

# Japanese Economy 2024: Why does BOJ not raise interest rates?

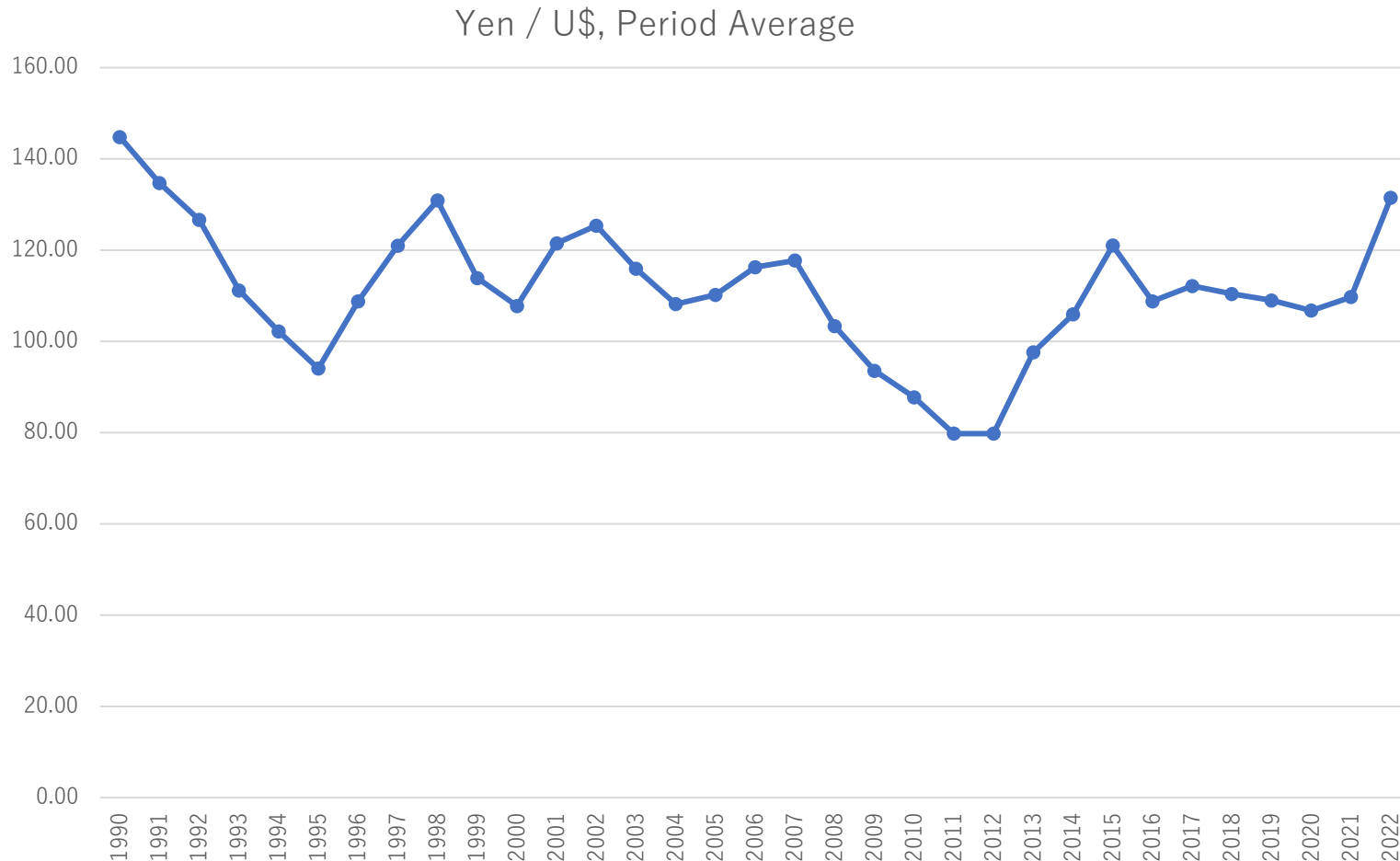
Ryoichi IMAI

# 目次

1. Current States of the Japanese Economy
2. BOJ is slow in move under current inflation and the Weak Yen
3. Price Hike in Energy and Food
4. What drives the Yen depreciation?

# Current State of Japanese Economy

# Yen Depreciation

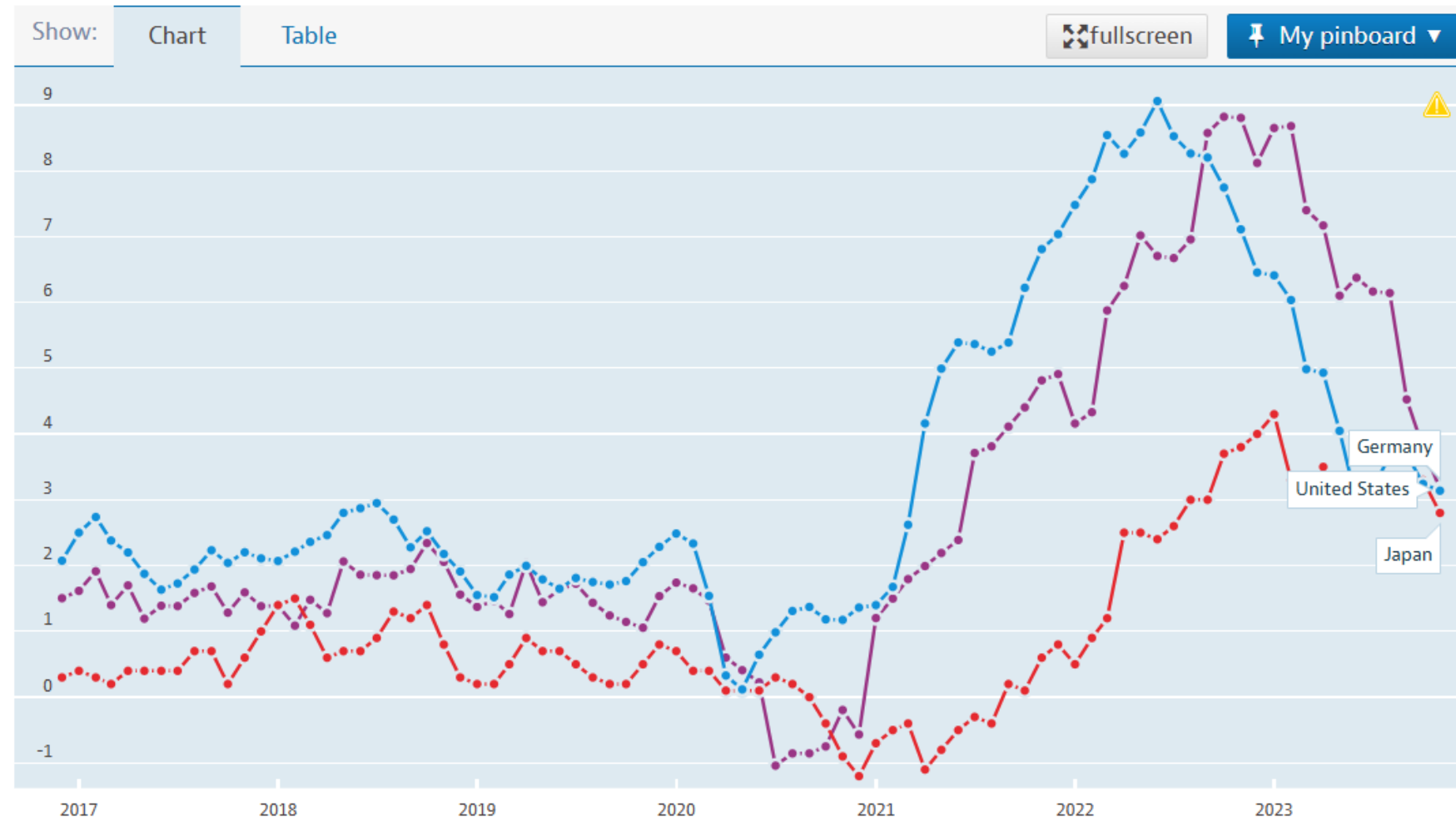


- Japanese Yen has been staying in the range of 100-120Y/\$ in the last three decades except for the period of 2008-2013.
- However, the current inflation reducing the international value of the Yen unexpectedly.

# Inflation (CPI)

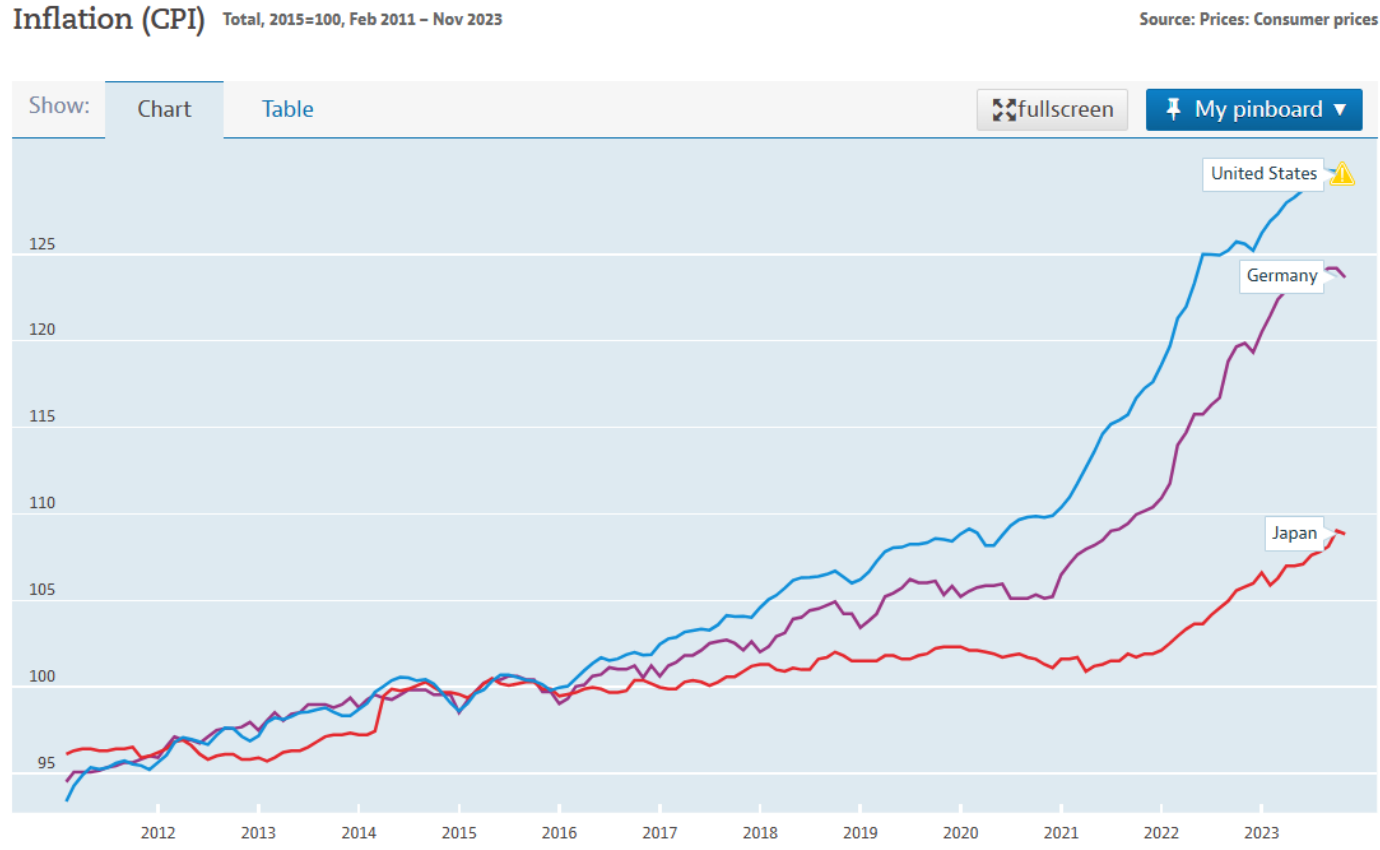
Inflation (CPI) Total, Annual growth rate (%), Dec 2016 – Nov 2023

Source: Prices: Consumer prices



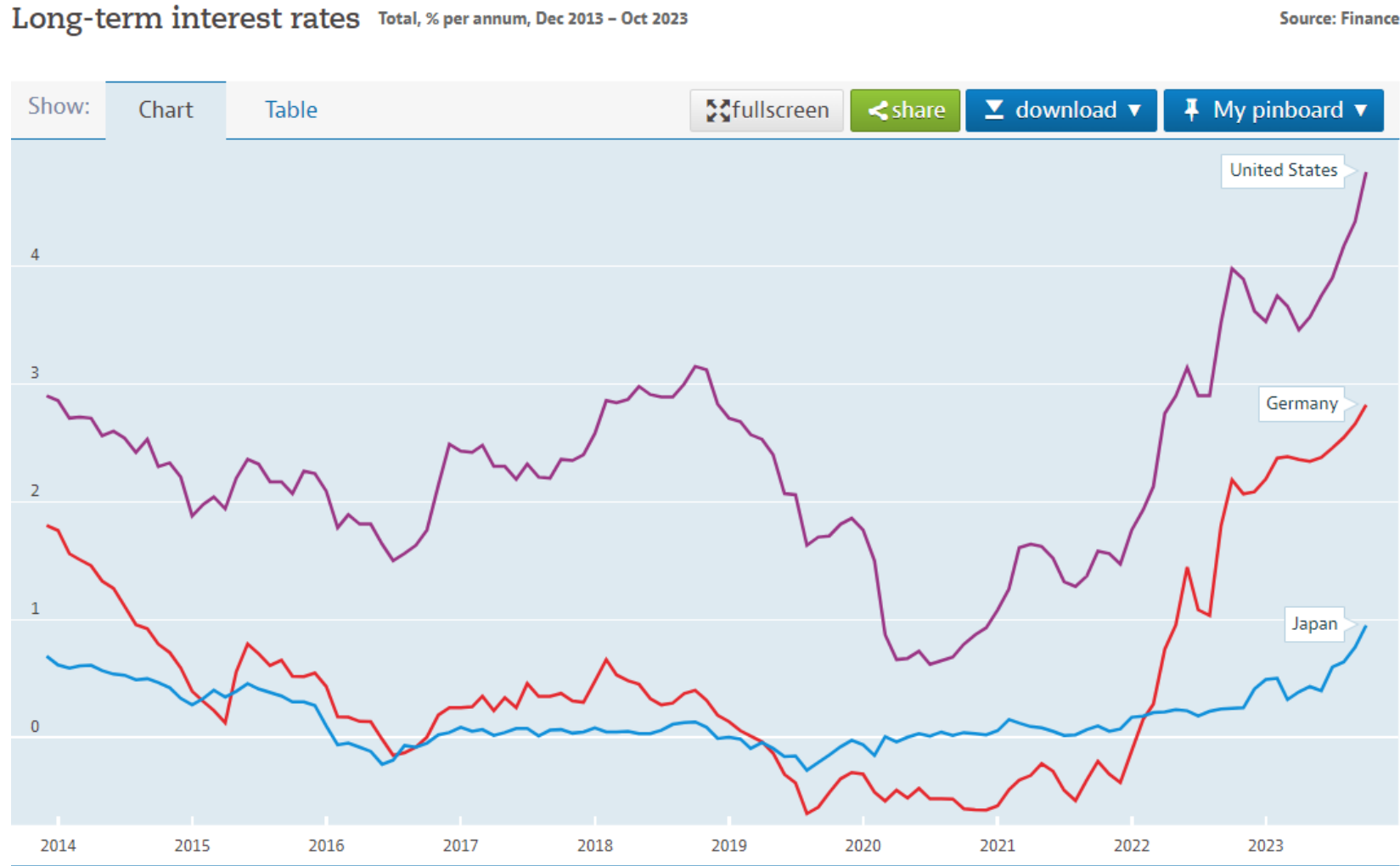
- In Europe and USA, inflation hike started in early 2021, and recorded a peak in Spring 2022.
- Japan's inflation follows the world but is much behind US and Europe. It reached a peak in early 2023.
- Now the inflation rate seems to converge to 3 to 4 % in the three economies.

