

European Debt Market Monitor: Q2 2023 & Outlook

A case for cautious optimism



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European debt outlook

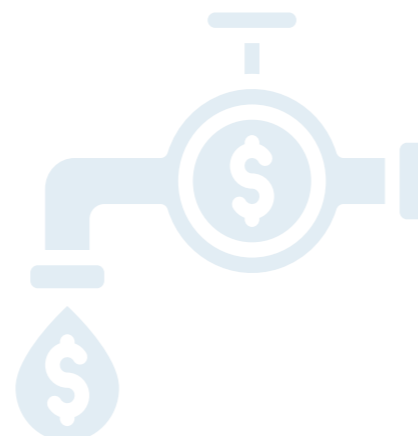
“We still expect deal activity to pick-up into the final quarter... but the scale of improvement in overall market activity remains dependent on potential additional central bank activity to fight core inflation”

Q2 2023 overview

- European liquid markets experienced a slow second quarter leaving H1 loan volumes at €19.9 bn, approximately €8 bn short of the level recorded for the same period in a disrupted 2022¹
- Low issuance levels were still dominated by extension-led supply, but record extension activity in 2023 so far has also reduced most near-term maturity pressures, while the average time extended also increased (3.3 years in 2023 vs. 2.8 years in 2022)²
- In the European mid-market, we observed a similar trend with deal volumes dropping for the fourth quarter in a row, with 160 issuances in Q2 2023 - 5% lower than Q1 (169 issuances) and 33% lower than Q2 in 2022 (238 issuances)³
- Against a backdrop of a challenging economy and rising base rates across Europe, we are seeing more demand for HoldCo payment-in-kind instruments with sponsors increasingly willing to accept higher priced instruments to avoid pressure on cash flows

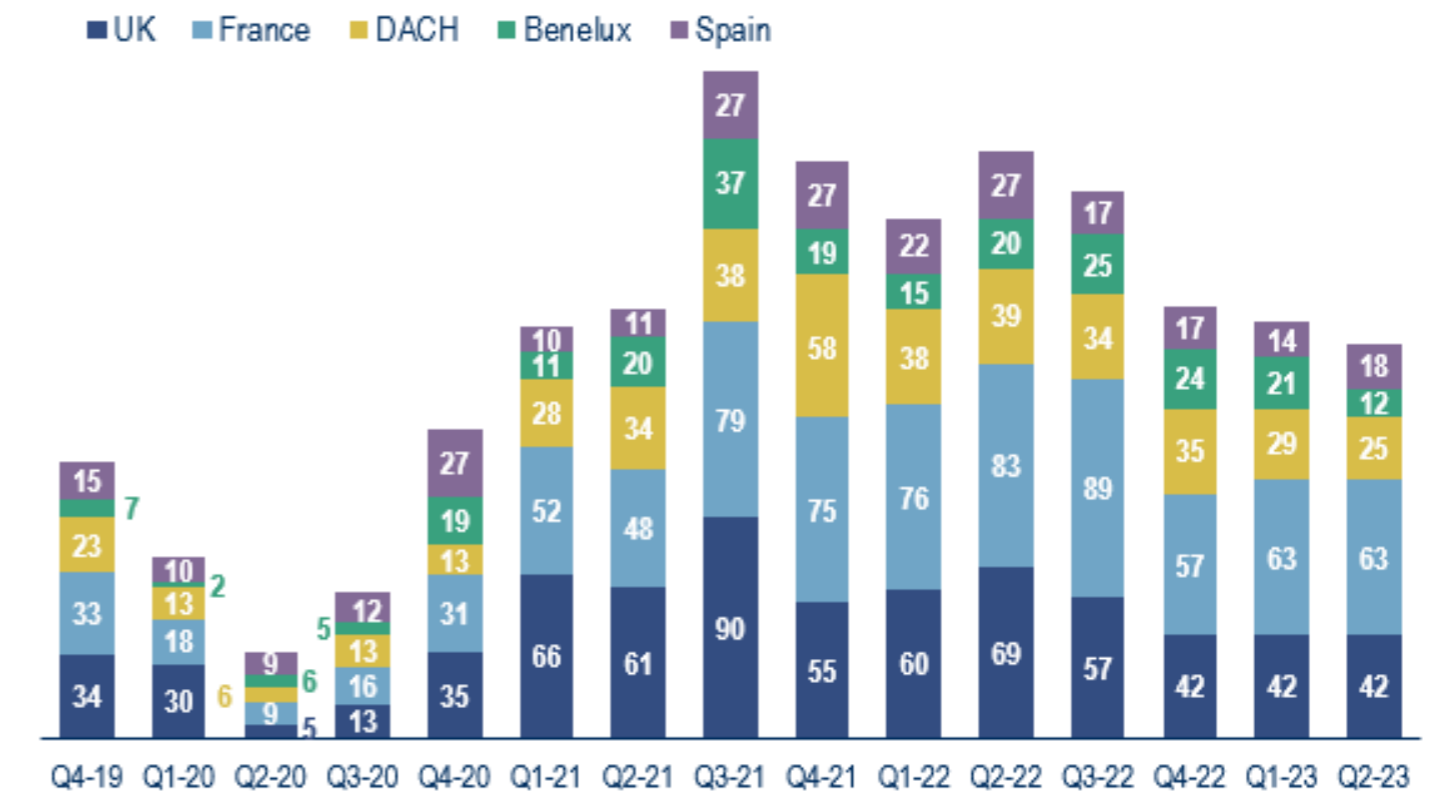
2023 outlook

- The continuing economic uncertainty in 2023 has resulted in reduced M&A activity, as a result M&A-linked volumes are now at their lowest level since 2012.⁴ Whilst market tone is improving, activity in the near term is expected to remain subdued and skewed towards A&E transactions (Amend and Extend), upsizes and refinancings
- Nevertheless, we still expect deal activity to pick-up into the final quarter, with an increase in M&A volume as GPs seek to monetize investments on the one hand, and credit investor appetite to deploy fund dry powder
- We expect the financial landscape will continue to be impacted by challenging credit conditions in the coming months, even with an anticipated softening in monetary policy tightening by the European Central Bank (ECB) for the cost of borrowing compared to previous quarters⁵
- However, the scale of improvement in overall market activity remains dependent on potential additional central bank activity to fight core inflation and the implications

