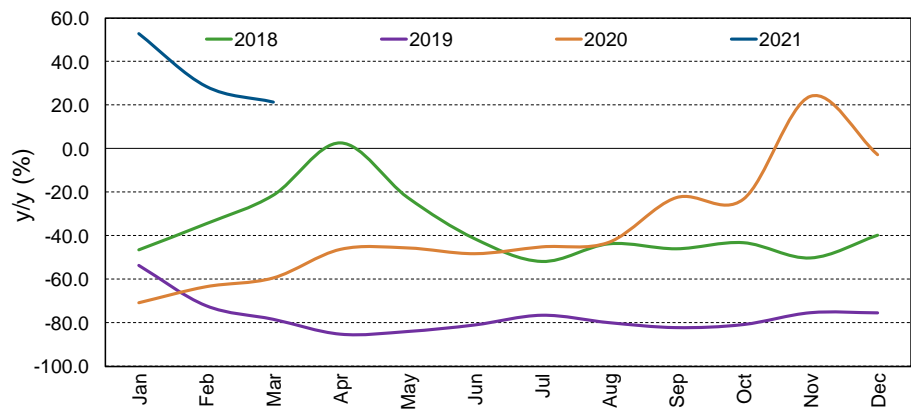
Sources: BCV and Ecoanalítica

**M2 Expansion  
(Real)**



Sources: BCV and Ecoanalítica

**Loan Portfolio  
(Real)**



Sources: SUDEBAN and Ecoanalítica

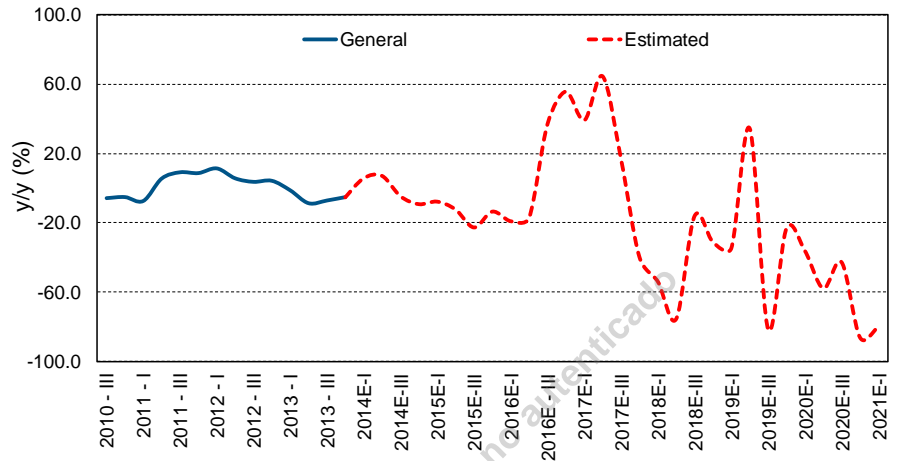
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May 2021

