

# Monthly Portfolio Update

## *Amundi Funds II – Pioneer U.S. High Yield\**

### *31 July 2018*

BOND

COMMENTARY

## Market Review

The credit spread rally stalled in August as many investors grappled with Emerging Market (EM) weakness, Italian government budgetary headlines, and concerns over an expected flood of new corporate bond issuance expected to hit the market in early September. Investors focused on US equities, however, looked elsewhere for their buy/sell signals and chose to focus on recent corporate earnings strength, a potential US-Mexico trade accord, and a dovish take on US central bank “Fedspeak”. As a result, US equity markets performed surprisingly well with the major indices all ending August near all-time highs. It is notable that the US equity markets significantly outperformed most, if not all, global developed equity markets during the month. Specific to the Fed, Chair Powell spoke at the annual Jackson Hole event and failed to deliver any major surprises; he defended a gradualist approach to monetary policy normalization (dovish) and hardened expectations for a September interest-rate increase.

High Yield (HY) corporates returned 0.72% for an excess return of 0.09%, as spreads remained unchanged. Performance for the month by rating tier: CCC's & lower (+0.31%) underperforming B's (+0.66%) and BB's (+0.90%)

## Portfolio Review

The Portfolio underperformed the Bank of America Merrill Lynch U.S. High Yield Index for the period.

The main contributor to underperformance was security selection, concentrated in the services and technology sectors.

Our underweight to CCC's, given our higher quality bias, supported relative performance. CCC rated bonds underperformed higher quality bonds.

## Portfolio Positioning

We continue to remain overweight the Healthcare sector through our allocation to both corporate bonds and convertible bonds. We believe that the sector may be poised to benefit from further capital appreciation in 2018. We remain underweight the Retail sector which continues to struggle and, historically, is a sector that has exhibited low recovery rates in a restructuring environment

Within Energy, we are overweight on a notional basis, but market-weight on risk basis. We have greater exposure to exploration & production and midstream relative to higher beta Services

The Portfolio maintains a higher quality bias, and as such remains under-weight “CCC and below” rated buckets relative to the benchmark.

The Portfolio continues its practice of seeking diversification and relative value by carrying out-of-index exposures, including convertibles and insurance-linked bonds. We remain constructive on insurance-linked bonds as they are uncorrelated with the financial markets, which in the long-term, provides diversification benefits and can help enhance the risk-return profile of the fund. We have taken the convertible bond positions down marginally, as securities reach our price targets and as a way to moderately reduce overall risk

## Outlook

The default rate for HY bonds remains well below historical averages, and we maintain a constructive outlook with respect to the US economy and overall corporate credit fundamentals. Strong earnings and a record pace of debt refinancing has enabled an extension of the credit cycle.

The Fed is expected to continue to gradually hike rates, and the tapering of its bond portfolio will also inevitably lead to some tightening of credit conditions. That said, high yield is less interest rate sensitive than other fixed-income segments.

Our intermediate-term macro forecast calls for continued domestic and global economic growth,

For Professional Clients Only.

\*Prior to 16 February 2018, Pioneer Funds – U.S. High Yield

**Amundi**  
ASSET MANAGEMENT

Marketing Material

which is expected to support issuer credit fundamentals (cash flow generation), business spending, and market valuations. Second quarter earnings announcements generally delivered a message of solid domestic and global operating performance. Most S&P 500 companies reported that trade issues had a limited impact on 2Q results, although most are also making plans for how to react if tariffs are ultimately put in place. It is worth remembering that the high yield issuer universe is made up of companies that are more likely to be found in an equity index like the Russell 2000 rather than the S&P 500. Revenues and earnings from overseas trade are much lower for companies in the Russell 2000 than those in the S&P 500.

At the end of August, USHY spreads were trading almost precisely in the middle of their 2018 trading range at 361 basis points over Treasuries and have tightened modestly since then. While we believe that USHY spreads can tighten further and perhaps even reach their post-recession tight levels of early this year (+334 basis points) supported by the strength of the U.S. equity markets which has recently hit its all-time peaks, we think it is unlikely that the USHY market will break through the +300 basis points barrier that some strategists called for earlier this year. The light new issue calendar (net new supply is down around 25% year-to-date) is a significant factor supporting tight US spreads. A recovery in the emerging markets will depend on a weaker U.S. dollar, more confidence in growth in Europe and China and a reduction in sabre rattling in the US-lead trade war.