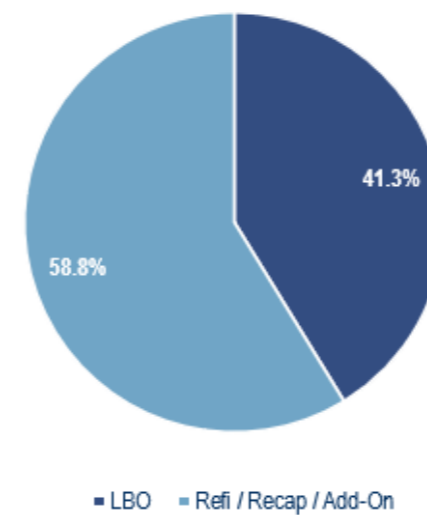


Deals overview

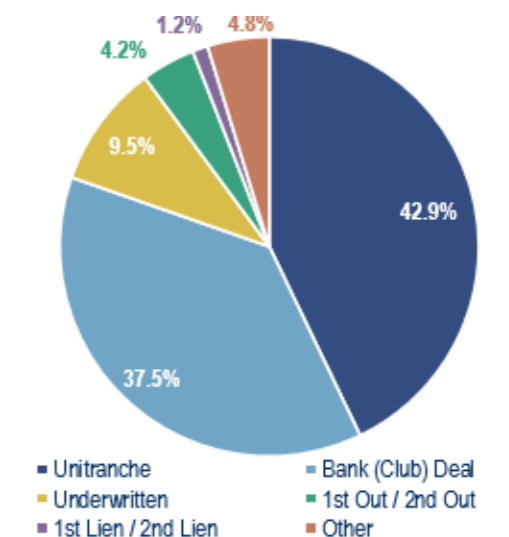
Deal volumes by region*



Deal purpose*



Deal structure*



*Unless otherwise indicated, all tables, data and statistics provided in this piece, including with respect to deal activity, have been collected via the August 2023 DC Advisory Lender Survey, subject to the limitations of the Survey; please see References for more details. For important information regarding this publication, please see this disclaimer >

UK highlights



Ciara O'Neill
Managing Director



Edward Godfrey
Managing Director



Jonathan Trower
Managing Director



Justin Holland
Managing Director

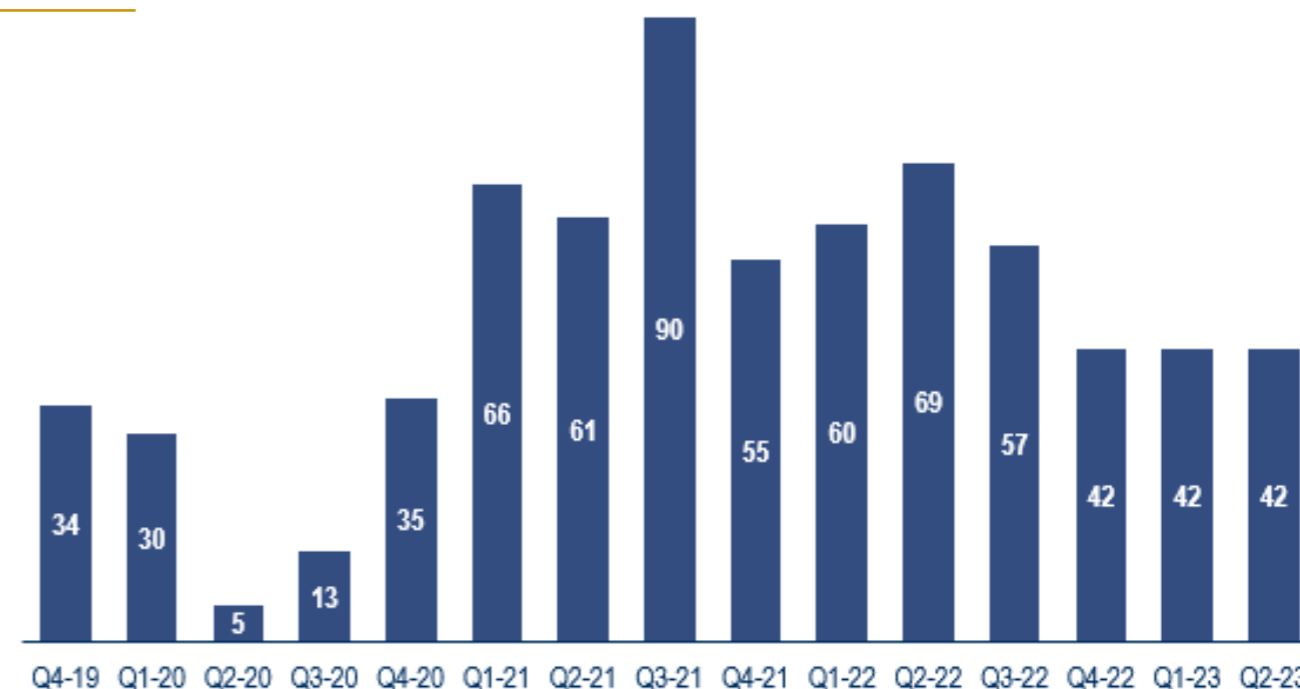
- Consistent with Q4 2022 and Q1 2023, the number of debt transactions in the UK mid-market last quarter amounted to 42, implying some degree of stability albeit volumes are still substantially lower, 39% down, compared with Q2 2022 (69 issuances)⁶
- The lower lending volumes are reflective of subdued M&A activity, especially in the upper mid-market where sponsors' confidence in valuation and ability to transact is reduced leaving investors to delay planned sale processes⁷
- As the BoE base rate rose further in Q2 2023 with another 75 bps on the back of sustained inflationary pressures in H1 2023, the cost of sterling debt remains more expensive compared to EUR debt – feeding the uncertainty and general lack of confidence^{8,9}
- Somewhat unsurprisingly, deal activity in Q2 2023 continued to be dominated by refinancings, maturity extensions and add-ons (69% of total deal counts¹⁰). We expect this trend to continue into the next quarter as not only have sponsors now secured 2024 repayments, they are also proactively seeking extensions for 2025 and 2026 maturities
- In Q2 2023 we did see renewed competition from banks – both on the smaller end of the mid-market through bilateral deals and at the upper end in the form of bank clubs – with their proportion of total deal count doubling from the last quarter (c. 40% in Q2 vs. c. 20% in Q1¹¹)
- Although the anticipated improvement in H2 2023 debt volumes at the beginning of the year have not materialized, we do believe there is some room for cautious optimism off the back of inflation rates continuing to ease between June and July (7.9% vs. 6.8%), and forward curves indicating base rates are now very close to the peak¹²