# Cumulative Inflation Matters



- The impact of inflation on the national economy should be assessed by the cumulative inflation rate (or price level) from the base year to date, not the current inflation rate.
- Although inflation in Europe and the United States is subsiding, price levels are still about 30% higher than they were before 2015.
- Prices in Japan, too, have risen by about 10% compared to 2015.
- Even if the inflation rate declines in the short term, if wages do not rise enough to compensate for the decline in purchasing power, the standard of living will decline for most citizens.
- Some citizens who invest in stocks and foreign currency deposits can thereby preserve their own purchasing power, but those with few assets will suffer inflation.

# Long-term interest rates



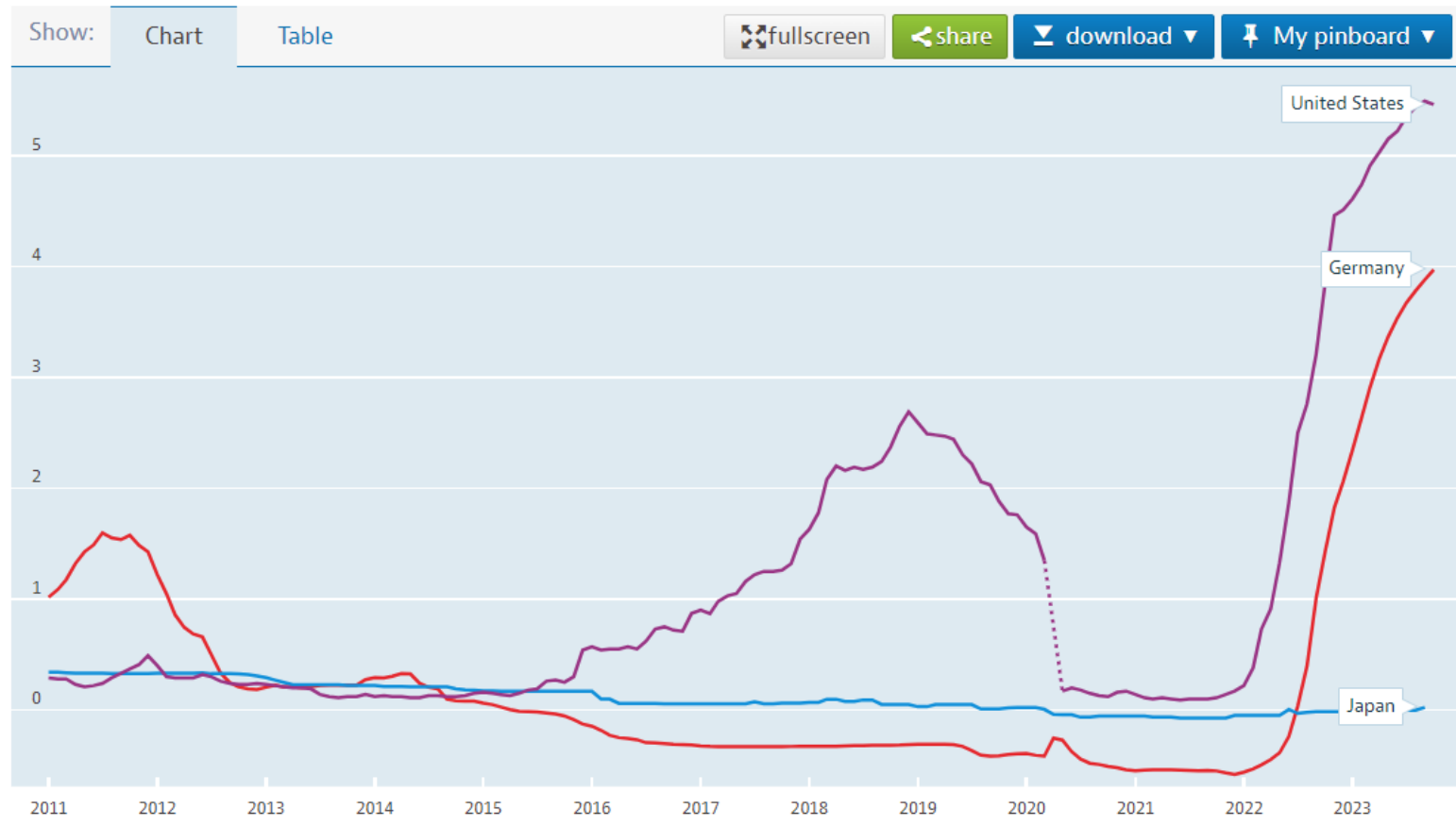
- For 2015-2019, US and Europe seems to leave the quantitative ease.
- However, the Coronavirus Pandemic suddenly prevented central banks from returning to normalization.
- In the recovery from the pandemic, the central banks let the long-term interest rates rise to 4% in US and 3% in Europe.
- In contrast to US and Europe, the BOJ has kept a very-low interest rate policy until recently, while the long-term interest rate is gradually rising to 1%.

<https://data.oecd.org/interest/long-term-interest-rates.htm#indicator-chart>

# Short-term interest rates

Short-term interest rates Total, % per annum, Jan 2011 – Oct 2023

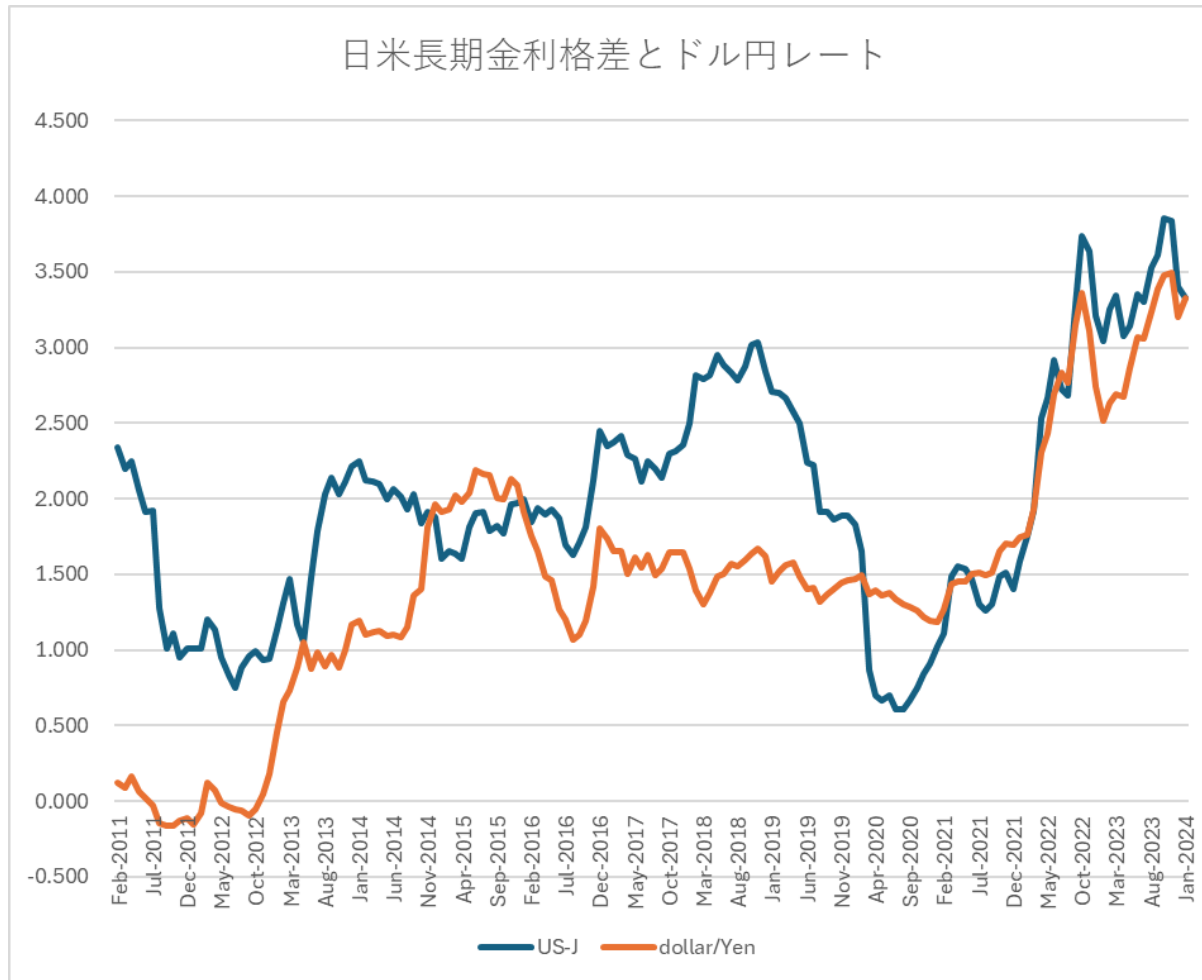
Source: Finance



- The Covid-19 Period (2020-2021) :
  - US - zero
  - Germany - negative
  - Japan – zero.
- In 2022, US and Germany started to raise the short-term interest rates, which has reached 5% in US and 4% in Germany.
- BOJ still keeps zero interest rate.