Markets have just “celebrated” the tenth anniversary of the failure of Lehman Brothers, which means it has also been ten years since the last recession was at its worst. We see no signs of a surge in defaults. We see no signs of an impending recession. While we have seen a few more new aggressive, debt-financed “shareholder friendly” transactions, relative to the lead up to the last recession there are very few. We continue to be on the lookout for signs of more hawkish Fed tightening or more serious credit deterioration but none is evident. We continue to focus on our active investment approach recognizing that on adding value through security selection and sector allocation is especially appropriate at this point of the economic cycle.

## Important Information

On the 16 February 2018, Pioneer Funds was renamed Amundi Funds II. Prior to 16 February 2018 the name of the sub-fund was with the prefix “Pioneer Funds”.

This material is provided to Professional Clients, including financial intermediaries, and is not intended for and should not be provided to the public.

This document contains information about investment services provided by Amundi group companies or undertakings for collective investment in transferable securities (the “Funds”) established under the laws of Luxembourg and authorised for public distribution by the Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier. The management company of

- Amundi Funds, Amundi Funds II, Amundi SICAV II, Amundi Fund Solutions and First Eagle Amundi is Amundi Luxembourg S.A., 5, allée Scheffer, L-2520 Luxembourg;
- CPR Invest is CPR Asset Management, 90 Boulevard Pasteur, 75015 Paris, France;
- KBI Institutional ICAV is KBI Global Investors Ltd., 2 Harbourmaster Place, International Financial Services Centre, Dublin 1, Ireland.

This material is information purposes only, is not a recommendation, financial analysis or advice, and does not constitute a solicitation, invitation or offer to purchase or sell any the Funds or services described herein in any jurisdiction where such offer, solicitation or invitation would be unlawful.

This material has not been submitted for regulatory approval and is solely for issue in permitted jurisdictions and to persons who may receive it without breaching applicable legal or regulatory requirements. The information contained in this document is confidential and shall not, without prior written approval of Amundi Ireland Limited (“Amundi”), be copied, reproduced, modified, or distributed, to any third person or entity in any country.

The Funds described in this document may not be available to all investors and may not be registered for public distribution with the relevant authorities in all countries.

Investment involves risk. **Past performance is not a guarantee or indication of future results.** Investment return and the principal value of an investment in the Funds or other investment product may go up or down and may result in the loss of the amount originally invested. All investors should seek professional advice prior to any investment decision, in order to determine the risks associated with the investment and its suitability. It is the responsibility of investors to read the legal documents in force in particular the current prospectus for each Fund. Subscriptions in the Funds will only be accepted on the basis of their latest prospectus and/or the Key Investor Information Document ( “KIID” available in local language in EU countries of registration) which, together with the latest annual and semi-annual reports may be obtained, free of charge, at the registered office of Amundi Luxembourg S.A. or at [www.amundi.lu](http://www.amundi.lu). In Italy, this documentation is available at [www.amundi.it](http://www.amundi.it). Information relating to costs and charges of the Funds may be obtained from the KIID.

The performance data do not take account of the commissions and costs incurred on the issue and redemption of units of the Funds.

In EEA Member States, the content of this document is approved by Amundi for use with Professional Clients (as defined in EU Directive 2004/39/EC) only and shall not be distributed to the public. Amundi Ireland Limited is authorised and regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. KBI Institutional ICAV is a collective

investment scheme established under Irish law. Société Générale, Dublin Branch 3rd Floor, IFSC House, IFS, Dublin 1 is the facilities agent for those sub-funds of Amundi Funds, Amundi Funds II, First Eagle registered in Ireland.