UK lender league tables

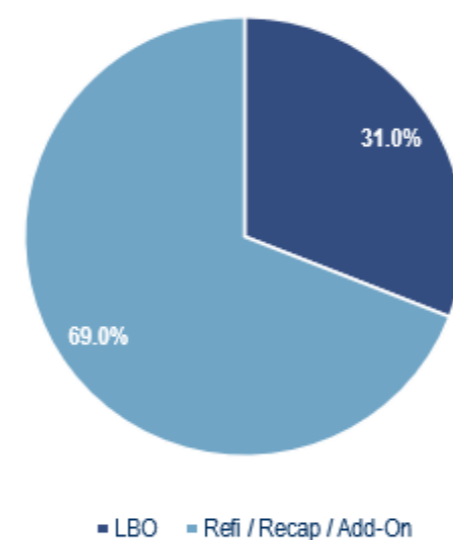
Banks	LTM	Funds	LTM
HSBC	43	Ares	25
Natwest	25	Kartesia	11
Lloyds	20	Alcentra	8
Barclays	15	CVC	8
Santander	9	Pemberton	6
Bol	9	Pricoa	6
Investec	7	Bridgepoint Credit	6
SMBC	7	Golub Capital	6
JP Morgan	4	Arcmont	6
Citi	3	Macquarie	5

“ We believe there is some room for cautious optimism off the back of inflation rates continuing to ease between June and July and forward curves indicating base rates are now very close to the peak ”

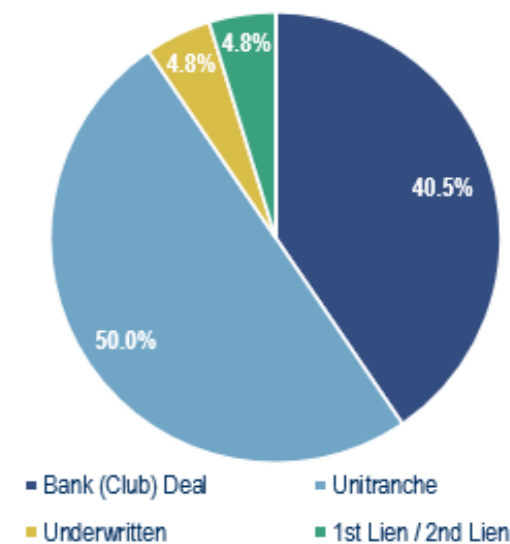
Deal volumes



Deal purpose



Deal structure



France highlights



Nicolas Cofflard
Managing Director

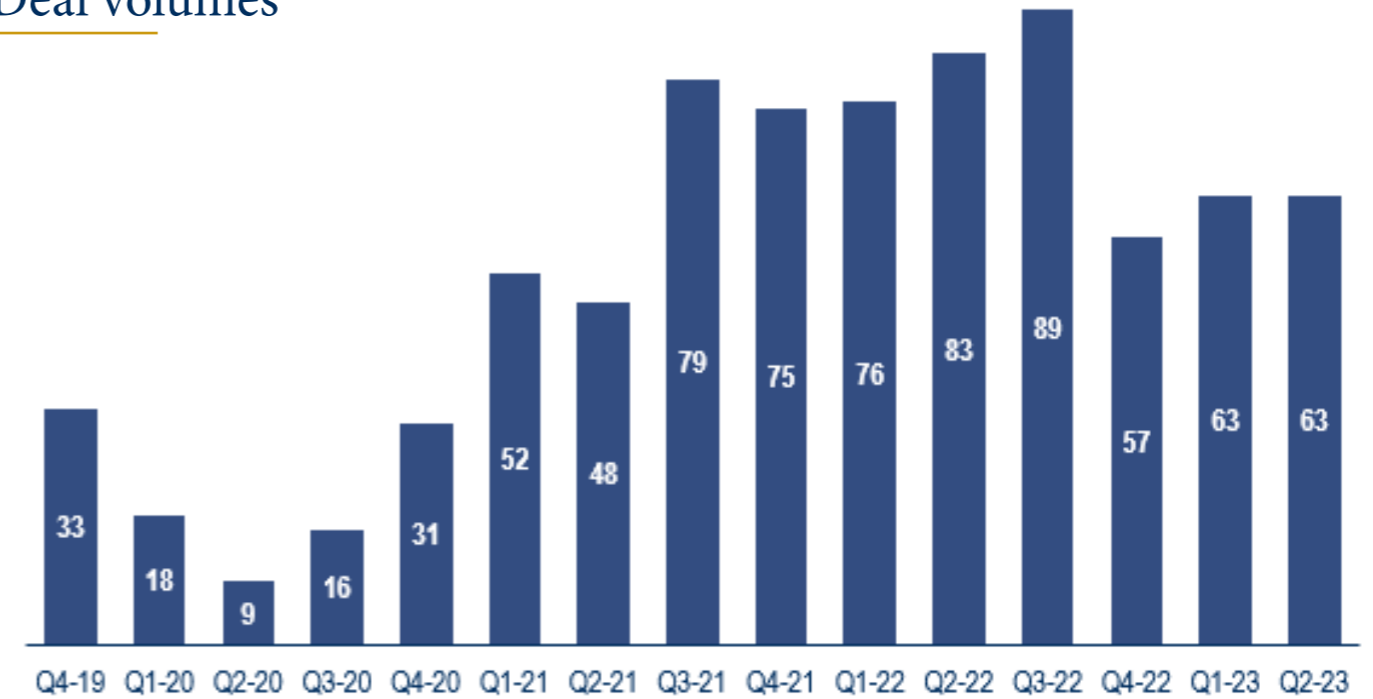
“ Although funds remain cautious about the capital they deploy amid macro economic uncertainties, French direct lenders have been more active this past quarter than in other regions ”