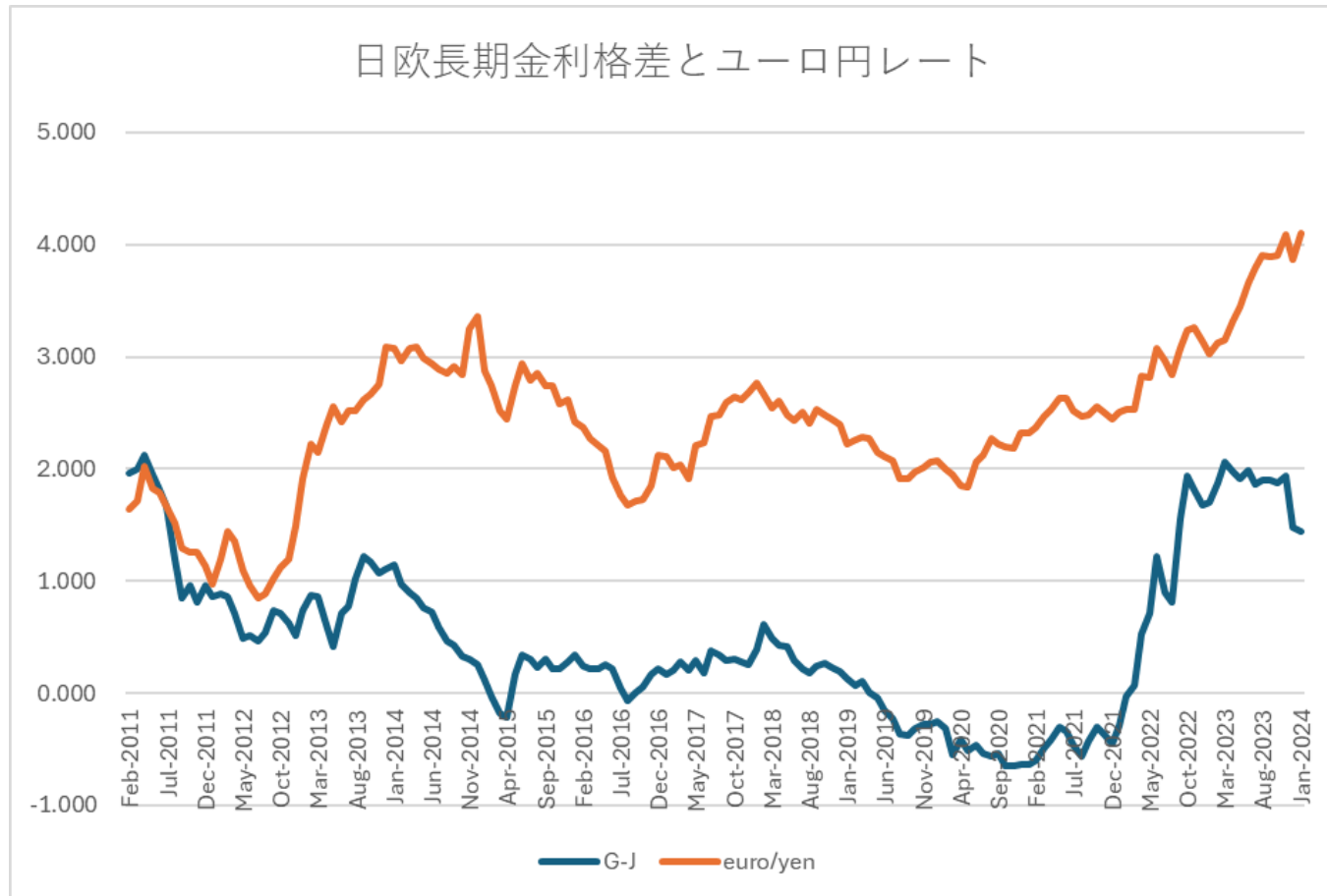


# The Dollar (Yen) and the Long-term Interest Rate Gap between US and Japan



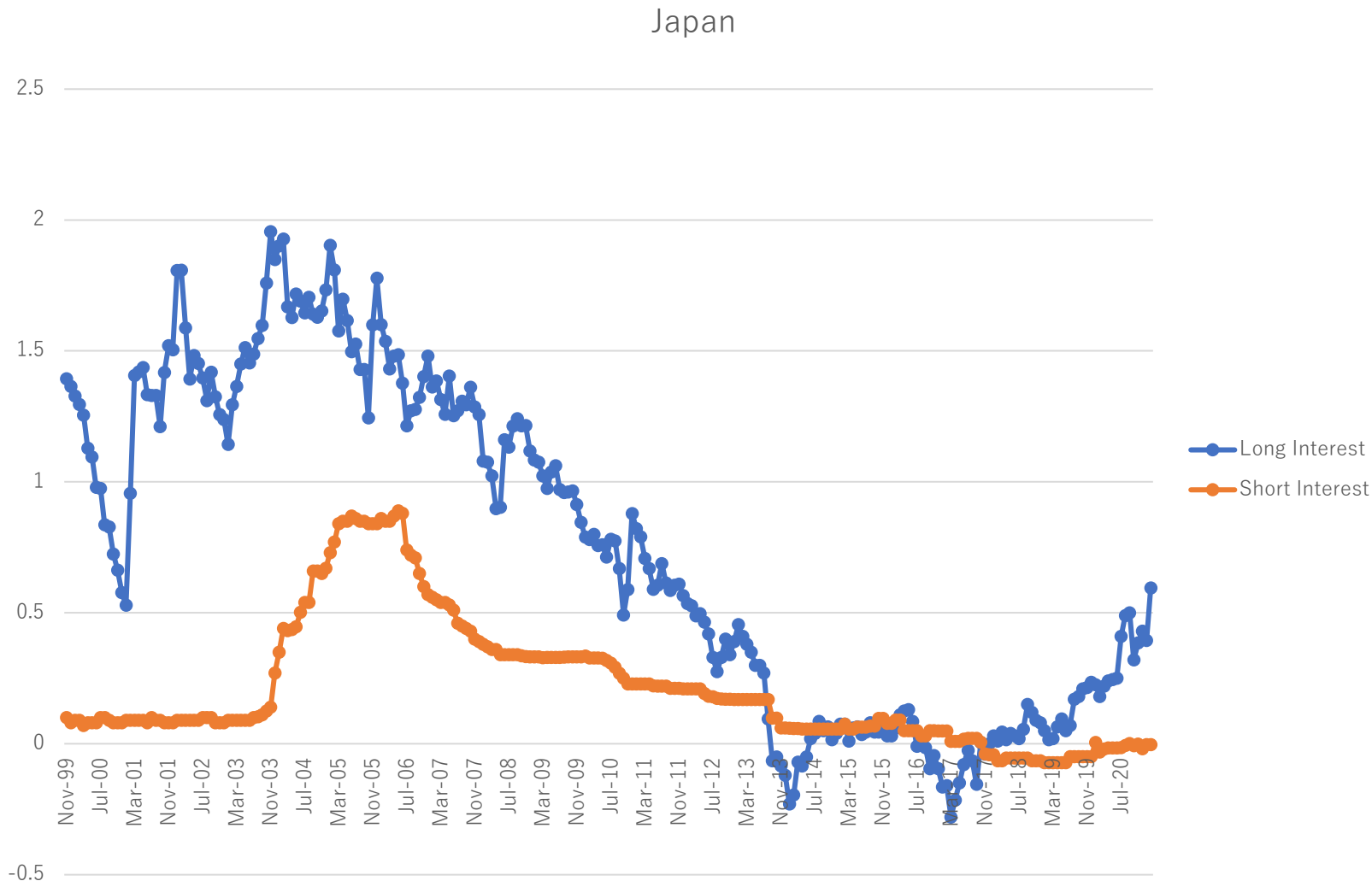
- After 2021, the U.S.-Japan interest rate differential appears to explain exchange rate fluctuations well.
- Before 2020, however, there does not appear to be a regular relationship between the U.S.-Japan interest rate differential and the exchange rate.
- In the 2010s, the U.S.-Japan interest rate differential fluctuated widely in response to changes in U.S. monetary policy, but the exchange rate remained very stable until 2021.

# The Euro (Yen) and the Long-term Interest Rate Gap between EU and Japan



- Compared to the dollar-yen rate, the euro-yen rate appears to move relatively regularly to the Japan-Europe (Japan-Germany) interest rate differential.
- However, since 2013, the yen has tended to weaken excessively relative to the interest rate differential.

# Short and Long Interest Rates: Japan

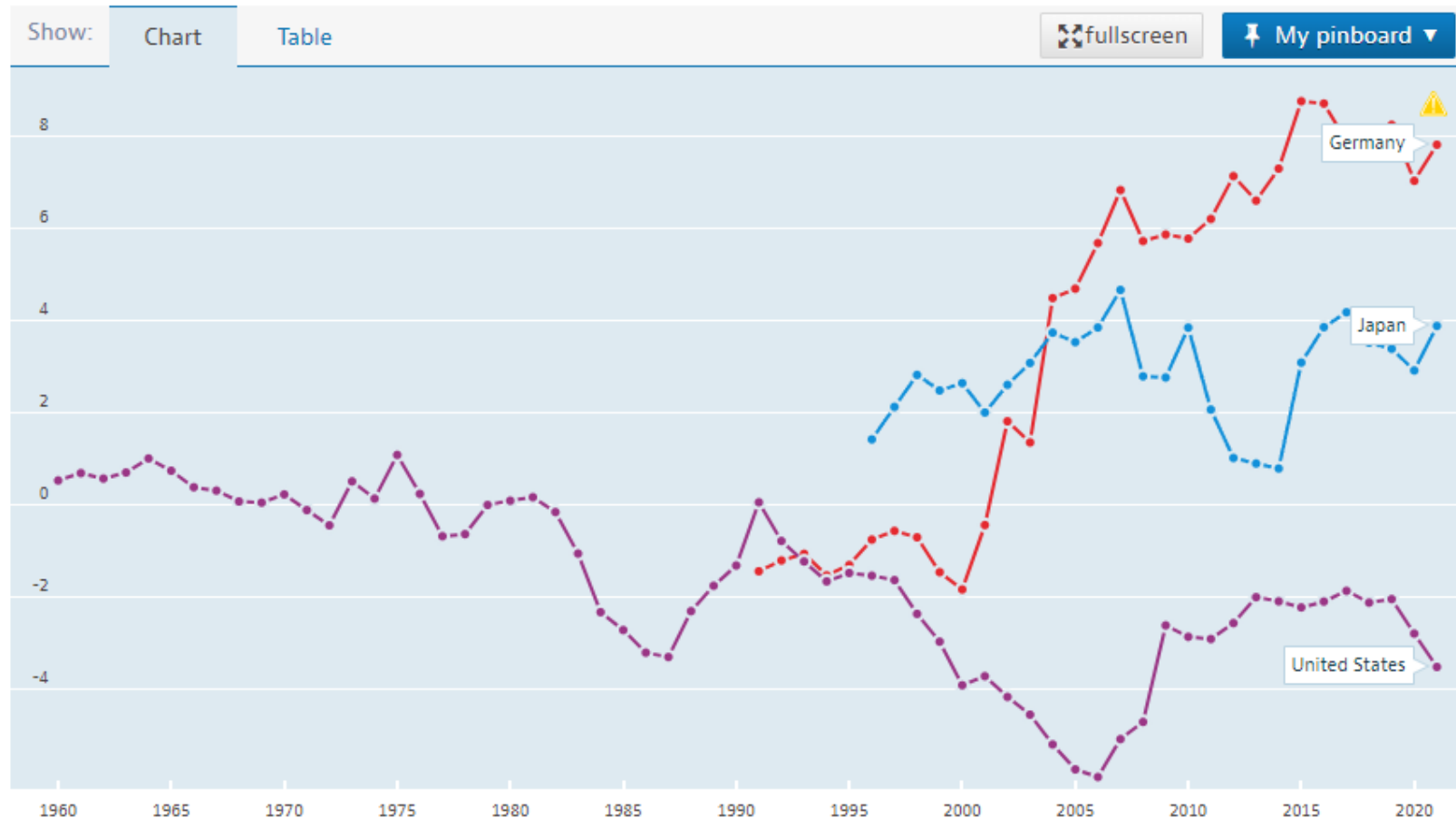


- For most time, the long-term interest has been higher than the short-term interest rate.
- In 2013 and 2017, the long-term interest rate was negative.
- Since 2017, the short-term interest rate has been negative.

# Current Account

Current account balance Total, % of GDP, 1960 - 2021

Source: Balance of payments BPM6



- Changes in the current account balance have not had a significant impact on the exchange rate.
- Germany's current account balance has been significantly in surplus since 2005.
- The U.S. current account balance deteriorated significantly until the Lehman crisis (2008), but then the deficit shrank until the Corona crisis.
- In contrast, the underlying tone of Japan's current account balance is a surplus, although not as large as Germany's, and tends to move just opposite to that of the U.S.
- Nevertheless, the impact of these factors on the exchange rate is unknown.

Why does BOJ move so slowly?

# BOJ Inflation Forecast

—対前年度比、%。なお、< >内は政策委員見通しの中央値。

	実質GDP	消費者物価指数 (除く生鮮食品)	(参考) 消費者物価指数 (除く生鮮食品・エネルギー)
2022 年度	+1.2 ~ +1.2 <+1.2>	+3.0	+2.2
1月時点の見通し	+1.9 ~ +2.0 <+1.9>	+3.0 ~ +3.0 <+3.0>	+2.1 ~ +2.1 <+2.1>
2023 年度	+1.1 ~ +1.5 <+1.4>	+1.7 ~ +2.0 <+1.8>	+2.5 ~ +2.7 <+2.5>
1月時点の見通し	+1.5 ~ +1.9 <+1.7>	+1.6 ~ +1.8 <+1.6>	+1.7 ~ +1.9 <+1.8>
2024 年度	+1.0 ~ +1.3 <+1.2>	+1.8 ~ +2.1 <+2.0>	+1.5 ~ +1.8 <+1.7>
1月時点の見通し	+0.9 ~ +1.3 <+1.1>	+1.8 ~ +1.9 <+1.8>	+1.5 ~ +1.8 <+1.6>
2025 年度	+1.0 ~ +1.1 <+1.0>	+1.6 ~ +1.9 <+1.6>	+1.8 ~ +2.0 <+1.8>

(注1) 「大勢見通し」は、各政策委員が最も蓋然性の高いと考える見通しの数値について、最大値と最小値を1個ずつ除いて、幅で示したものであり、その幅は、予測誤差などを踏まえた見通しの上限・下限を意味しない。

(注2) 各政策委員は、既に決定した政策を前提として、また先行きの政策運営については市場の織り込みを参考にして、上記の見通しを作成している。

(注3) 2022 年度の消費者物価指数は、実績値。

—対前年度比、%。なお、< >内は政策委員見通しの中央値。

	実質GDP	消費者物価指数 (除く生鮮食品)	(参考) 消費者物価指数 (除く生鮮食品・エネルギー)
2023 年度	+1.6 ~ +1.9 <+1.8>	+2.8 ~ +2.9 <+2.8>	+3.7 ~ +3.9 <+3.8>
10月時点の見通し	+1.8 ~ +2.0 <+2.0>	+2.7 ~ +3.0 <+2.8>	+3.5 ~ +3.9 <+3.8>
2024 年度	+1.0 ~ +1.2 <+1.2>	+2.2 ~ +2.5 <+2.4>	+1.6 ~ +2.1 <+1.9>
10月時点の見通し	+0.9 ~ +1.4 <+1.0>	+2.7 ~ +3.1 <+2.8>	+1.6 ~ +2.1 <+1.9>
2025 年度	+1.0 ~ +1.2 <+1.0>	+1.6 ~ +1.9 <+1.8>	+1.8 ~ +2.0 <+1.9>
10月時点の見通し	+0.8 ~ +1.2 <+1.0>	+1.6 ~ +2.0 <+1.7>	+1.8 ~ +2.2 <+1.9>

(注1) 「大勢見通し」は、各政策委員が最も蓋然性の高いと考える見通しの数値について、最大値と最小値を1個ずつ除いて、幅で示したものであり、その幅は、予測誤差などを踏まえた見通しの上限・下限を意味しない。

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The right table is the BOJ's price outlook as of the end of January 2024. First of all, we can see that the Bank of Japan had estimated prices for FY2023 to be about 1% lower than they were at the end of April 2023. This is the reason for the delay in the policy shift, but the previous governor, Kuroda, left office last spring. It was difficult for newly appointed Governor Ueda to make a dramatic change in policy immediately after his predecessor retreated.