In the **UK**, this document is approved for distribution by Amundi Asset Management London Branch), 41 Lothbury, London, EC2R 7HF. Amundi Asset Management is a portfolio management company authorised by the Autorité des Marchés Financiers in France and its London Branch is subject to limited regulation by the UK Financial Conduct Authority. Further information of this authorisation is available on request. Amundi Funds SICAV, First Eagle Amundi SICAV, CPR Invest SICAV, KBI Institutional ICAV and Amundi SICAV II are recognised schemes for the purposes of Section 264 of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (the “FSMA”) of the UK and can be promoted and sold direct to the public in the United Kingdom subject to compliance with the FSMA and applicable regulations made thereunder. Amundi Funds II is an unregulated collective investment scheme under (“FSMA”). Potential investors in the UK should be aware that none of the protections afforded by the UK regulatory system will apply to an investment any of the Funds and that compensation will not be available under the UK Financial Services Compensation Scheme. This document is addressed only to those persons in the UK falling within one or more of the following exemptions from the restrictions in s 238 FSMA:

- authorised firms under FSMA and certain other investment professionals falling within article 14 of the FSMA (Promotion of Collective Investment Schemes) (Exemptions) Order 2001, as amended (the “CIS Order”) and their directors, officers and employees acting for such entities in relation to investment;
- high value entities falling within article 22 CIS Order and their directors, officers and employees acting for such entities in relation to investment;
- other persons who are in accordance with the Rules of the FCA prior to 1 November 2007 classified as Intermediate Customers or Market Counterparties or on or thereafter classified as Professional Clients or Eligible Counterparties.

The distribution of this document to any person in the UK not falling within one of the above categories is not permitted by Amundi Asset Management London Branch and may contravene FSMA. No person in the UK falling outside those categories should rely or act on it for any purposes whatsoever.

In **Switzerland**, this document is for Qualified Investors (as defined in Swiss Collective Investment Schemes Act of 23 June 2006 as amended or supplemented) use only and shall not be distributed to the public.

The Representative and Paying Agent for Funds registered for distribution in Switzerland are, in respect of Amundi Funds II: BNP Paribas Securities Services, Zurich Branch, Selnaustrasse 16, 8002 Zurich Amundi Funds and First Eagle Amundi: Representative - CACEIS (Switzerland) SA and Paying Agent - CACEIS Bank, Nyon Branch both at 35 Route de Signy, Case postale 2259, CH-1260 Nyon; KBI Institutional Fund SICAV: Representative – ACOLIN Fund Services AG, Affolternstrasse 56, CH-8050 Zurich and Paying Agent – NPB Neue Privat Bank AG, Limmatquai 1, CH-8001 Zurich. Free copies of the prospectus, key investor information documents, annual and semi-annual reports, management regulations and other information are available at the representative’s address shown above.

Amundi Suisse SA has been authorized in Switzerland to distribute the Funds. Amundi Suisse SA. Amundi Suisse SA receives from Amundi Luxembourg S.A. or other Amundi group entities, compensation under article 34 al. 2bis of the OPCC

(Ordonnance sur les placements collectifs de capitaux). Such compensation may constitute a part of the management fees stated in the prospectus of the Funds and further information may be obtained upon written request to Amundi Suisse S.A., 6-8 rue de Candolle 1205 Genève Suisse.

In **France**, a free prospectus is available from Amundi Asset Management, 90 boulevard Pasteur -75015 Paris - France - 437 574 452 RCS Paris France or from the centralisateur of the Funds which in the case of Amundi Funds SICAV and CPR Invest SICAV is CACEIS Bank SA, 1-3 place Valhubert, 75013 Paris and in the case of Amundi Funds II and First Eagle Amundi SICAV is Société Générale, 29 Boulevard Haussmann, 75008 Paris. In Germany, for additional information on the Fund, a free prospectus may be requested from Amundi Deutschland GmbH, Arnulfstr. 124-126 80636 Munich, Germany (Tel. +49.89.99.226.0).

In **Austria** the paying agents for Funds registered for public distribution in are, in respect of Amundi Funds II and Amundi Fund Solutions: UniCredit Bank Austria AG, Schottengasse 6-8, A-1010 Vienna Amundi Funds: Meindl Bank Aktiengesellschaft, Bauernmarkt 2, A-1010 Vienna; First Eagle Amundi: Société Générale, Vienna Branch, Prinz Eugen Strasse 8 - 10/5/Top 11, A-1040 Vienna; CPR Invest: Raiffeisen Bank International AG, Am Stadtpark 9, A-1030 Wien; and KBI Institutional ICAV: Erste Bank der oesterreichischen Sparkassen AG, Am Belvedere 1, A-1100 Vienna.