- Within France’s mid-market, we have seen a continuation of similar deal drivers and volumes from the last quarter, 64 in Q1 2023 to 63 in Q2 2023, but a notable distinction between A&E transactions animating the TL (Term Loan) market and private debt funds seizing the M&A deals supporting primary lending
- The terms of these A&E transactions were surprisingly favorable, notably those obtained by the prominent French borrower Idemia¹³ - upsizing and reverse-flexing pricing on its cross-border extension exercise – as well as those secured by Axilone¹⁴ - the beauty products packaging manufacturer securing a three year extension
- On the private debt side, two landmark transactions demonstrated that the private market is still open for good quality borrowers: ICG unitranche supporting Wendel’s acquisition of the consulting firm Scalian¹⁵ and Hayfin backing PAI’s acquisition of the park operator Looping¹⁶
- Although funds remain cautious about the capital they deploy amid macro economic uncertainties, French direct lenders have been more active this past quarter than in other jurisdictions, representing 31% of the European deal count in H1 2022¹⁷, placing France as the most active country in Europe for direct lending deals
- We believe the outlook for 2023 remains uncertain, as an increasing number of French companies undergo financial restructurings, like Orpea¹⁸ and Casino¹⁹

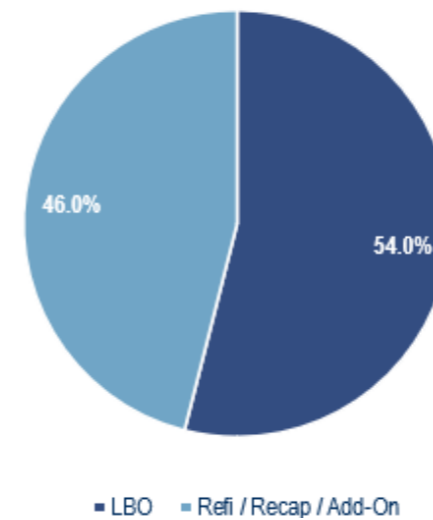
France lender league tables

Banks	LTM	Funds	LTM
LCL	84	CAPZA / Artemid	21
BNP Paribas	76	CIC Private Debt	20
Société Générale	73	Schelcher Prince Gestion	20
La Banque Postale	37	Eurazeo	19
CIC	36	Barings	19
CA-CIB	34	Amundi	13
Banque Populaire	30	Bpifrance	12
Caisse d’Epargne	27	Tikehau	12
HSBC	25	Hayfin	6
Banque Palatine	23	Eiffel	6