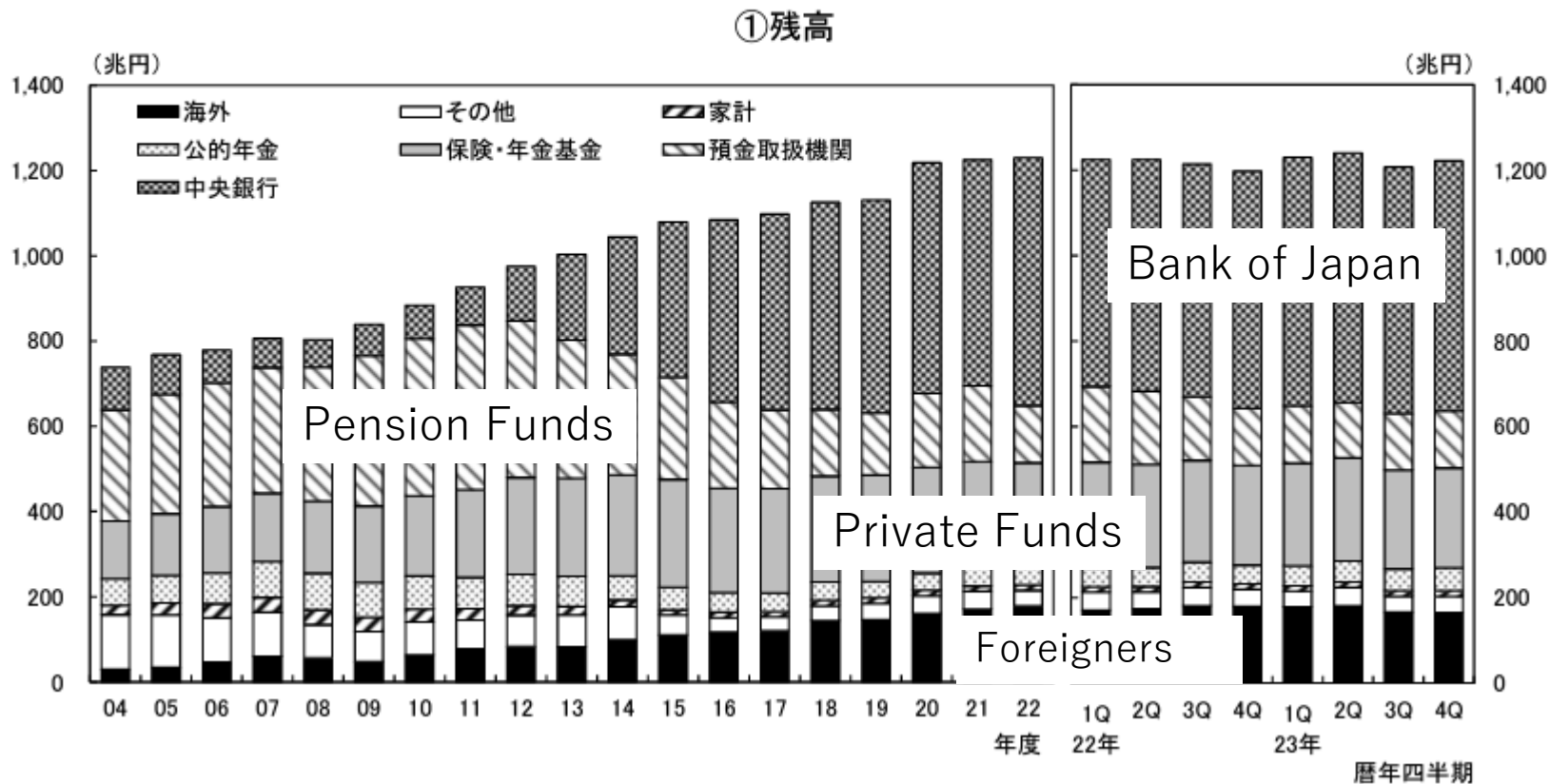
<https://boj.or.jp/mopo/outlook/gor2401a.pdf>

The left table was the BOJ's price forecast as of April 28, 2023, which showed a much higher price forecast for FY23 but a decline to less than 2% in FY24. Therefore, last spring, the end of the extra-dimensional easing was postponed.

<https://boj.or.jp/mopo/outlook/gor2304a.pdf>

# Who holds JGBs?

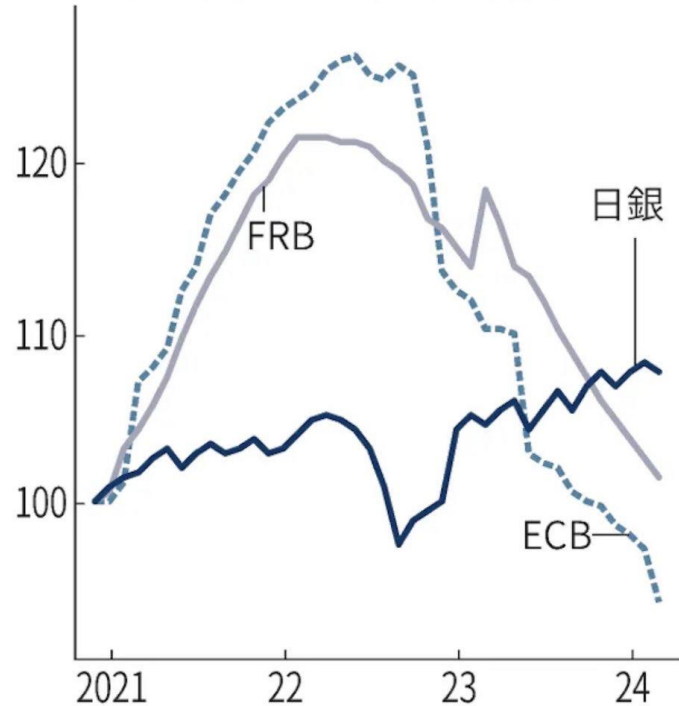
(図表6-2) 国債等の保有者内訳



- According to the Bank of Japan's Flow of Funds statistics, the BOJ's share of JGBs was around 10% until 2012. That has now reached 47%.
- Mr. Shirakawa, the former Governor of the Bank of Japan, must have realized that holding such a huge amount of JGBs would leave the BOJ with little flexibility in its monetary policy.
- The outstanding amount of JGBs itself has been on a leveling off trend since 2020. This is probably the result of both the consumption tax hike and the inflation tax.

# Balance Sheets of the Central Banks

日銀は資産の削減に出遅れ



(注) 2020年末=100として各中銀の  
総資産残高を指数化

Whereas European and U.S. central banks were quick to shrink their central bank balance sheets in response to the recent rise in inflation, the BOJ lagged behind in asset reduction.

<https://nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOUB256DQ0V20C24A4000000/>



## (参考) 日銀財務のシミュレーション

- 中銀財務に関する有識者からは、一定のシナリオを設定したうえで、日本銀行の先行きの財務をシミュレーションしたものが発表されている。結果をみると、シナリオの設定の仕方に応じて、大きく幅のあるものとなっている。
- シミュレーションを見る際には、上述した4つの要因などについて、どのような前提が置かれているのかにも留意する必要。

		Fujiki and Tomura[2017]	伊藤[2022]	左三川・中野[2023]
シミュレーション結果		19年間赤字継続	赤字回避	赤字回避
バランスシートの規模 (基準時点)		432兆円 (2016年6月末)	736兆円 (2022年3月末)	733兆円 (2023年1月末)
国債の再投資規模 (再投資対象)		再投資なし (注)	償還額の3分の2 (5年債)	償還額の4分の3 (10年債)
長短金利の推移	短期	2年で2.75%に上昇	初年度+0.1% 年+0.25% (上限2.5%)	初年度+0.1% 年+0.125% (上限1.0%)
	長期	—	年+0.5% (上限4.0%)	初年度+0.5% 年+0.125% (上限2.0%)
銀行券発行残高		名目GDP比8%まで減少	—	年率2%で増加
上記以外のシナリオ		3シナリオ: 銀行券需要の収益への感応度分析を実施	5シナリオ: 再投資規模、短期金利の上昇ペースを変更 (複数シナリオで赤字)	3シナリオ: 短期金利・長期金利の上昇ペースを変更 (複数シナリオで赤字)

- **The BOJ's BS problem** is that if the BOJ reduces its holdings of JGBs as it cuts back on monetary easing, interest rates will rise both on government debts and on reserve deposits held by private banks with the BOJ, causing the BOJ to run a deficit.
- The BOJ refers to three scenarios. Under the first scenario, the deficit will continue for 20 years because the balance of JGBs held by the BOJ will be dramatically reduced.
- In contrast, in the second and third scenarios, the BOJ will continue to purchase JGBs, so the balance of JGBs held by the BOJ will not decrease that much and the deficit will be avoided because the BOJ will receive both the advantages and disadvantages of higher interest rates.
- The question is whether there is a way for the BOJ to raise interest rates without selling JGBs.

<https://boj.or.jp/mopo/outline/bpreview/bpr231206a.htm...>

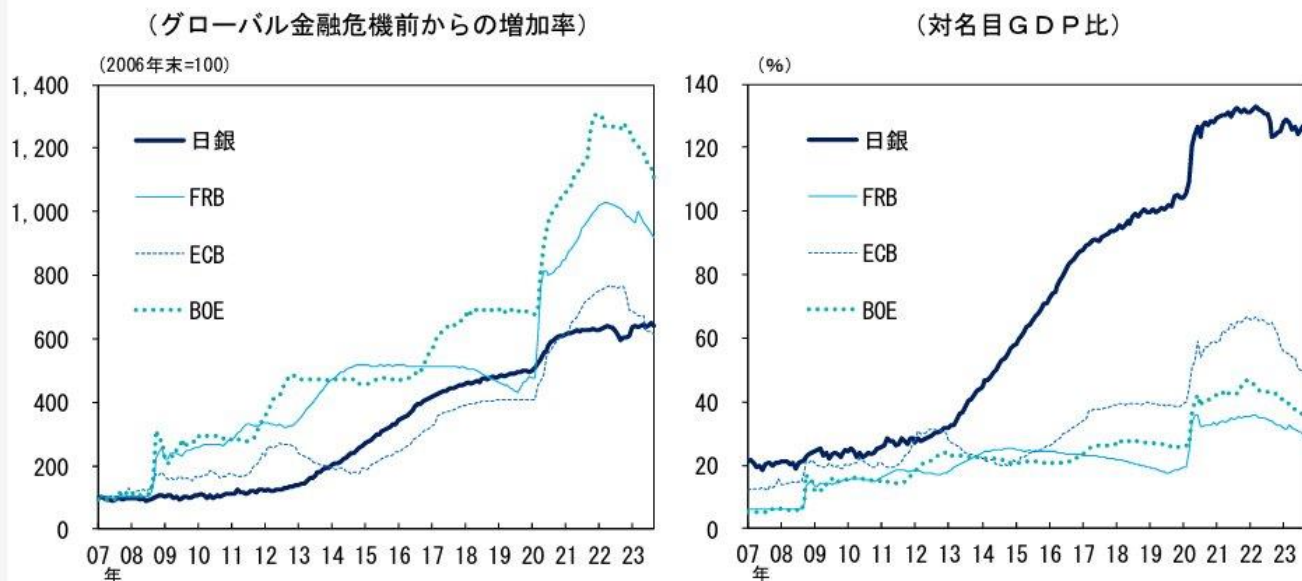
<https://boj.or.jp/mopo/outline/bpreview/data/bpr231206c.pdf>

# QT: FRB, ECB and BOJ

## (1) 大規模な金融緩和の実施

- 日本銀行は1990年代後半以降、主要な海外中央銀行はグローバル金融危機の発生以降、非伝統的な金融政策を実施。
- 各中央銀行ともに、バランスシートの規模は大きく拡大。

(図表1) 主要中央銀行のバランスシート規模の推移

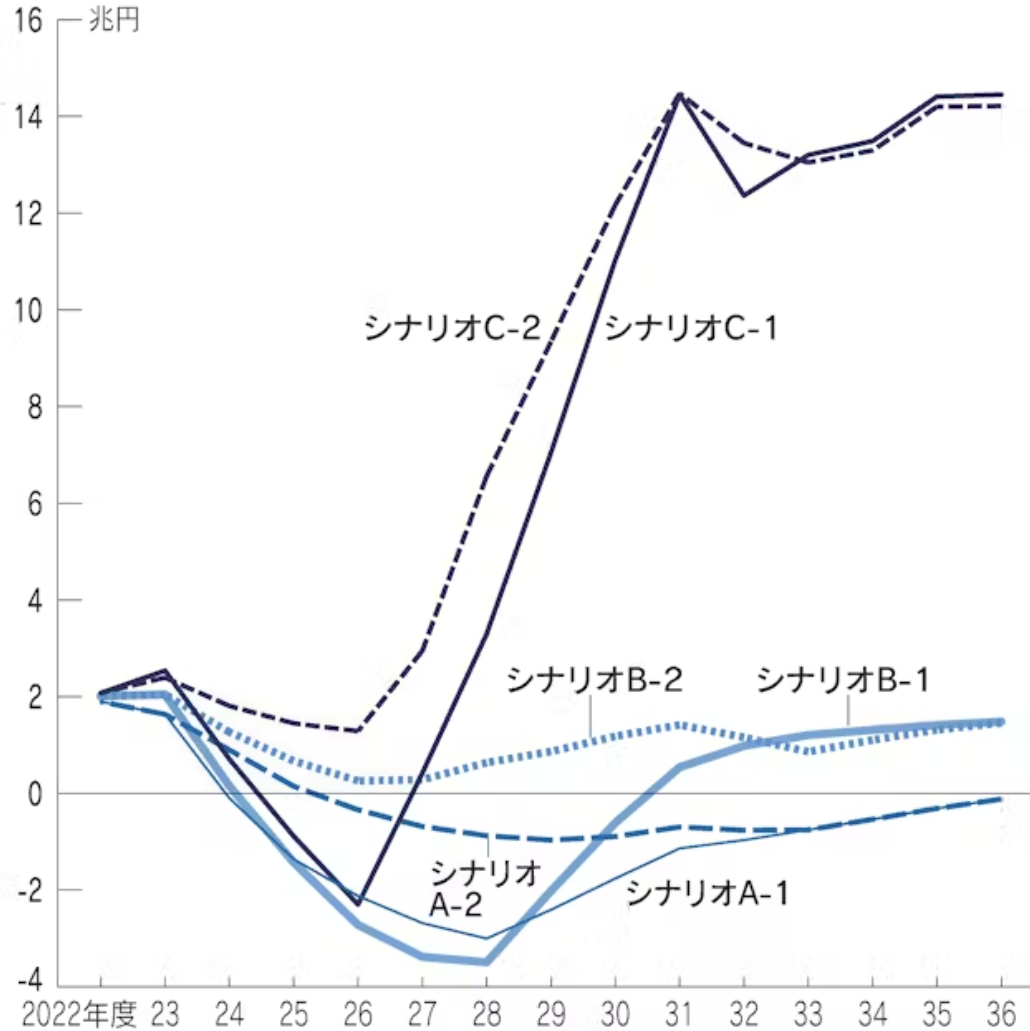


(出所) Haver、日本銀行

3

- Since the Lehman crisis, central banks in Japan, the U.S., and Europe have dramatically increased their holdings of government bonds.
- This trend was further extended in response to the Corona disaster.
- However, in order to cope with inflation during the economic recovery period, the central banks in Europe and the U.S. rapidly reduced their JGB holdings, whereas the BOJ's reduction of its JGB holdings did not proceed rapidly.
- The reason is that the BOJ holds far more bonds as a percentage of GDP than the Western central banks. At its peak, the BOJ's bond holdings exceed 120% of GDP, while the Western central banks' bond holdings are 30-60% of GDP.
- This means that a rise in interest rates will have a greater impact on the BOJ's BS than on the US and European Central Banks.