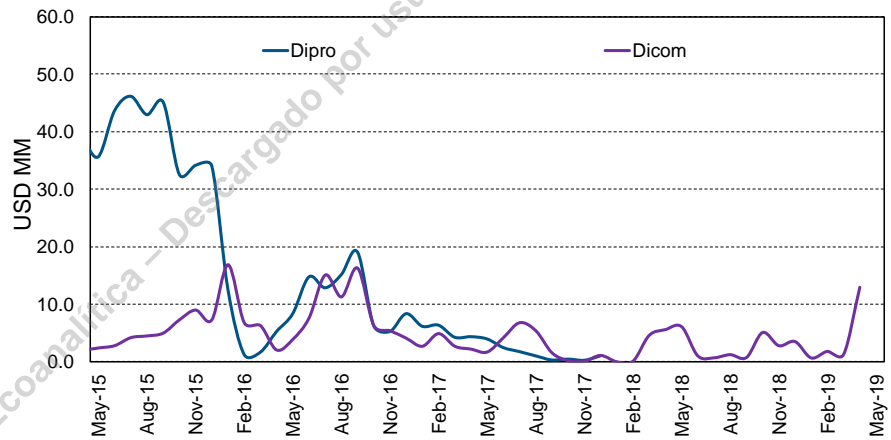
**ECONOMIC INDICATORS**

**Real Wage Index**



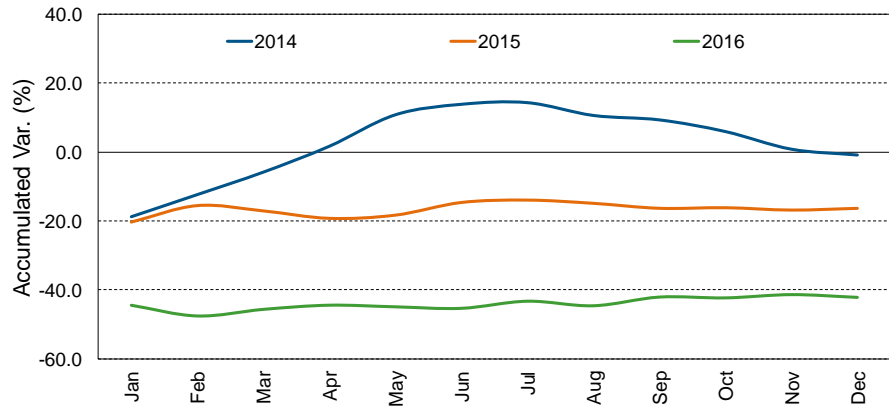
Sources: BCV and Ecoanalítica

**Disbursements to the Private Sector (Daily Average)**



Source: Ecoanalítica

**Primary Spending NTO (Real - Central Government)**



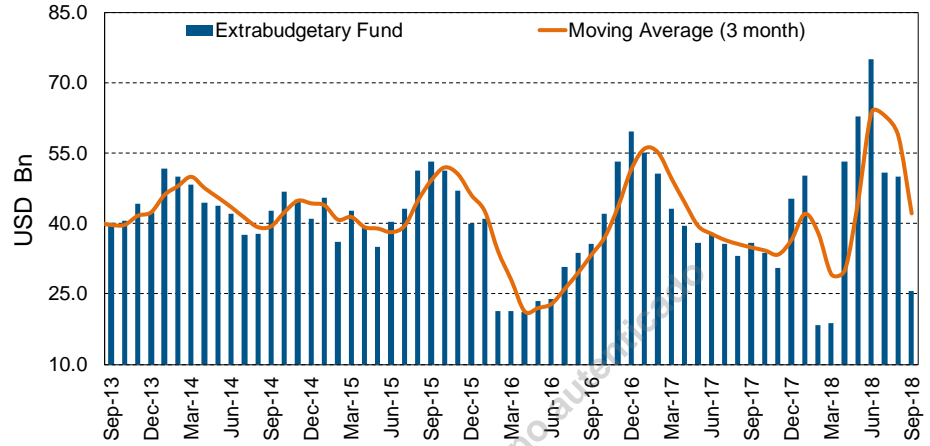
Sources: ONT and Ecoanalítica

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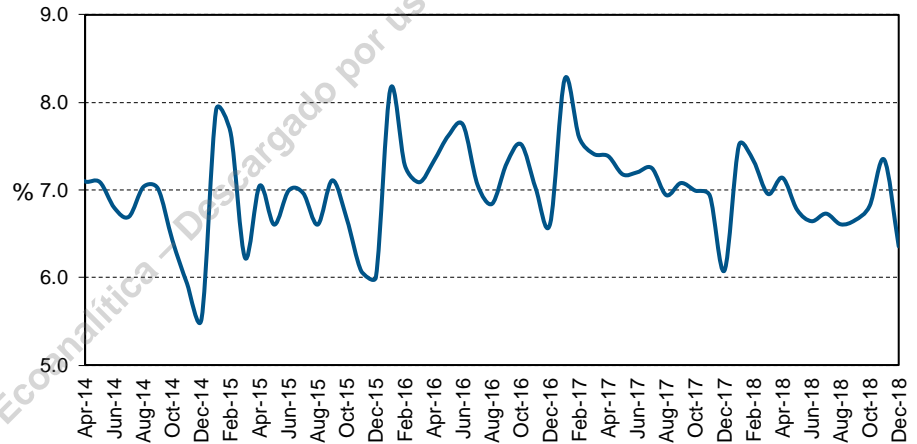
**ECONOMIC INDICATORS**

**State Extrabudgetary Resources**



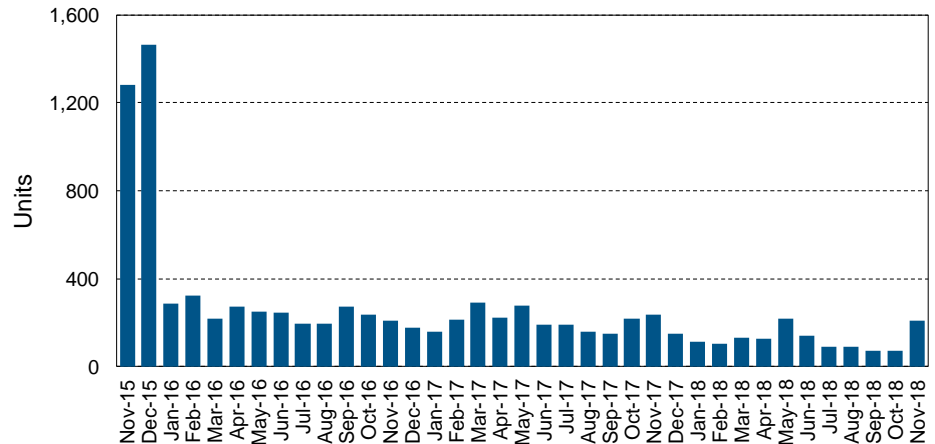
Source: Ecoanalítica

**Unemployment Rate**



Sources: INE and Ecoanalítica

**Vehicle Sales**



Sources: CAVENEZ and Ecoanalítica

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