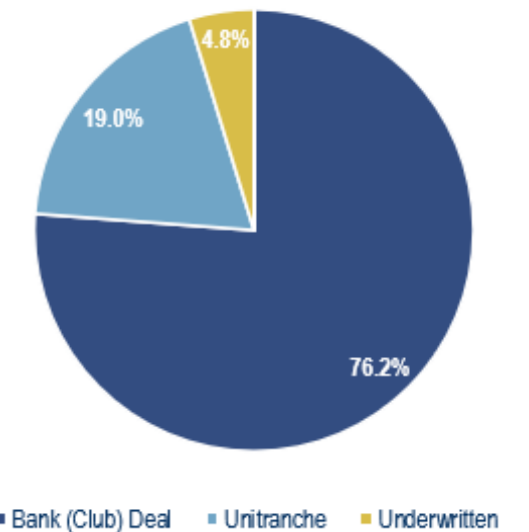
Deal volumes



Deal purpose



Deal structure



Germany highlights



Ari Winarto
Managing Director

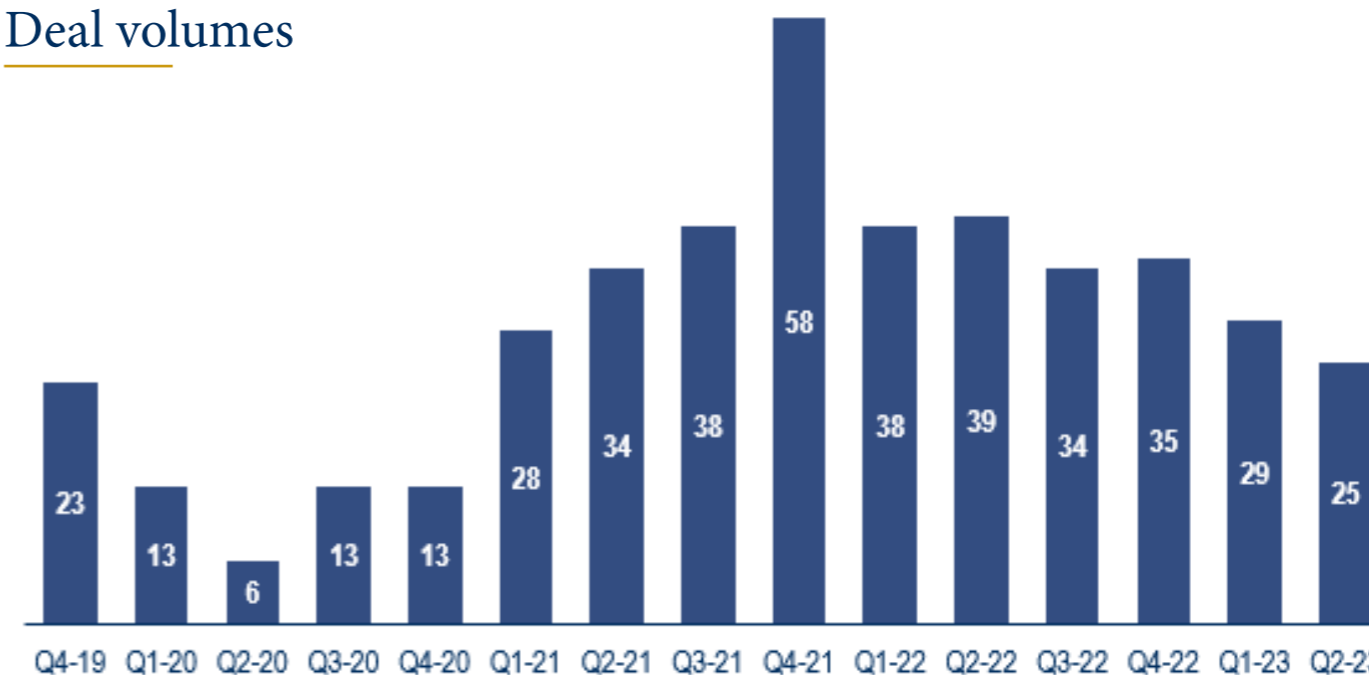
“ **Key debt metrics have been easing, albeit remaining at a high level, bringing a possible end to the record costs for companies** ”

- Within the DACH region, key lending themes remained the same from Q1 to Q2 2023: refinancing and add-on transactions have continued to be popular as sponsors reprice their portfolios and manage exit plans²⁰; and covenant work behind the scenes continues as lenders and companies focus on waivers, amendments and small restructurings
- Deal volume decreased slightly in Q2 2023 compared to the previous quarter, but the number of live deals has increased as M&A activity picked up. Key debt metrics have been easing, albeit remaining at a high level, bringing a possible end to the record costs for companies
- As we anticipated last edition, we believe ESG linked financings will continue to be a relevant topic for banks and private debt lenders, and could represent another important liquidity pocket for companies to tap into in the current challenging environment²¹
- This past quarter, lenders remain cautious, selective, and restrictive on terms. While avoiding cyclical sectors, for example retail and construction, lenders are valuing good assets despite the market uncertainty
- Looking forward, we expect increased deal flow as sponsors respond to the easing macro pressures by launching processes – many assets are currently being prepared to market following the summer break

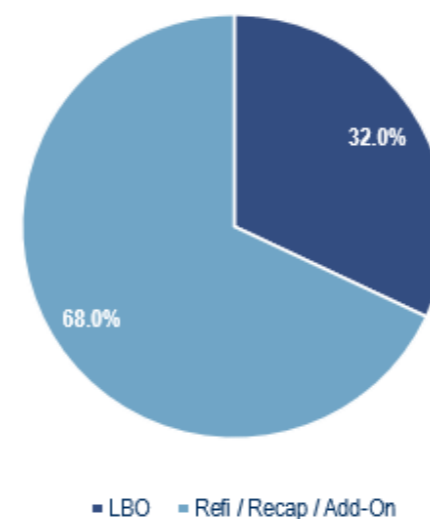
Germany lender league tables

Banks	LTM	Funds	LTM
SEB	12	Eurazeo	7
OLB	11	Arcmont	7
Nord LB	10	BlackRock	6
LBBW	9	ODDO BHF	6
Berenberg	8	Pemberton	6
DZ Bank	8	Investec	5
Siemens	7	Permira	5
RBI	6	Hermes	4
Commerzbank	4	Ardian	4
ApoBank	4	Ares	4