日銀の損益の変化

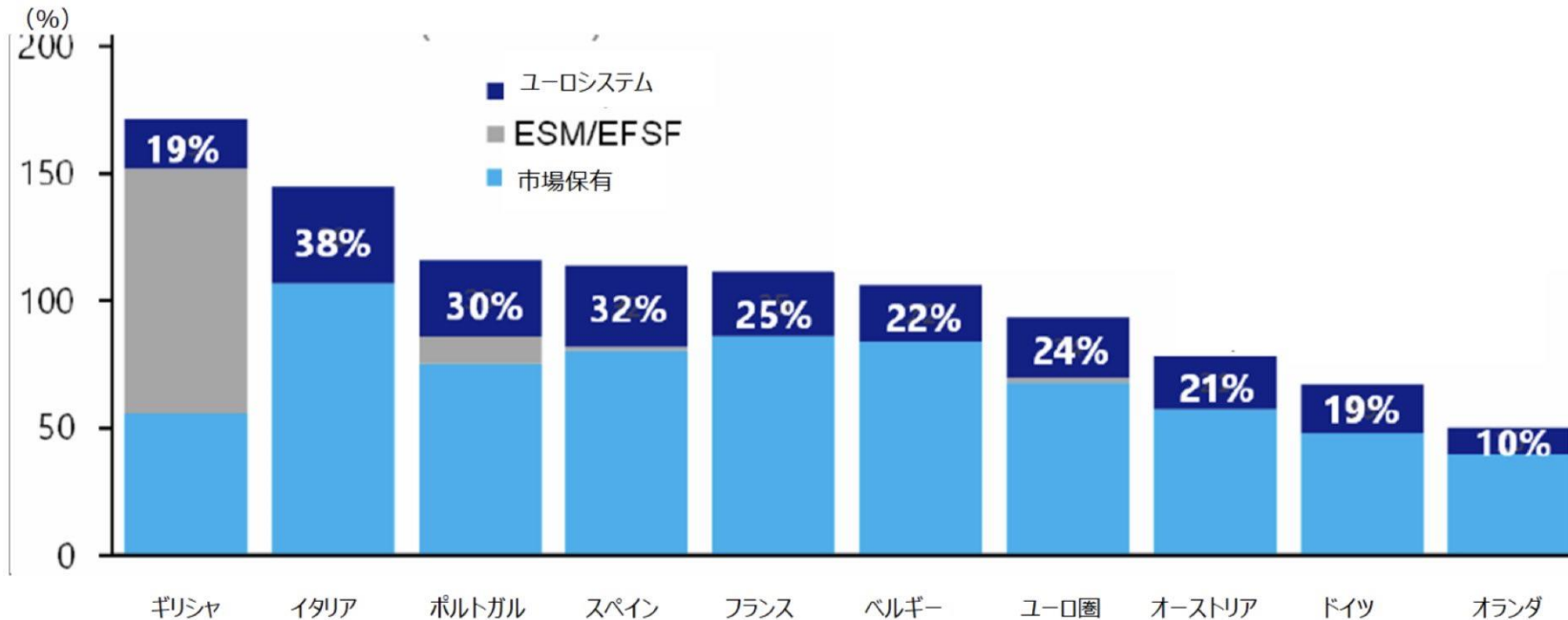


BOJ can avoid deficits simply by keeping its BS

<https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOCD1794J0X10C22A8000000/>

# Share of ECB holding to the EU sovereign debts

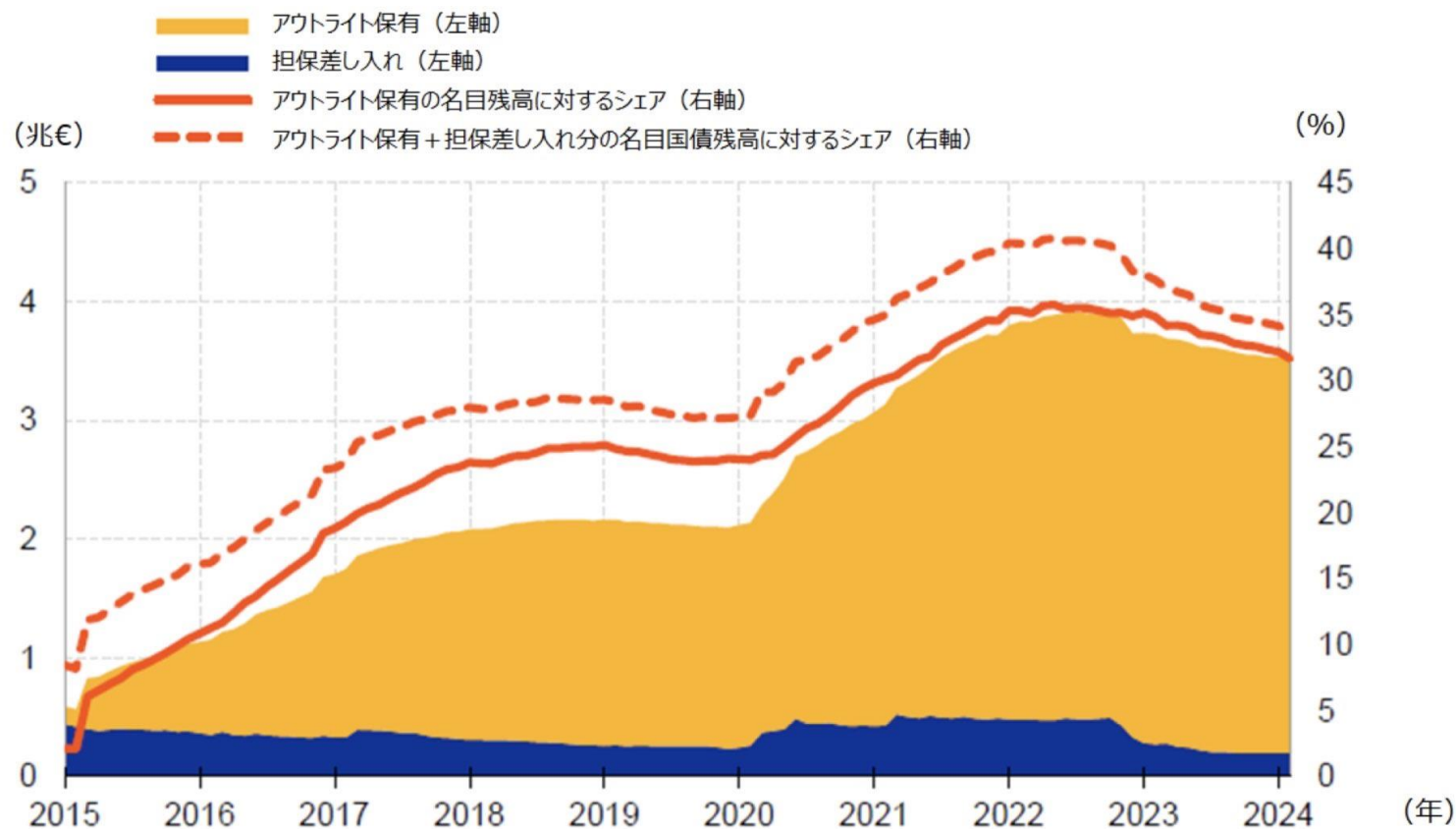
(図表4) 【IMF】ユーロ圏各国の gross 政府債務残高とユーロシステムが保有する割合



(資料) Nazim Belhocine, Ashok Vir Bhatia, and Jan Frie, "Raising Rates with a Large Balance Sheet: The Eurosystem's Net Income and its Fiscal Implications", Working Paper 23/145, International Monetary Fund, July 7, 2023, p10, Figure 5を基に日本総合研究所作成。

(原資料) ECBおよびIMFスタッフによる算出。

(図表5) ユーロシステムの国債買い入れ割合

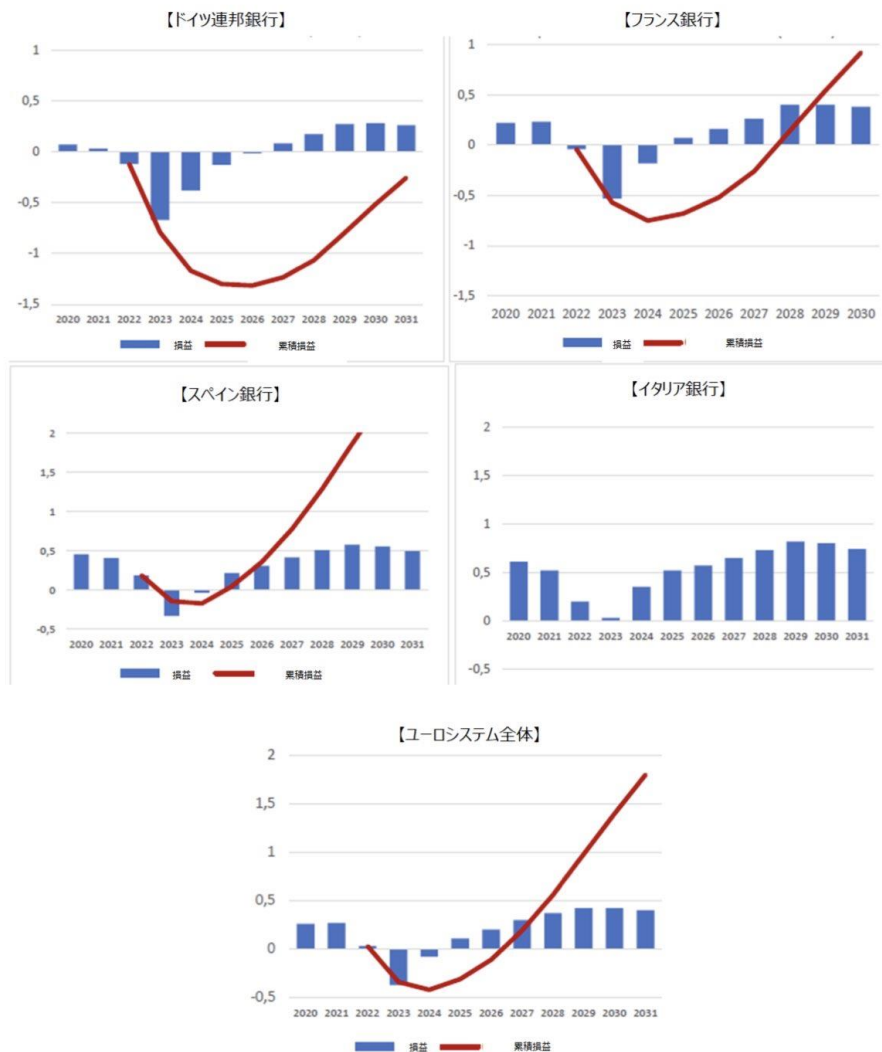


At the peak, ECB held 40% of sovereign debts in EU

(資料) Isabel Schnabel, "The Eurosystem's operational framework", *Speech at the Money Market Contact Group meeting*, March 14, 2024, Slides, p10を基に日本総合研究所作成.

(原資料) Eurosystem, CSDBおよびECBスタッフによる算出.

(図表 11) ユーロシステムを構成する中央銀行の損益の見通し  
(IMF 推計を基に CESifo が算出、対名目 GDP 比、%)



(資料) Paul De Grauwe and Yuemei Ji, “Fighting Inflation More Effectively without Transferring Central Bank’s Profits to Banks”, CESifo Working Papers, No 10741, Munich Society for the Promotion of Economic Research – CESifo GmbH, November 2023, p9, Figure 2を基に日本総合研究所作成。

(原資料) Nazim Belhocine, Ashok Vir Bhatia, and Jan Frie, “Raising Rates with a Large Balance Sheet: The Eurosystem’s Net Income and its Fiscal Implications”, Working Paper 23/145, International Monetary Fund, July 7, 2023, IMF, およびCESifo推計。

(原資料注) 本図の基となっているIMFの推計の前提は次の通り。①預金金利は2024年に3.5%でピークを付け、その後2.3%まで下落。②各中央銀行が保有するQEのポートフォリオのイールドは、2024～25年まで上昇した後、徐々に2%まで下落。③ECBのAPP（資産買い入れプログラム）は、満期が到来した債券の再投資をしないことにより徐々に落とされる。④PEPPは再投資によって、今日と同じレベルで維持される。

(注) イタリア銀行は本試算では赤字転落を回避できる見込みのため、本図では累積損益は表記されていない。

- The central banks of European countries have incurred many deficits in the process of BS contraction, but the accumulated deficits are expected to be eliminated around 2030.
- Thus, there is not much concern that rising interest rates will destabilize central bank finances, and currency depreciation has not occurred. Rather, the European currency is overvalued.
- There are a number of ways for the BOJ to allow interest rates to rise and not fall into deficit, so why hasn't the BOJ raised interest rates?
- Perhaps it is because raising interest rates is expected to bring about a recession in the short term. Not only would a rate hike make it more difficult for small and medium-sized businesses to finance their operations, but there are also concerns that it would raise mortgage rates and create a bad loan problem in the real estate sector.
- **Of fundamental importance, however, is that higher interest rates will make government budgeting more difficult.**

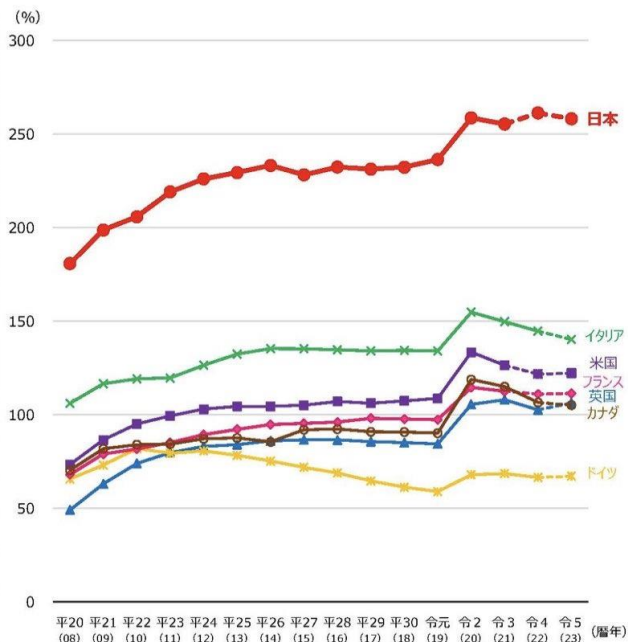
# International Comparison of Government Debts

