

2015 November- Are emerging markets an opportunity

In the times of expensive stocks in US and Europe, one might look for opportunities in emerging markets (EM). For 5 years, EM stocks have lagged behind (see *Graph 1*) those from developed markets (DM) and are now valued much lower (14 x vs. 21 x earnings). Only this year, the EM benchmark MSCI EM (USD denominated) has lost 12%, so one has to wonder if this trend will reverse, presenting an opportunity.



Graph 1. Period matters: 1986-2015 performance of EM (orange line) vs. S&P 500 (purple line) Source: Thomson Reuters.

Even if recent negative trend might easily reverse, we believe EM are not worthy for long term investor. In very long term, EM stocks return less than DM with higher volatility and higher maximum drawdowns (max % difference between peak and through).

Analysis of more than 100 years of drawdowns in EM and DM (illustrated in *Graph 2*) tells another sad story. This insight is hidden to most with a myopic and short term approach to markets, since most datasets go back only 30-40 years (the largest EM drawdown with magnitude of almost 80% is attributable to wipe-out of Japanese equities after WW2). As seen on Graph 2, long term view captures much more EM risks which consist of weak institutional framework, lack of democratic tradition, widespread corruption, geopolitical risk and many others.



Graph 2. Maximum drawdowns of EM vs. DM. Source: Dimson, E., March, P., Staunton, M.

The last 30-40 years, even though definitely not so clearly, suggest something similar. From *Graph 1* we can see that the EM and DM returns have been comparable but volatility was much worse in EM than in DM, i.e. EM have had lower Sharpe ratio. However, mentioning this just couple of years ago in the midst of EM euphoria would make anyone look like a fool. Nevertheless, significant risks often responsible for devastating losses are there, whether one sees them in recent data or not.

Anyone considering EM as an investment, *caveat emptor*!

This month our performance was 3.9% beating our U.S. benchmarks S&P 500 (0.1%) and NASDAQ (1.1%). With respect to EU benchmarks we outperformed EU Enlarged 15 (-9.1%), MSCI EM (2%) and underperformed DAX (4.9%).



Fund Manager	Cumulative Performance						
Jan Pravda	Period	Sanning ⁽¹⁾	EU Enlarged ⁽²	¹⁾ MSCI EM EU ⁽²⁾	DAX	S&P 500	Nasdaq
	1 month	3.9%	-9.1%	2.0%	4.9%	0.1%	1.1%
Launch Date	3 months	10.1%	-13.1%	2.6%	10.9%	5.5%	7.0%
2.6.09	12 months	12.2%	-16.1%	-0.3%	14.0%	0.6%	6.6%
Location	3 years	20.9%	-25.7%	-12.2%	53.7%	46.9%	69.7%
	5 years	11.6%	-35.5%	-14.2%	70.2%	76.2%	104.5%
Prague	Since inception (2.6.2009)	86.8%	-21.7%	23.7%	121.3%	120.2%	178.1%
Fund Currency	Further Characteristic						
EUR	Beta relative to:				Volatility (3)	18.6%	
Share Price	EU Enlarged 15			0.27	Alpha (vs EU15)	0.12	
€ 1,868.04	DAX			0.24	Sharpe ratio	0.51	
Performance Fee	(1) Net off management fees, gross off performance fees						
renormance ree	 (2) These two indeces presented only to illustrate performance in 2003-2014, when focused on Central Eastern Europe (3) Annualized standard deviation since inception 						
20 % HWM							
Management Fee							

2% p.a.

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Sanning Capital Limited Opletalova 1417/25 Prague 11000 Czech Republic

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