

# Swiss real estate market

## UBS Swiss Real Estate Bubble Index 2Q 2016

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- The *UBS Swiss Real Estate Bubble Index* nudged down in 2Q 2016 to 1.32 points and thus remains in the risk zone.
- This second drop in a row was due to house prices falling in real terms and the declining momentum of mortgage growth.
- Investments in real estate remain popular due to low interest rates.

The *UBS Swiss Real Estate Bubble Index* was in the risk zone in 2Q 2016 at 1.32 index points. The index decreased 0.03 points over the revised figure for the previous quarter. There were two factors behind the slight drop: First, nominal home prices were unchanged compared to the previous quarter. Adjusted for inflation, this corresponds to a decline of 0.6%. On an annual basis, this was the lowest growth rate since 2000. Second, the momentum of mortgage growth also weakened. Private household mortgage debt rose by only 2.7% compared to the previous year – likewise the slowest rate since the turn of the millennium.

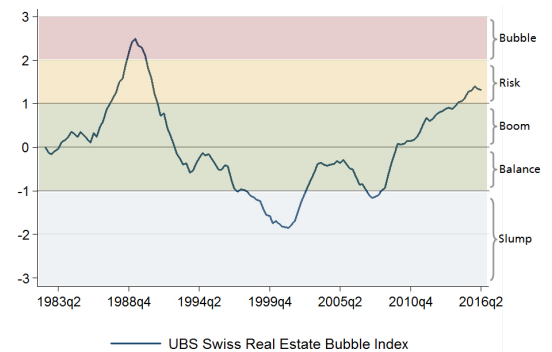
Low interest rates are continuing to boost the "buy-to-let" investment strategy. In 2Q 2016, the proportion of loan applications for real estate not intended for owner-occupancy hovered at almost 18%. Real estate investments thus continued to enjoy great popularity, as also confirmed by the figures for building permits. Building permits for almost 30,000 dwellings were granted in the first half of the year, which corresponds to a rise of around 8% compared with the same period of the previous year.

### Methodology

The *UBS Swiss Real Estate Bubble Index* comprises six sub-indices that track: the relationship between purchase and rental prices, the relationship between house prices and household income, the relationship between house prices and inflation, the relationship between mortgage debt and income, the relationship between construction and gross domestic product (GDP) and the proportion of credit applications by UBS clients for residential property not intended for owner occupancy. The *UBS Swiss Real Estate Bubble Index* is calculated as the average of trend-adjusted and standardized indicators weighted using a principal component analysis. The index level shows the deviation in standard deviations from the average, which is normalized to zero.

The index value is categorized into one of five levels: slump (below -1), balance (between -1 and 0), boom (between 0 and 1), risk (between 1 and 2) and bubble (above 2).

### UBS Swiss Real Estate Bubble Index



Source: UBS

### Index performance

		Index
2013	Quarter 1	0.80
	Quarter 2	0.84
	Quarter 3	0.89
	Quarter 4	0.91
2014	Quarter 1	0.89
	Quarter 2	0.95
	Quarter 3	1.04
	Quarter 4	1.06
2015	Quarter 1	1.14
	Quarter 2	1.29
	Quarter 3	1.30
	Quarter 4	1.40
2016	Quarter 1	1.35
	Quarter 2	1.32

Source: UBS

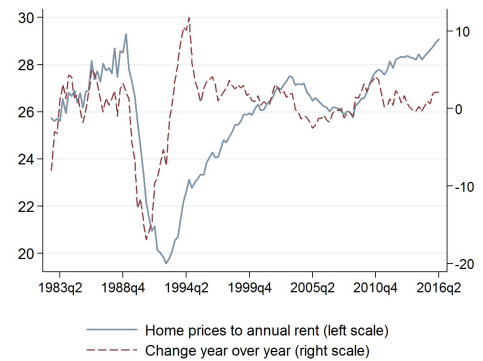
The index values may be slightly adjusted each quarter as a result of data revisions and varying weights of the sub-indices.

## Sub-indices of the *UBS Swiss Real Estate Bubble Index*

### Owner-occupied house prices relative to annual rents

While rents declined by a nominal 0.7% year-on-year, owner-occupied house prices were unchanged. This resulted in an increase in the buy/rent ratio. In 2Q 2016, it took more than 29 annual rents to purchase a comparable home. The last time the ratio was higher was in March 1989. The current figure significantly exceeds the long-term average of around 26.

**Home prices relative to annual rent**  
Level and change year-over-year in percent

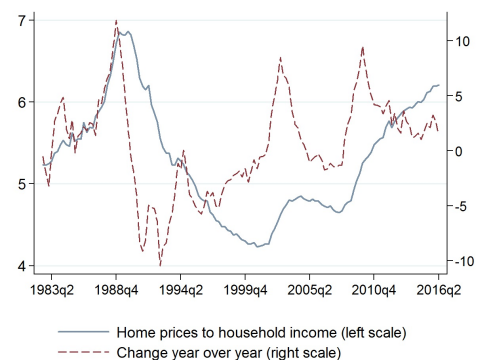


Source: SNB; UBS

### Owner-occupied house prices relative to household income

Nominal prices of owner-occupied homes stagnated in 2Q 2016. Since household incomes fell slightly, the indicator did not go up very much compared to the previous quarter. Around 6.2 annual household incomes were still needed to purchase a home in the medium price segment. The long-term average is 5.3 annual incomes.

