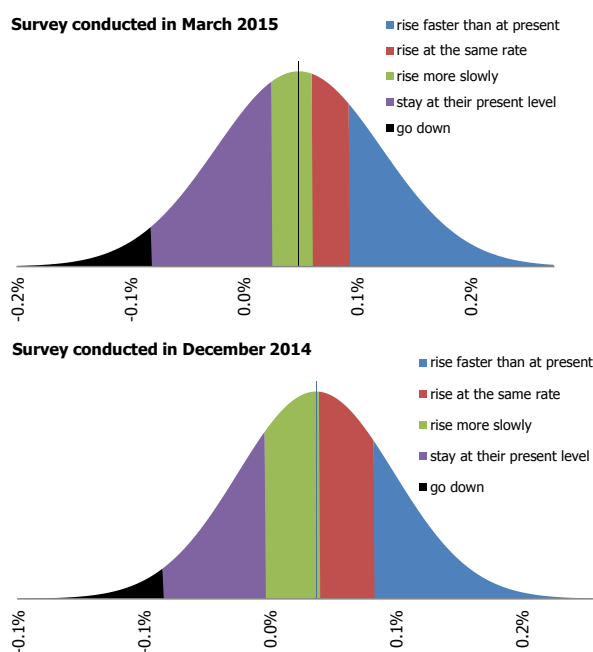


## Survey on Inflation Expectations<sup>1</sup>

**Inflation Expectations Survey** includes three groups of respondents: economic analysts, companies and financial institutions. The questionnaire contains two questions to measure inflation expectations, one qualitative and one quantitative in nature. For the first question on inflation expectations, the respondents indicate the direction and extent of price changes compared with the change in the previous 12 months<sup>2</sup>. Carlson and Parkin (1975) probability approach has been used for quantification of qualitative answers, which assumes that at a sufficiently large number of respondents, the expected change in prices is normally distributed among the population. The second question requires from the respondent to quantify precisely the expected average rate of change of prices in the next two years<sup>3</sup>. The overall expected rate is calculated as a simple average of the responses of all participants. The resulting indicator is useful for obtaining indications for the direction of the respondents' expectations.



The Inflation Expectations Survey was conducted in March 2015<sup>4</sup>. As in the previous survey cycle, **the negative average inflation rate for the previous 12-month period remained in March<sup>5</sup>, and the results of the March survey showed unchanged inflation expectations compared with the December survey.** Thus, in the next 12-month period, same as in December, respondents expect the inflation in the next 12 month period to be around 0%. There are similar expectations with respect to different surveyed groups (economic analysts, companies and financial institutions) who expect the rate of inflation in the next 12-month period (to February 2016) to average around 0%.

**Analyzing the quantitative question on expected inflation rate for 2015 and 2016, shows that respondents have lower inflation expectations.** Namely, in the period between the two surveys, the respondents' expectations for

inflation for 2015 and 2016 decreased by 0.5 percentage points, on average. According to respondents, **factors that explain the lower inflation expectations in March include** the movement of

<sup>1</sup> In order to improve the survey measure of inflation expectations, in 2013, the Monetary Policy and Research Department of the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia started an in-depth analysis of the experiences of other central banks associated with conducting surveys. On that basis, the existing survey was redesigned and starting from October 2013, data were collected for the new survey, thus ensuring greater approximation to the European practice.

<sup>2</sup> The qualitative question of expectations reads as follows: "Compared with the past 12 months, how do you expect consumer prices to change in the next 12 months? a) will have a faster growth; b) will grow at the current pace; c) will grow at a slower pace; d) will remain almost unchanged; e) will decrease; f) it is difficult to determine "

<sup>3</sup> The quantitative question reads as follows: "What are your expectations/forecasts for the average inflation rate for 2015 and 2016?"

<sup>4</sup> Refers to the period March 2014 to February 2015. The percentage of responsiveness to the Survey conducted in March was 33.9%, which compared to the previous quarter, represents an increase of responsiveness. Analyzed by groups of respondents, the financial institutions' responsiveness is 55.6%, followed by economic analysts with 38.2% and companies with 27.2%.

<sup>5</sup> In circumstances of a negative price growth, the interpretation of the results of the survey can be blurred, and therefore, it is necessary to change the method of calculation of the indicator for inflation expectations. Thus, in the procedure for quantification, the negative rate is replaced with the last growth rate. This is the way to avoid any contradictory responses from the survey that indicate positive price growth. Taking into account that changes in the method are of a purely technical nature, the quantification of qualitative answers for the expected rate of inflation in periods of negative inflation should be taken with caution, while the indicator for inflation expectations as approximate.

consumer prices in the domestic economy and the euro area in the past, the slow recovery of European economies and lower world prices of crude oil, amid high inventories and stagnant global demand.