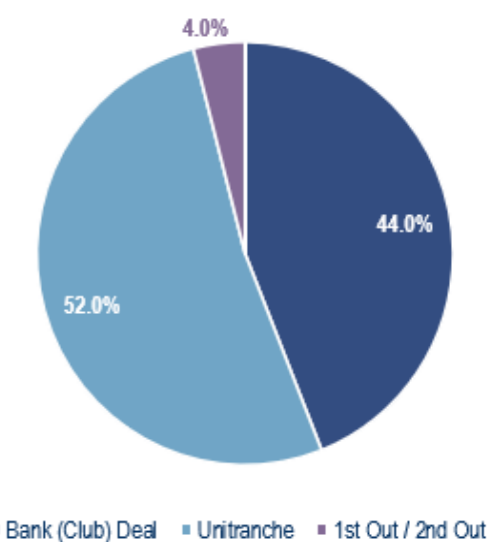
Deal volumes



Deal purpose



Deal structure



Benelux highlights



Paul de Hek
Co-CEO, Benelux



Robert Ruiter
Co-CEO, Benelux

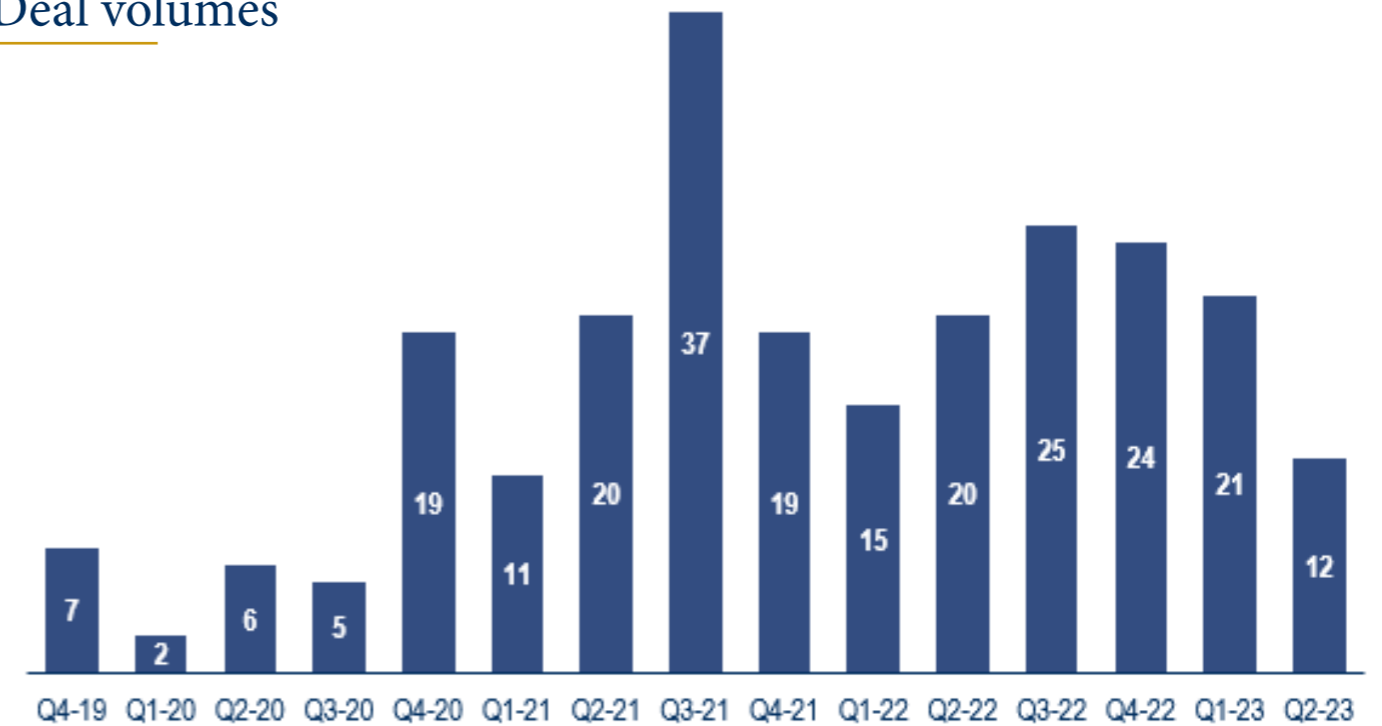
“ **Financing will continue to be an important part of the process, and the impact of decreased appetite and rising interest rates on deal pricing, with double digit rates for private debt funds nowadays, will keep sellers focused on trade bidders** ”

- Within the Benelux mid-market, Q2 2023 continued to be challenging for financing buyouts with activity still constrained by the macro and geopolitical backdrop
- While private debt funds continue to focus on perceived high-quality assets, like those exposed to technology IP or clean energy products, banks are still focused on supporting existing relationships, seen notably at Rabobank²², ING²³ and ABN Amro²⁴. Due to limited appetite for single debt ticket exposure, we have observed increased difficulty when composing banking club deals with an enterprise value above €100m
- The rise of private debt funds which are targeting the consumer, industrial and services industries continues at a slow pace. Given the pricing is typically above classic bank debt pricing levels, deal values are impacted when the bidder chooses this route
- The ongoing challenging economic environment has made it clear to sellers and buyers that early lender education is an important element of the deal process. It has also fostered a better understanding of deal pricing between sellers and buyers
- As discussed in the previous edition, we expect the end of 2023 will determine the deal pipeline for next year and beyond as the number of portfolio companies with previously delayed exits meets high levels of dry powder. Financing will continue to be an important part of the process, and the impact of decreased appetite and rising interest rates on deal pricing, with double digit rates for private debt funds nowadays, will keep sellers focused on trade bidders

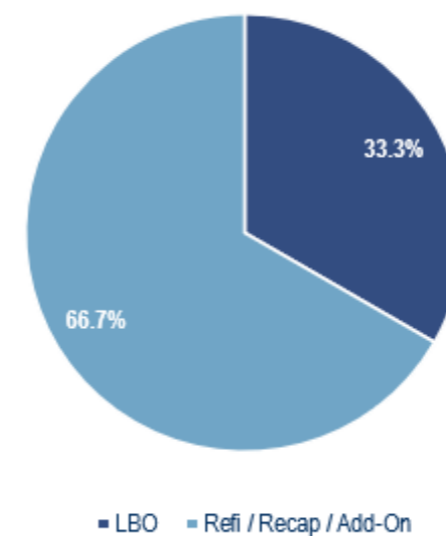
Benelux lender league tables

Banks	LTM	Funds	LTM
ING	17	Barings	10
Rabobank	13	Crescent	8
ABN Amro	12	Ares	8
Siemens	5	Tikehau	6
Investec	5	Hayfin	4
JP Morgan	4	KKR	4
Deutsche Bank	4	LGT	3
BNP Paribas	4	Ardian	3
SMBC	4	Muzinich	3
CIC	3	Bridgepoint Credit	3