In **Spain**, the Funds are foreign undertakings for collective investment registered with the CNMV and numbered Amundi Funds II (226); Amundi S.F (493); Amundi Fund Solutions (1333); Amundi Funds (61) First Eagle Amundi (111); CPR Invest (1564); and KBI Institutional ICAV (1248). Any investment in the Funds or their respective sub-funds must be made through a registered Spanish distributor. Amundi Iberia SGIC, SAU, is the main distributor of the Funds in Spain, registered with number 31 in the CNMV’s SGIC registry, with address at Pº de la Castellana 1, Madrid 28046. A list of all Spanish distributors may be obtained from the CNMV at www.cnmv.es. Units may only be acquired on the basis of the most recent prospectus, key investor information document and further current documentation, which may be obtained from the CNMV. In Chile and Peru, this document is approved for use by Administradora de Fondos de Pensiones/Pension Fund Administrators and other institutional investors.

In **Mexico**, this document is approved for use with institutional investors. It may not be distributed to third parties or to the public.

In **Singapore**, this document is provided solely for the use of distributors and financial advisors only and is not to be distributed to the retail public. Distribution occurs through Amundi Singapore Ltd, 80 Raffles Place #23-01, UOB Plaza 1, Singapore 048624. This document contains information about certain sub-funds of Amundi Funds and First Eagle Amundi SICAV which may be registered as recognised schemes in Singapore under the Securities and Futures Act (Cap. 289) of Singapore (“SFA”), or notified as restricted schemes under the Sixth Schedule to the Securities and Futures (Offers of Investments) (Collective Investment Schemes) Regulations 2005, while certain sub-funds of Amundi Funds II are restricted schemes. For the sub-funds or relevant share/unit classes notified as restricted schemes in Singapore, such sub-funds or relevant share/unit classes are not authorised or recognised by the Monetary Authority of Singapore (“MAS”) and are not allowed to be offered to the Singapore retail public. Accordingly, this document and the material contained within, may not be circulated or distributed, nor may the relevant shares/units be offered or sold, or be made the subject of an invitation for subscription or purchase, whether directly or indirectly, to persons in Singapore other than (i) to an institutional

investor under Section 304 of the SFA, (ii) to a relevant person pursuant to Section 305(1), or any person pursuant to Section 305(2), and in accordance with the conditions specified in Section 305 of the SFA, or (iii) otherwise pursuant to, and in accordance with the conditions of, any other applicable provision of the SFA. In other Asian jurisdictions, for use by licensed intermediaries only and not to be distributed to the public.

This information is not for distribution and does not constitute an offer to sell or the solicitation of any offer to buy any securities or services in **the United States** or in any of its territories or possessions subject to its jurisdiction to or for the benefit of any U.S. Person (as defined in the prospectus of the Funds). The Funds have not been registered in the United States under the Investment Company Act of 1940 and units of the Funds are not registered in the United States under the Securities Act of 1933. This document is not intended for and no reliance can be placed on this document by persons falling outside of these categories in the above mentioned jurisdictions.

**In jurisdictions other than those specified above, this document is for the sole use of the professional clients and intermediaries to whom it is addressed. It is not to be distributed to the public or to other third parties and the use of the information provided by anyone other than the addressee is not authorised.**

This material, is based on sources that Amundi considers to be reliable at the time of publication. Data, opinions and analysis may be changed without notice. Amundi accepts no liability whatsoever, whether direct or indirect, that may arise from the use of information contained in this material. Amundi can in no way be held responsible for any decision or investment made on the basis of information contained in this material

© 2018 Morningstar. All Rights Reserved. The information, data, analyses and opinions ("Information") contained herein: (1) include the proprietary information of Morningstar; (2) may not be copied or redistributed; (3) do not constitute investment advice; (4) are provided solely for informational purposes; (5) are not warranted to be complete, accurate or timely; and (6) may be drawn from fund data published on various dates. Morningstar is not responsible for any trading decisions, damages or other losses related to the Information or its use. Please verify all of the Information before using it and don't make any investment decision except upon the advice of a professional financial adviser. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. The value and income derived from investments may go down as well as up.

The Funds or securities referred to herein are not sponsored, endorsed, or promoted by MSCI, and MSCI bears no liability with respect to any such Funds or securities or any index on which such Funds or securities are based. The offering documents of the Funds contain a more detailed description of the limited relationship MSCI has with Amundi and any relevant Funds.

Date of publication: 19 August 2018.  
Document ID: 608283