## 債務残高の国際比較 (対GDP比)

債務残高の対GDP比は、G7諸国のみならず、その他の諸外国と比べても突出した水準となっています。

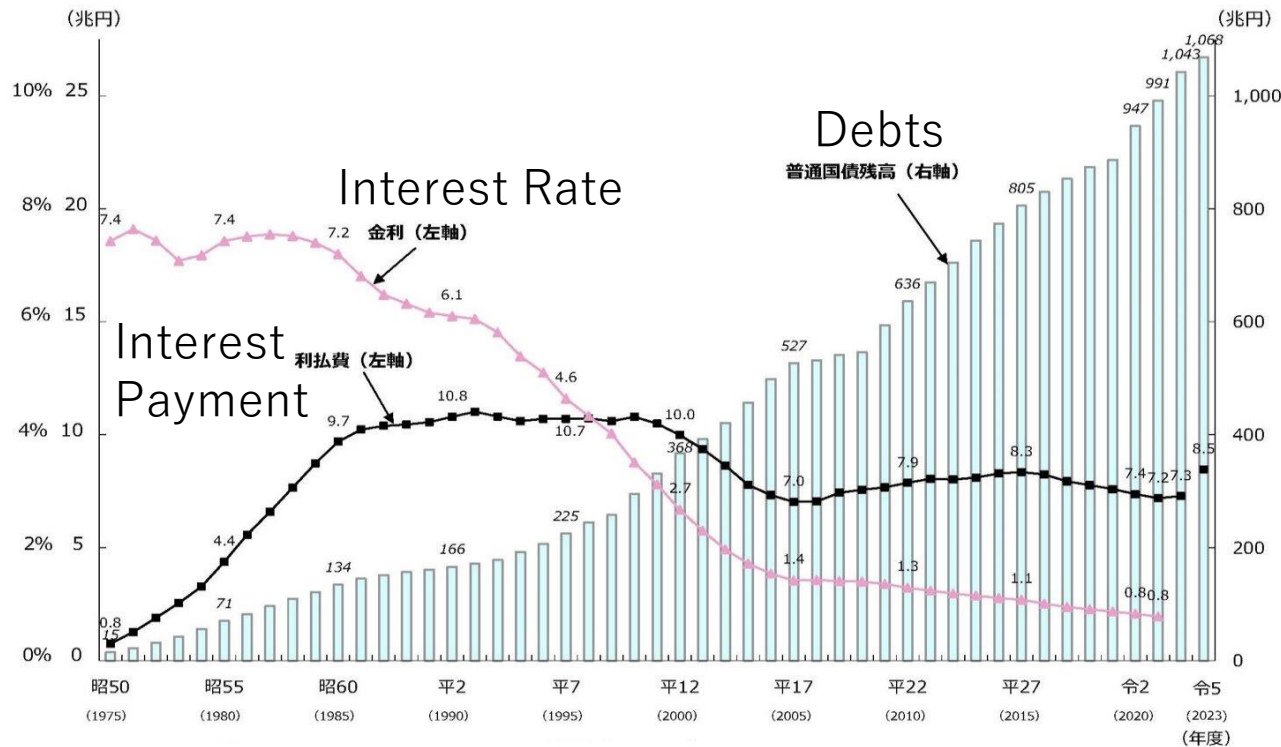
暦年	平20 (2008)	平21 (2009)	平22 (2010)	平23 (2011)	平24 (2012)	平25 (2013)	平26 (2014)	平27 (2015)
日本	180.9	198.8	205.9	219.2	226.1	229.5	233.3	228.3
米国	73.4	86.6	95.1	99.5	103.0	104.5	104.5	105.1
英国	49.2	63.1	74.0	79.8	83.1	84.1	86.1	86.7
ドイツ	65.7	73.2	82.0	79.4	80.7	78.3	75.3	71.9
フランス	68.1	79.0	81.8	85.2	89.4	92.2	94.8	95.4
イタリア	106.2	116.6	119.2	119.7	126.5	132.5	135.4	135.3
カナダ	70.4	81.9	84.0	84.3	87.2	87.6	85.5	92.0

暦年	平28 (2016)	平29 (2017)	平30 (2018)	令元 (2019)	令2 (2020)	令3 (2021)	令4 (2022)	令5 (2023)
日本	232.4	231.3	232.4	236.4	258.7	255.4	261.3	258.2
米国	107.2	106.2	107.4	108.7	133.5	126.4	121.7	122.2
英国	86.6	85.6	85.2	84.5	105.6	108.1	102.6	106.2
ドイツ	69.0	64.6	61.3	58.9	68.0	68.6	66.5	67.2
フランス	96.1	98.1	97.8	97.4	114.7	112.6	111.1	111.4
イタリア	134.8	134.2	134.4	134.1	154.9	149.8	144.7	140.3
カナダ	92.4	90.9	90.8	90.2	118.9	115.1	106.6	105.1



- It is clear that the ratio of government debt to GDP rises during deflationary periods and falls during inflationary periods.
- During the DPJ administration, life was easier due to a strong yen and deflation, but the government's finances worsened as a result.
- With Abenomics, the yen depreciated, and disinflation reduced the debt to GDP ratio.
- Japan's debt ratio reduction is smaller than in the U.S. and Europe, where inflation is higher.

(出所) IMF "World Economic Outlook" (2023年4月)



(注1) 利払費は、令和3年度までは決算、令和4年度は第2次補正後予算、令和5年度は予算による。

(注2) 金利は、普通国債の利率加重平均の値を使用。

(注3) 普通国債残高は各年度3月末現在高。ただし、令和4年度は第2次補正後予算、令和5年度は予算に基づく見込み。

[https://mof.go.jp/tax\\_policy/summary/condition/a02.htm](https://mof.go.jp/tax_policy/summary/condition/a02.htm)

# Government Debts Matters

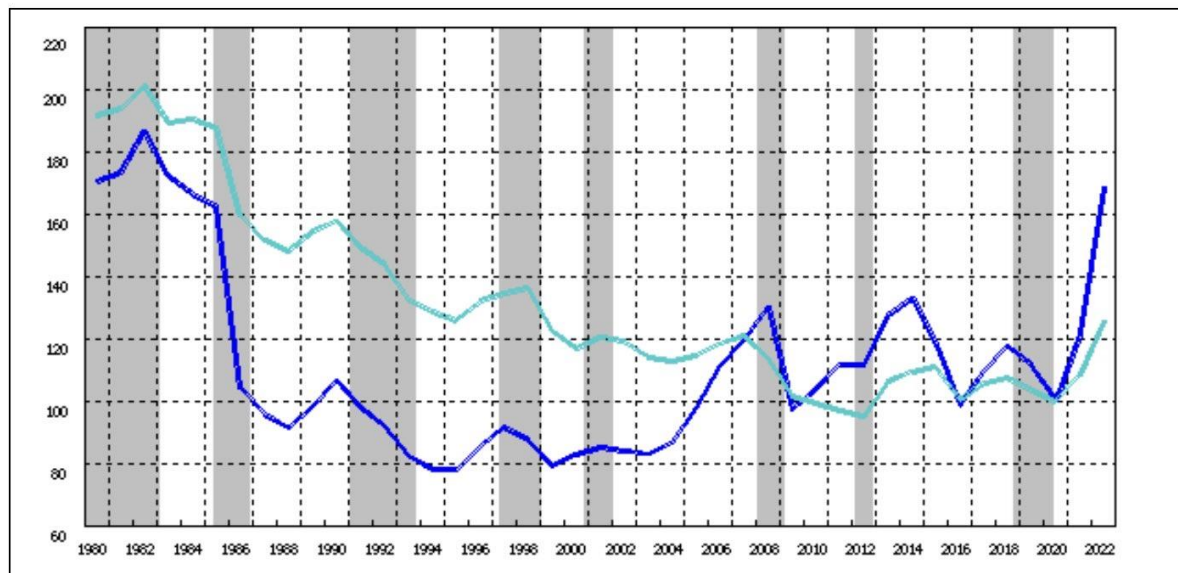
- Despite the rapid growth of outstanding government debt, interest payments have continued to decline thanks to very low interest rates.
- However, if the BOJ reduces monetary easing, interest rates will rise, and higher interest expenses will make it difficult for the government to compile a budget.
- It is said that raising interest rates would result in a loss of earnings for the BOJ. But the fundamental reason for the inability to raise interest rates is the government budget deficit.



# Price Hike in Energy and Food

# Term of Trade matters little

## グラフ



※グラフのデータソースはフッターの上部にある「データ表示」ボタンを押すと確認できます。

Drawn by the author using data compiled by BOJ  
<https://www.stat-search.boj.or.jp/index.html>

- Term of Trade is the ratio of export prices to import prices.
- Current inflation increases export prices and greatly benefits business and their shareholders.
- The term of trade of Japan improved drastically in 1980, had deteriorated since 1990 until 2008 (Lehman crisis), and since then has stabilized.
- However, it deteriorates again recently, reflecting world inflation.
- Japanese people's welfare is affected more by the import price index than by the export price index.
- The import price index is greatly affected by prices in food and energy.

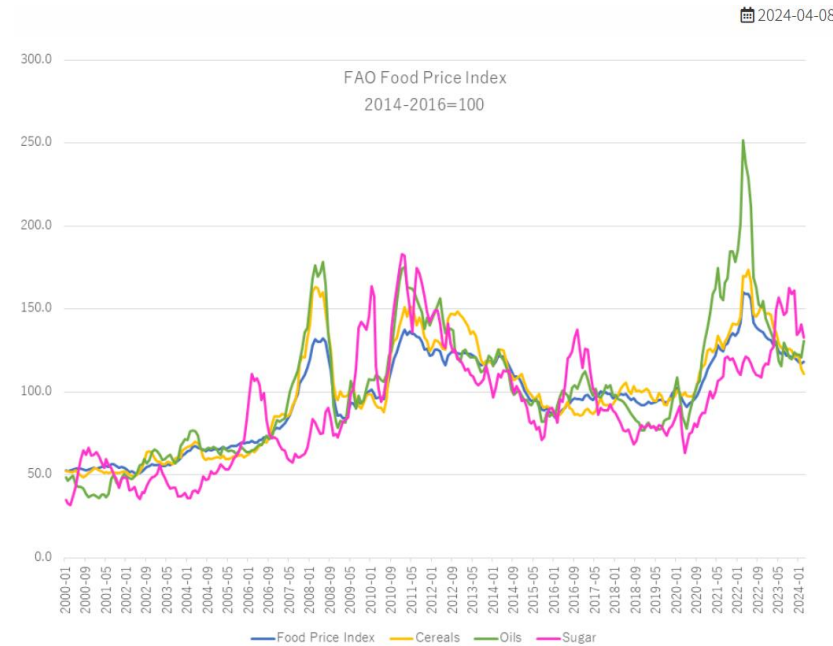
# Consumer Price Index (CPI)

年 月	原 数						Home goods	Furniture	
	総 合 Total	生鮮食品を 除く総合	生鮮食品及び エネルギー を除く総合	食 料 Food	生鮮食品	生鮮食品 を除く 食 料	住 居 Housing	光熱・ 水 道 utility	家具・ 家事用品
ウエイト	10000	9604	8892	2626	396	2230	2149	693	387
指数									
2019 年平均	100.0	100.2	99.8	98.7	96.8	99.0	99.4	102.5	97.7
2020	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
2021	99.8	99.8	99.5	100.0	98.8	100.2	100.6	101.3	101.7
2022	102.3	102.1	100.5	104.5	106.7	104.1	101.3	116.3	105.5
2023	105.6	105.2	104.5	112.9	114.6	112.6	102.4	108.5	113.8
2022 年 5 月	101.8	101.6	100.1	103.4	107.5	102.6	101.1	115.2	105.1
6	101.8	101.7	100.1	103.6	105.7	103.2	101.2	115.6	105.7
7	102.3	102.2	100.6	104.0	104.9	103.8	101.2	117.0	106.3
8	102.7	102.5	100.9	104.5	106.4	104.2	101.3	117.9	106.8
9	103.1	102.9	101.1	105.6	108.5	105.0	101.3	118.5	108.4
10	103.7	103.4	101.7	107.1	109.6	106.7	101.8	119.7	108.7
11	103.9	103.8	102.0	107.8	107.2	107.9	101.9	121.0	109.6
12	104.1	104.1	102.1	107.9	105.7	108.3	102.0	123.3	108.6
2023 年 1 月	104.7	104.3	102.2	109.5	114.2	108.7	102.0	124.5	108.5
2	104.0	103.6	102.6	110.0	113.3	109.4	102.1	110.8	109.2
3	104.4	104.1	103.2	110.4	111.6	110.2	102.1	110.2	111.4
4	105.1	104.8	104.0	111.6	111.4	111.6	102.2	109.9	114.1
5	105.1	104.8	104.3	112.2	113.1	112.1	102.3	105.6	115.2
6	105.2	105.0	104.4	112.2	109.7	112.7	102.3	108.0	114.8
7	105.7	105.4	104.9	113.1	111.7	113.4	102.4	105.8	115.3
8	105.9	105.7	105.2	113.5	112.1	113.8	102.4	103.4	114.4
9	106.2	105.7	105.4	115.0	119.0	114.3	102.5	101.5	115.0
10	107.1	106.4	105.8	116.3	125.0	114.8	102.5	107.7	116.2
11	106.9	106.4	105.9	115.6	118.4	115.2	102.6	107.2	116.3
12	106.8	106.4	105.9	115.2	116.0	115.1	102.6	107.1	115.7
2024 年 1 月	106.9	106.4	105.8	115.7	119.5	115.0	102.7	107.2	115.6
2	106.9	106.5	105.9	115.3	116.2	115.1	102.8	107.4	114.8
3	107.2	106.8	106.2	115.7	117.7	115.3	102.8	108.3	114.9
4	107.7	107.1	106.5	116.4	121.5	115.5	102.8	108.8	117.0
5	108.1	107.5	106.6	116.8	123.1	115.7	102.9	112.6	118.6

- Cumulative rise in CPI affects people's recognition of the economy more directly than the current rise in CPI.
- Cumulative CPI is normalized to 100 for 2020.
- In May 2024, Total CPI is 108.
- CPI is
  - 117 for food
  - 103 for housing rent
  - 113 for utility
  - 119 for home goods and furniture
- Most of food, energies, and home goods are imported from abroad, much affected by world inflation.