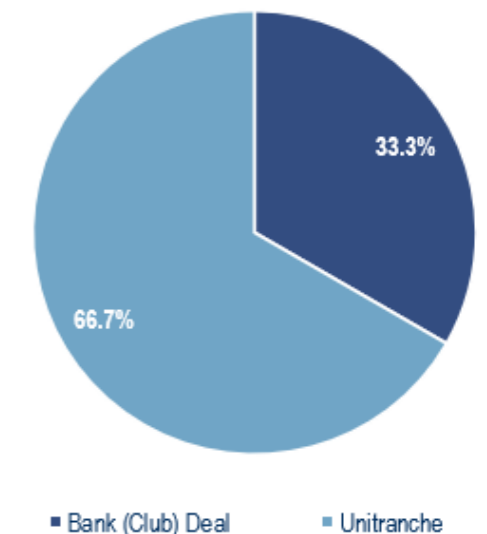
Deal volumes



Deal purpose



Deal structure



Spain highlights



Manuel Zulueta
CEO, Spain



Joaquín Gonzalo
Managing Director

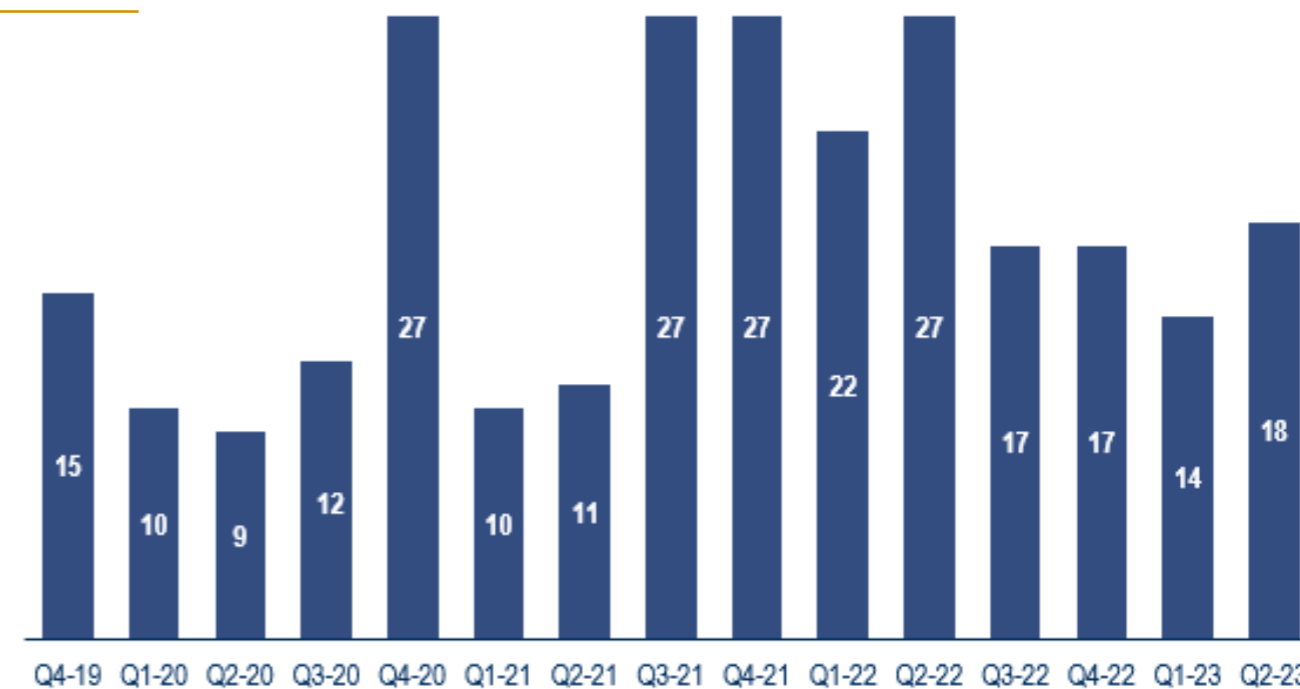
“ *Within the Spanish mid-market, economic uncertainty and tighter financing terms have had an impact on companies’ valuations, leading to less acquisition financing* ”

- Within the Spanish mid-market, economic uncertainty and tighter financing terms have had an impact on companies’ valuations. The valuation gap has led to weaker M&A activity, and thus, less acquisition financing²⁵
- On the other hand, following a drop in activity since Q3 2022, debt funds have material dry powder, and growing pressure to deploy it. The increase in base rates - EURIBOR (Euro Interbank Offered Rate) increased to 4.15% at the end of July²⁶ - has made direct lenders more price competitive in relation to banks.
- Additionally, we have seen growing rivalry amongst the limited high-quality assets in the market although terms remain conservative. Further, these top-quality companies are looking for alternative sources of financing (unitranche, preferred equity) to support their growth and expansion initiatives (organic and inorganic)
- With the reform of Spain’s Insolvency Law²⁷, we have observed lenders’ increased authority during refinancing procedures but also Spanish banks remaining hesitant to assume control of the companies. We believe distressed funds will soon be key players, as greater clarity is gained regarding the implementation of the law
- We expect higher refinancing and restructuring activity in the coming months. Public loan programmes, such as ICO loans²⁸ and the SEPI fund²⁹ have been useful for businesses navigating COVID, however we are now seeing many businesses struggling with increased debt service costs (higher interest rates and dealing with rigorous amortization plans)

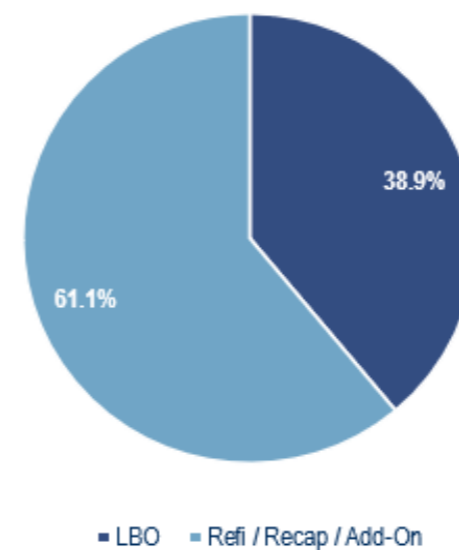
Spain lender league tables

Banks	LTM	Funds	LTM
CaixaBank	38	Tresmares	8
BBVA	22	Oquendo	7
Santander	20	Amundi	3
Sabadell	10	Ares	2
Bankinter	7	Pemberton	2
Targobank	7	Allianz G.I.	1
Deutsche Bank	6	Carlyle	1
ING	5	Cerea	1
Ibercaja	5	Eurazeo	1
BCC	4	Metlife	1