FAO food price index							
	Food Price Index <sup>1</sup>	Meat <sup>2</sup>	Dairy <sup>3</sup>	Cereals <sup>4</sup>	Vegetables Oils <sup>5</sup>	Sugar <sup>6</sup>	
2006	72.6	70.5	73.1	71.2	70.5	91.4	
2007	94.3	76.9	122.4	100.9	107.3	62.4	
2008	117.5	90.2	132.3	137.6	141.1	79.2	
2009	91.7	81.2	91.4	97.2	94.4	112.2	
2010	106.7	91.0	111.9	107.5	122.0	131.7	
2011	131.9	105.3	129.9	142.2	156.5	160.9	
2012	122.8	105.0	111.7	137.4	138.3	133.3	
2013	120.1	106.2	140.9	129.1	119.5	109.5	
2014	115.0	112.2	130.2	115.8	110.6	105.2	
2015	93.0	96.7	87.1	95.9	89.9	83.2	
2016	91.9	91.0	82.6	88.3	99.4	111.6	
2017	98.0	97.7	108.0	91.0	101.9	99.1	
2018	95.9	94.9	107.3	100.8	87.8	77.4	
2019	95.1	100.0	102.8	96.6	83.2	78.6	
2020	98.1	95.5	101.8	103.1	99.4	79.5	
2021	125.8	107.7	119.6	131.2	164.9	109.3	
2022	144.7	118.8	149.5	154.7	187.8	114.5	
2023	124.7	114.7	123.7	130.9	126.3	145.0	
2023	April	128.7	116.8	129.3	136.1	130.0	149.4
	May	124.7	118.1	121.7	129.3	118.7	157.2
	June	123.1	119.0	119.9	126.6	115.8	152.2
	July	124.6	118.5	119.1	125.9	129.8	146.3
	August	122.0	115.2	114.3	125.0	125.8	148.2
	September	121.9	114.1	112.0	126.3	120.9	162.7
	October	120.9	112.5	114.6	124.8	120.0	159.2
	November	120.8	112.0	116.5	121.0	124.1	161.4
	December	119.2	111.6	118.7	122.8	122.3	134.2
2024	January	117.7	109.0	118.7	119.9	122.5	136.4
	February	117.4	112.5	120.7	113.8	120.9	140.8
	March	118.8	114.5	124.0	110.9	130.6	133.4
	April	119.1	116.3	123.7	111.2	130.9	127.5



# Rising food price

<https://www.jircas.go.jp/ja/program/proc/blog/20240408>

- World food prices rose sharply during the economic recovery after the Corona disaster. This is the main cause of the recent political turmoil.
- However, as we move into 2024, the price increase has subsided and some prices are declining.

- Although PM Abe resigned because of its failure of handling the anti-Corona measures, Corona was only one of the foreign circumstances that made his situation worse.
- These days, foreign circumstances have a greater impact on Japanese politics than the performance by domestic policies.
- The impact of foreign shocks on domestic politics differs depending on whether exchange rate fluctuations amplify the shocks or, conversely, reduce them.
- In the past, the dollar/yen rate moved in the direction of reducing shocks from abroad (war, recession, inflation, etc.), so politics was not destabilized.
- During the DPJ administration, world food prices were also high, but domestic prices did not rise because of the strong yen.
- Recently, however, the yen has weakened in tandem with rising international prices for energies and food, amplifying the shocks and increasing public dissatisfaction with politics.

How foreign exchange rates affect politics?

# Living cost is more important than political scandals

## ドル・円

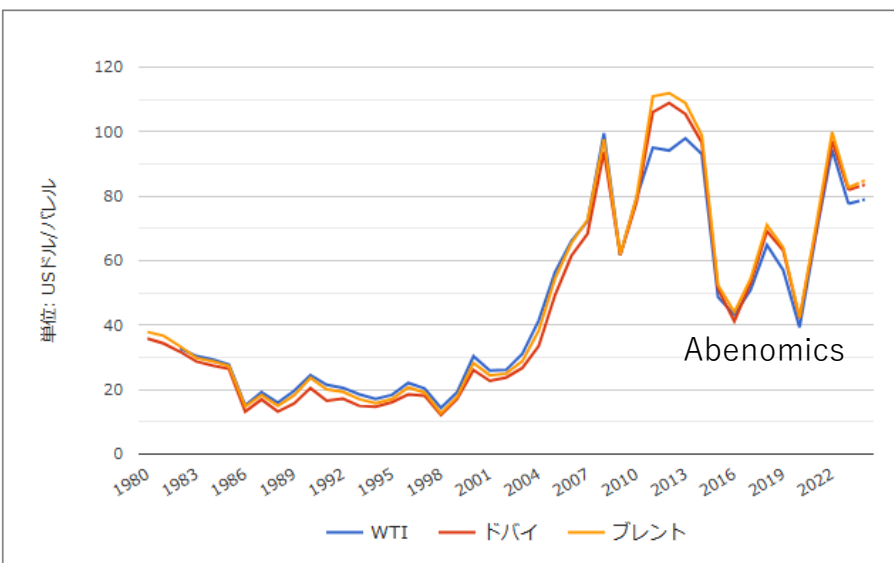
153.94 - 153.95 (7日 0:19) +1.06 (+0.69%) (単位:円)



表示期間 1日 | 3カ月 | 6カ月 | 1年 | 5年

※縦軸は円、横軸は期

- The dollar-yen rate has risen by about 1.5 times compared to its stable period. With rising food prices coming to Japan, it is no wonder that the approval rating of the administration is falling.
- The media is still saying that "politics-money scandals have caused distrust in politics," but the economy and people's lives are much more important.
- Gerald Curtis (Columbia University) said on Japanese TV that "the issue of politics and money is nothing compared to the era of Kakuei Tanaka and Shin Kanemaru."
- What the people are most upset about is the rising cost of living.
- Reflationists say, "There are many advantages to a weak yen," but they cannot persuade the public.



画像出力

年	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
WTI	no data	no data	32.77	30.41	29.38	27.76	15.08	19.16	15.97	19.60
ドバイ	35.85	34.29	31.76	28.73	27.49	26.46	13.20	16.94	13.22	15.70
ブレント	37.89	36.68	33.42	29.83	28.80	27.33	14.77	18.34	14.97	18.22
年	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
WTI	24.49	21.48	20.56	18.56	17.16	18.37	22.07	20.33	14.35	19.24
ドバイ	20.46	16.56	17.19	14.94	14.67	16.12	18.54	18.10	12.13	17.17
ブレント	23.68	20.07	19.31	17.02	15.83	17.07	20.65	19.09	12.72	17.81
年	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
WTI	30.33	25.92	26.09	31.11	41.44	56.44	66.04	72.28	99.56	61.65
ドバイ	26.08	22.71	23.72	26.74	33.46	49.29	61.43	68.37	93.78	61.75
ブレント	28.27	24.42	24.97	28.85	38.30	54.43	65.39	72.70	97.64	61.86
年	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
WTI	79.43	95.05	94.16	97.94	93.11	48.71	43.19	50.91	64.82	57.01
ドバイ	78.06	106.03	108.90	105.43	96.66	51.18	41.20	53.12	69.15	63.18
ブレント	79.64	110.94	111.97	108.86	98.94	52.37	44.05	54.39	71.07	64.03
年	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024					
WTI	39.31	67.96	94.43	77.67	78.93					
ドバイ	42.17	68.81	97.05	81.98	83.53					
ブレント	42.30	70.44	99.82	82.62	84.87					

単位: USドル/バレル

※年間の平均価格

※ **数値** は1月~最新月の平均価格

<出典>

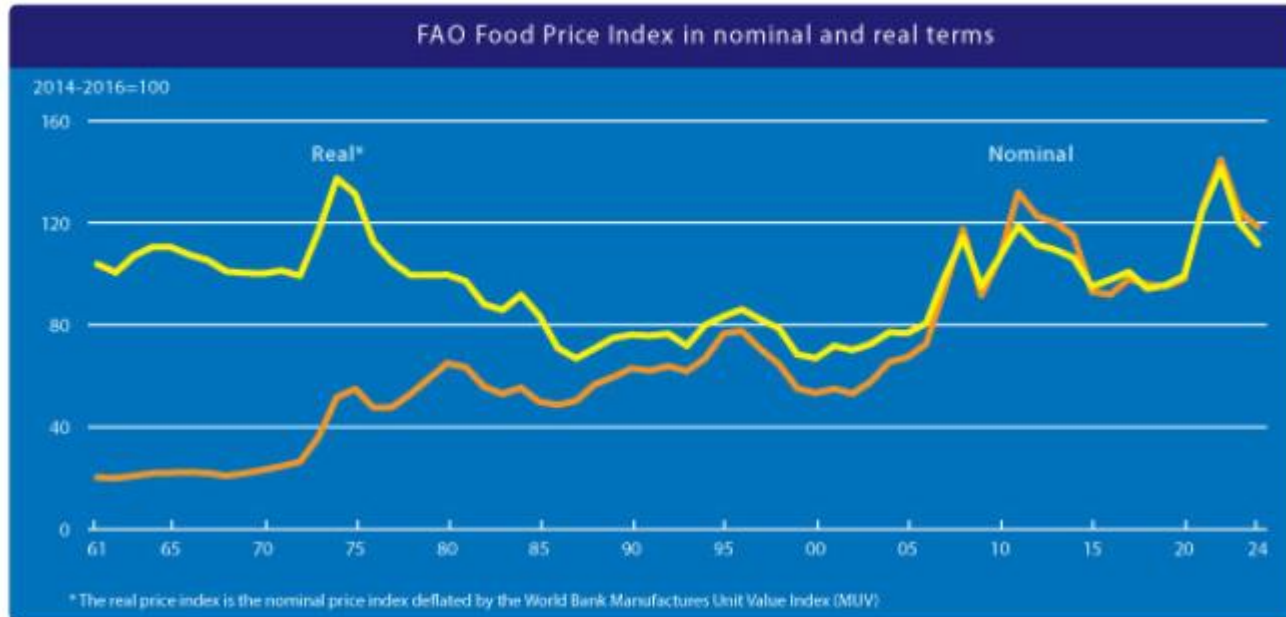
World Bank - Commodity Markets

# World Oil Price

- World oil prices remained stable at low levels until 2000, but rose sharply after 2000, reaching a high of around \$100 in the 2010s.
- The price then declined sharply through the Corona period but has recently risen sharply again.
- It can be said that the stability of the Abe administration has been brought by the low and stable price of crude oil.

[https://ecodb.net/commodity/group\\_oil.html](https://ecodb.net/commodity/group_oil.html)

# Return of the Pessimism



<https://fao.org/worldfoodsituation/foodpricesindex/en/>

- The long-term trend of the real index of the World Food Price (perhaps denominated by the CPI) shows that it was high until about 1975, then declined and remained stable at a low level until about 2005.
- The period from 1975 to 2005 can be described as a period of optimism, while the period after 2005 is the return of pessimism originally proposed by the Club of Rome in 1972, which emphasized the upcoming food crisis.
- The rise in the price of food and energy might have been brought by the Globalization with economic growth of emerging countries.<sup>2</sup>



What drives foreign exchange rates?

# Theories to explain exchange rates

- Current account approach: The idea that exchange rates are determined by current transactions of currencies, such as trade balance and income balance. This was the mainstream approach until the 1970s.
- Asset approach: The idea that exchange rates are determined by asset transactions such as deposits, bonds, and stocks, which became the mainstream idea around the 1980s.
- Interest rate parity
- Purchasing power parity
- Labor Productivity

# Uncovered Interest rate parity (UIRP)

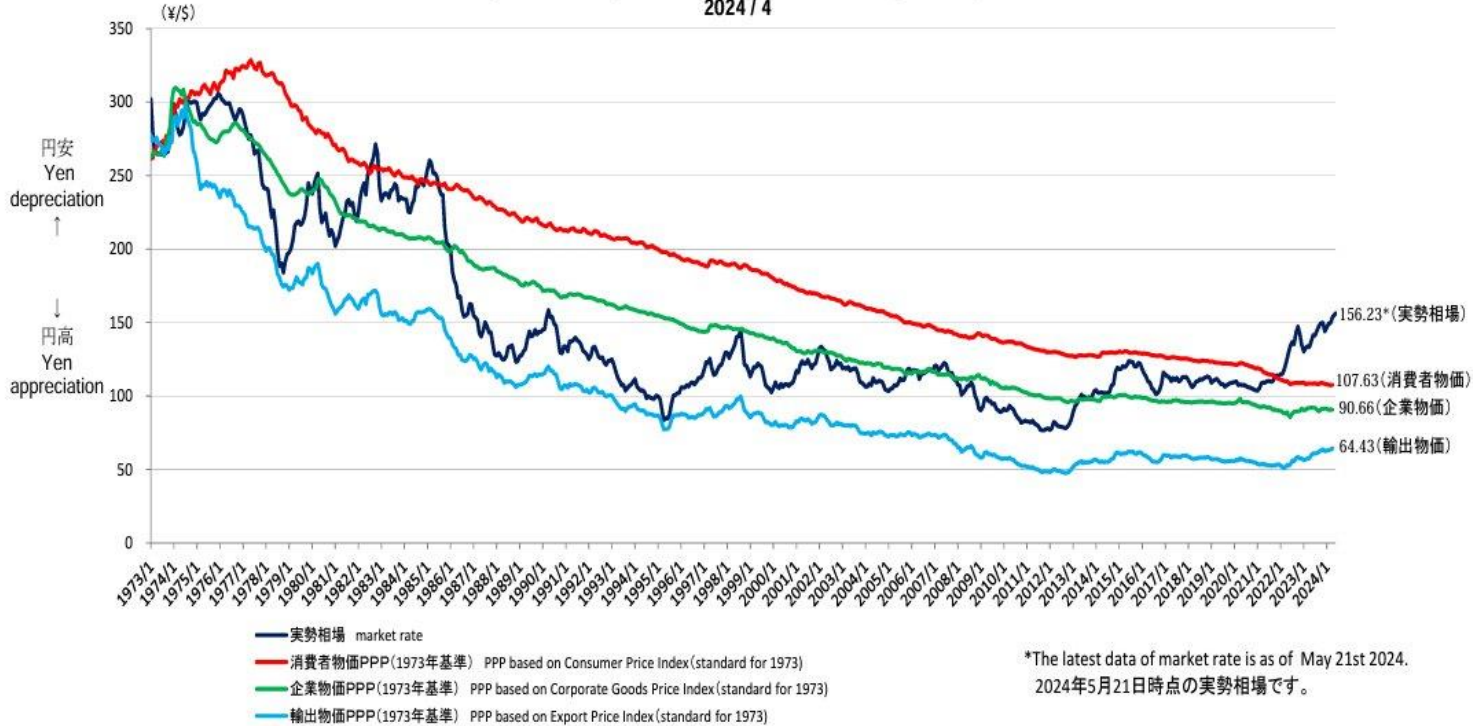
- The idea that exchange rates are determined in such a way as to equalize the rates of return of each currency.
- There are different versions with and without currency hedging.
- For example, the currency of a high-interest-rate country will eventually depreciate, but at the start of the comparison, the currency will instead rise in value to reflect future depreciation.
- To complicate matters, for example, the dollar/Yen rate is currently appreciating due to the large difference in interest rates between Japan and the U.S.
- However, in order for the rate of return to equalize, the dollar should depreciate in the future. However, in a phase of widening interest rate differentials, the currencies of higher-interest-rate countries will apparently rise.
- Under the interest rate parity theory with currency hedging on the contrary, the rate of return on a currency is equalized after paying a premium to protect against exchange rate fluctuations.