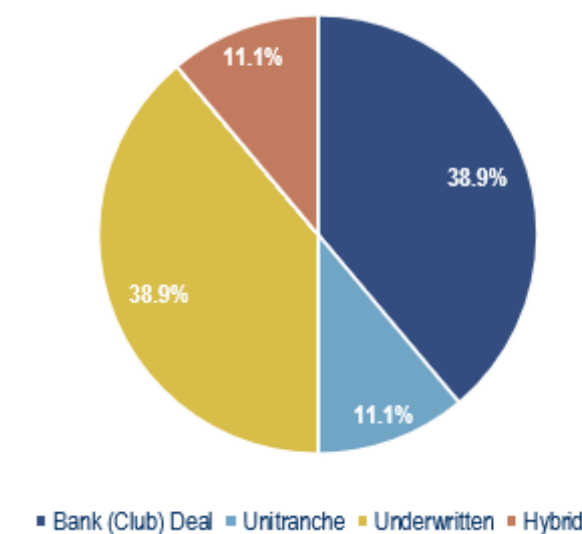
Deal volumes



Deal purpose



Deal structure



Italy highlights



Giuliano Guarino
DC Advisory Italy Co-Head

“ **There is cause for cautious optimism as the level of inflation is decreasing, albeit at a slow rate, energy prices are reducing and the labor market is improving** ”

- Conditions in the Italian mid-market during Q2 2023 continued to be negatively impacted by slower global economic growth, tight monetary policies and heightened geopolitical tensions
- Investments made by private companies decreased in volume³⁰, in line with previous quarters, leading to a slowdown in the demand for debt. However, there is cause for cautious optimism as the level of inflation is decreasing, albeit at a slow rate, energy prices are reducing and the labour market is improving³¹
- Demand for loans in the non-financial private sector has continued to diminish, influenced by the rise in the cost of credit which reached 4.8% in May 2023³². Notably, loans to small-sized players decreased the most (by 8.2%) compared to last year, while loans to the private sector slowed by 2.6%³³
- The challenging macroeconomic and credit environment was reflected further in dealmaking activity with a 63% decrease in deal value compared to the same period last year, and a 14% decrease in terms of deal volume. This trend is driven by an extension of M&A process times and a focus on smaller-scale operations, in order to limit financial and operational risks³⁴
- Italy's 2023 GDP growth projections have been revised higher than originally anticipated³⁵, demonstrating hope in the economy, however there is still a fear of recession and further fluctuations of the EU GDP. As such, we believe it's likely that the ECB will continue raising interest rates, increasing the overall cost of debt³⁶



Recent European Debt Advisory transactions

Project Cheetah Advisor to the Company on an A&E process 2023	CVS Group plc Passionate about animal care Advisor to the Company on Refinancing 2023	Parkia igneo Infrastructure Partners Advisor to the Company on Refinancing 2023	BIOCARTIS Advisor to an <i>ad hoc</i> group of creditors on the Recapitalisation of the Company 2023	VILLERBY Advisor to the Company on Refinancing 2022
wsd Advisor to the Company on Refinancing 2022	preqin Advisor to the Company on Add-on Financing 2022	Infracapital III <small>INFRAFIBRE GERMANY</small> Advisor to the Company on Financing Package 2022	MACCAFERRI Advisor to an <i>ad hoc</i> group of creditors on the Restructuring process 2022	EKCO Advisor to the Company on Acquisition Financing 2022
BURGER KING Advisor to the Company on Incremental Financing 2022	acora Advisor to the Company on Acquisition Financing 2022	DAMOVO Advisor to the Company on Refinancing 2022	DUBAG SCHAEFFLER Advisor to Sponsor on Acquisition Financing 2022	Project Trident II Advisor to the Company on Recapitalisation 2022
Cadogan Tate Advisor to Sponsor on Acquisition Financing 2022	D Advisor to the Company on Staple Financing 2022	HK>A Advisor to Sponsor on Acquisition Financing 2022	Project Hebrides Advisor to the Company on a Restructuring process 2022	Project Danum Advisor to the Company on a Restructuring process 2022
JACOBS Advisor to the Company on Refinancing 2022	naxicap Teufel Advisor to the Company on Refinancing 2022	Project Shine Advisor to the Company on Acquisition Financing 2022	zenergi Advisor to Sponsor on Acquisition Financing 2022	Currencies Direct Advisor to Sponsors on Dividend Recapitalisation 2022
STUART TURNER Advisor to the Company on Staple Financing 2022	MARLINK Connect smarter. Anywhere. Advisor to Sponsor on Acquisition Financing 2021	REALVNC Advisor to Sponsor on Acquisition Financing 2021		

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2. LCD Q2 2023 European Quarterly Wrap <https://www.lcdcomps.com/lcd/r/index.html?rid=20>
3. The August 2023 DC Advisory Lender Survey: (DC Advisory's independent survey of 98 European banks and direct lenders. which was completed in August 2023 and conducted across UK, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg (referred to herein as the "The August 2023 DC Advisory Lender Survey" or the "Survey"). Any such data, including league table data referenced herein is limited to the data provided by the Survey participants and is not meant to constitute definitive market data. The banks and lenders selected for the Survey are based on those that are most active in the market, and that DC Advisory interacts with the most. Accordingly, the Survey participants do not constitute an exhaustive list of banks and lenders who may have been active during the period addressed by the Survey. Comparisons to deal activity or other statistics from prior quarters or other periods are calculated by comparing the results of the Survey to the results from DC Advisory Lender Survey corresponding to the prior period, subject to the same limitations described above.)
4. LCD Q2 2023 European Quarterly Wrap <https://www.lcdcomps.com/lcd/r/index.html?rid=20>
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*Lender Survey

Unless otherwise indicated, all tables, data and statistics provided in this piece, including with respect to deal activity, have been collected via the August 2023 DC Advisory Lender Survey, subject to the limitations of described below.

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