# Covered Interest Rate Parity (CIRP)

- You can hedge the return to invest in dollar by signing a forward contract to sell dollars at forward rate,
- Assume that the interest rate per annum is 0% for Japan, 5% for US.
- The spot rate is  $\$1 = \text{¥}150$ .
- If you invest  $\text{¥}1500$  into Yen, you will get  $\$1500$  one year later.
- Today you will get  $\$10$  by exchange your  $\text{¥}1500$  for dollars.
- If you invest  $\$10$  into dollar, you will get  $\$10.5$  one year later.
- If the yen appreciates one year later, your investment return will lose a part of its value if you convert it to Yen.
- But you can assure the Yen value of your investment into by selling dollars at a forward rate.
- If you now sign a forward contract to sell your dollar at forward rate  $142.857 (= 1500 / 10.5)$ , you will get  $\text{¥}1500$  for sure one year later.
- This is the covered interest rate parity.
- The forward rate is based not on the investor's speculation on the future exchange rate but on the prevailing interest rate spread.
- CIRP always holds if various transaction costs, institutional differences, and political costs are considered.

# Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)

- PPP says that exchange rate will converge to the rate at which all the prices of commodities will be equated across countries.
- However, the market exchange rate might diverge from its PPP rate for long time.
- Japanese yen has been overvalued against US dollar for 5 decades until 2021.
- Japanese yen has been undervalued against Euro for 5 decades. Diversion seems to expand.
- Euro was against US dollar
  - undervalued for 1999-2003
  - overvalued for 2003-2015
  - undervalued for 2015-



データ: 消費者物価... 日本 総務省, U.S. Department of Labor  
企業物価、輸出物価... 日本銀行, U.S. Department of Labor, IMF  
ドル円相場... 日本銀行

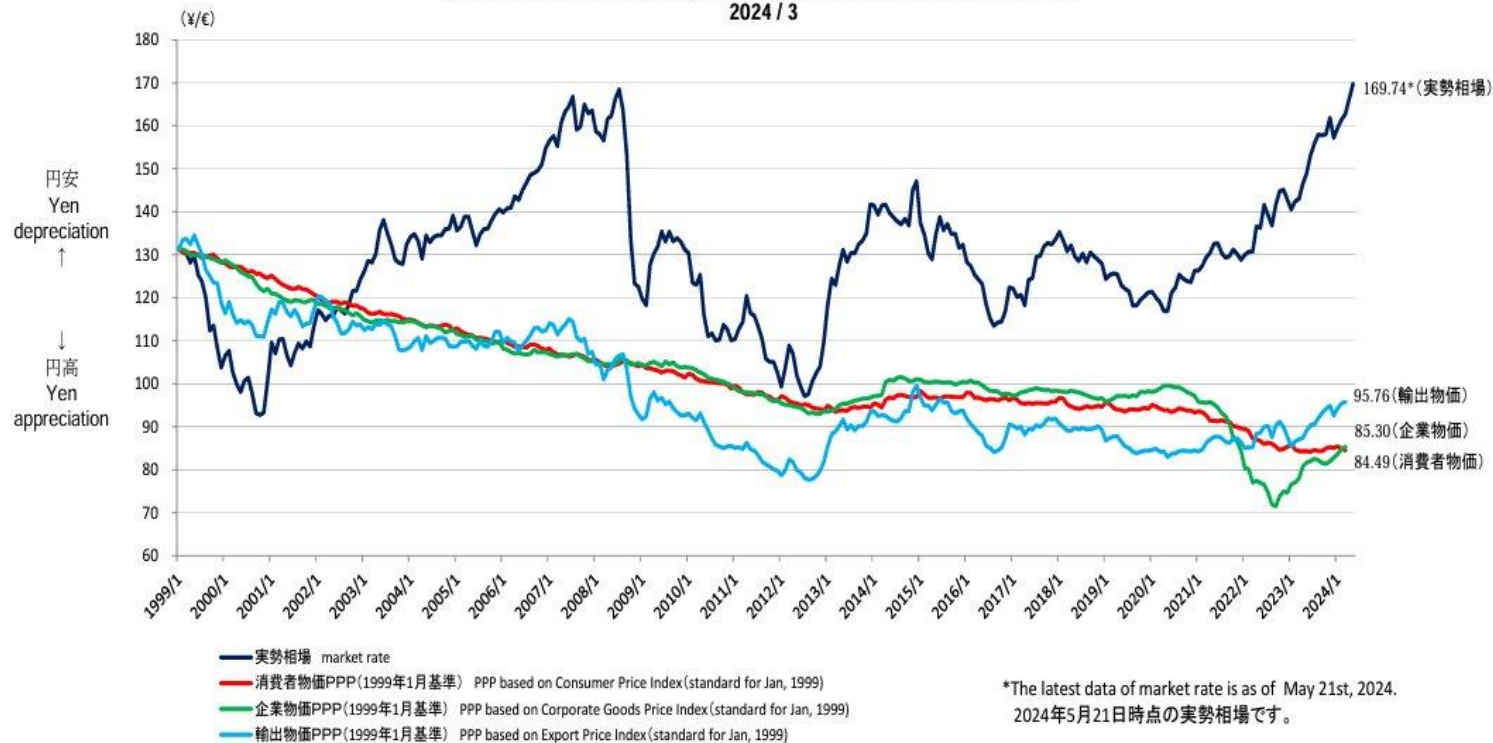
[グラフの原データはこちら](#) (The original data of the chart is here.)

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# Dolar/Yen

- Black: market rate
- Red: PPP based on consumer price index (CPI)
- Green: PPP based on corporate price
- Blue: PPP based on export price.

ユーロ円購買力平価と実勢相場  
Purchasing Power Parity and market rate / Euro against Japanese Yen  
2024 / 3



データ: 消費者物価...日本総務省、Eurostat  
企業物価、輸出物価...日本銀行、Eurostat、Datastream  
ユーロ円相場...ECB

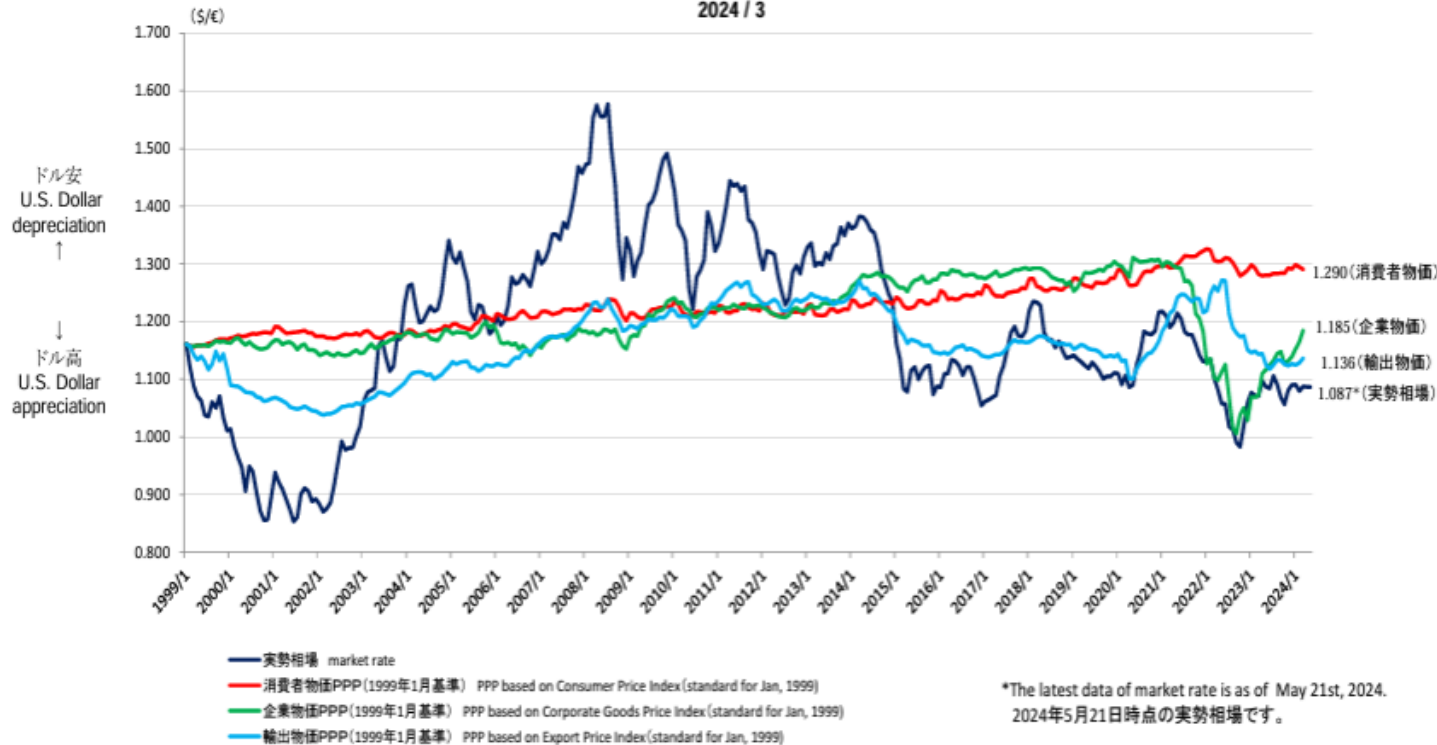
[グラフの原データはこちら](#) (The original data of the chart is here.)

# Euro/Yen

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ユーロドル購買力平価と実勢相場  
Purchasing Power Parity and market rate / Euro against U.S. Dollar  
2024 / 3



データ: 消費者物価、企業物価、輸出物価...U.S. Department of Labor, Eurostat, Datastream  
ユーロドル相場...ECB

[グラフの原データはこちら \(The original data of the chart is here.\)](#)

\*The latest data of market rate is as of May 21st, 2024.  
2024年5月21日時点の実勢相場です。

# Euro/Dollar

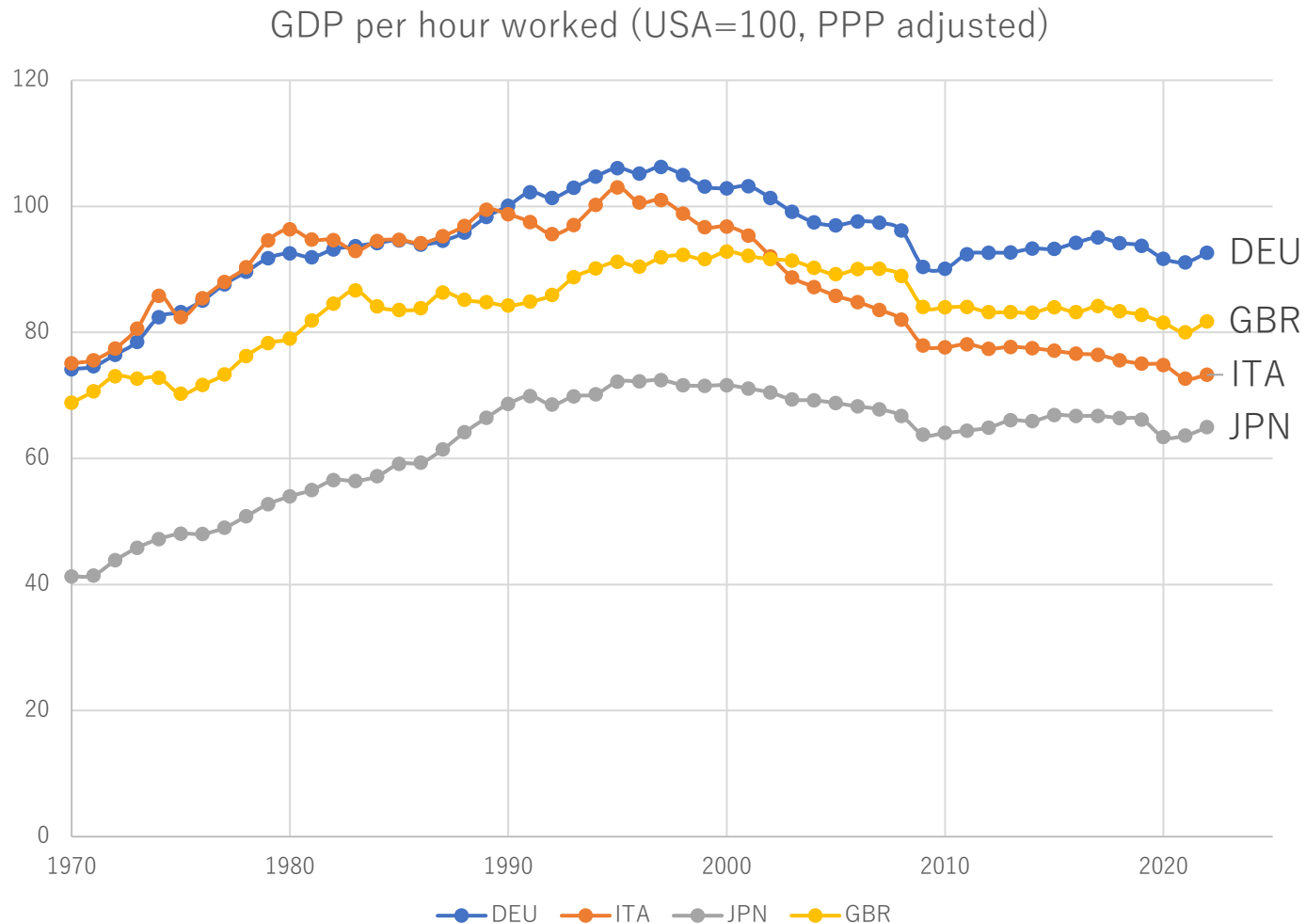
- Black: market rate
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# Labor Productivity?



- Productivity seems not to well explain the exchange rate.
- GDP per hour worked in Japan has been 70% of the US.
- There is no such a large decline in Japan's labor productivity from its peak recorded in the middle of 1990s.
- No Japanese people have complained about the weak Yen until 2021, even though the relative labor productivity has been much lower than US for a long time.
- Relative decline in productivity in Europe seems to be larger than in Japan, while no continuing trend of Euro depreciation is observed,
- Japan's labor productivity might be undervalued because of some data problem.

# Conclusion

- Interest Rate Parity (UIRP or CIRP) seems to most convincingly explain the current Yen depreciation, while there are many residuals to be explained by other theories.
- The flow factors such as trade and capital investment, seem to be too small to generate such a large trend toward the weak Yen.
- Speculative incentives might affect the Yen depreciation.
- In the long-run, foreign exchange rates tend to converge to their PPP, while their inexplicable deviation might emerge for very long time.
- Productivity gap does not well explain the long-term trend of foreign exchange rates.