**Home prices relative to household income**  
Level and change year-over-year in percent

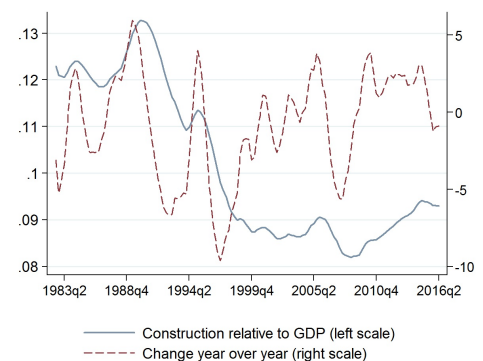


Source: SNB; FSO; UBS

### Construction relative to gross domestic product (GDP)

Nominal construction investment increased slightly in 2Q 2016. However, investment in the sector declined 0.4% compared to the previous year. In view of the somewhat weaker economic results, construction investment's share of the gross domestic product remained unchanged at 9.3%. The long-term average value lies at 10.3%.

**Construction relative to gross domestic product**  
Level and change year-over-year in percent



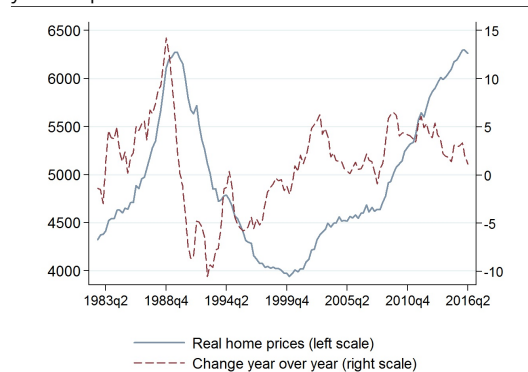
Source: seco; FSO; UBS

**Owner-occupied home prices relative to consumer prices**

Nominal home prices, as a mean value of prices for single-family homes and condominiums, were virtually unchanged in 2Q 2016 compared to the previous quarter. Due to positive inflation, there was a small price correction for owner-occupied homes of 0.6% after adjustment for inflation. Year-on-year, however, a nominal rise of 0.7% was recorded.

**Home prices relative to consumer prices**

Real home prices (CHF/m<sup>2</sup>) and change year-over-year in percent



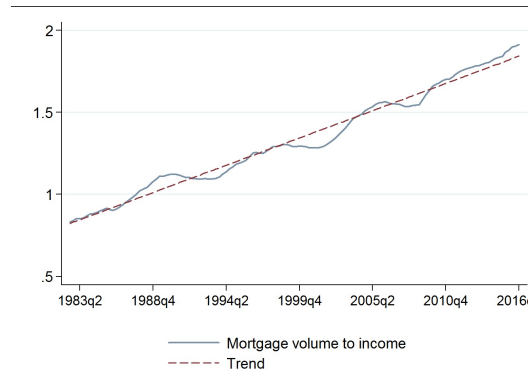
Source: SNB; FSO; UBS

**Mortgage volume relative to disposable household income**

The momentum of mortgage growth dropped in 2Q 2016 for the fourth time in succession. Mortgage debt only rose by around 2.7% year-on-year. This means that the growth rate fell to its lowest level since the start of 2000. Total debt exceeds disposable income by about 90%.

**Mortgage volume relative to income**

Mortgage debt of private households relative to income and trend line



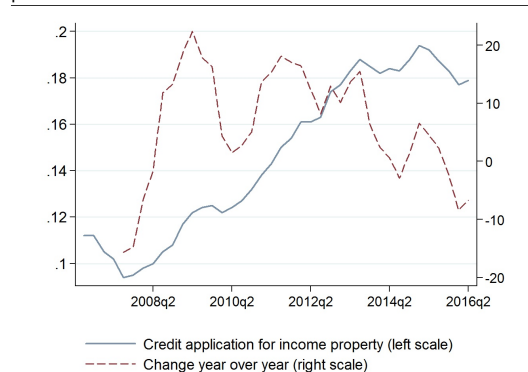
Source: SNB; FSO; UBS

**UBS credit applications for residential property not intended for self-occupancy**

The number of loan applications for non-owner-occupied real estate rose slightly in 2Q 2016. The figure nevertheless remained substantially below the record high achieved in 2015. Despite historically low long-term interest rates, falling rents and rising vacancies reduced the attractiveness of buy-to-let investments. Buy-to-let nevertheless remains a popular investment strategy, accounting for 17.9% of all loan applications.

**Credit applications for residential property not intended for self-occupancy**

Share of total and change year-over-year in percent



Source: UBS

## Regions with risk potential for the residential real estate market

The risk map has changed to reflect the decrease in the real estate bubble index. The regions Appenzell Innerrhoden, Baden and Thurgau are no longer among the monitored regions. The composition of the exposed regions remains unchanged.

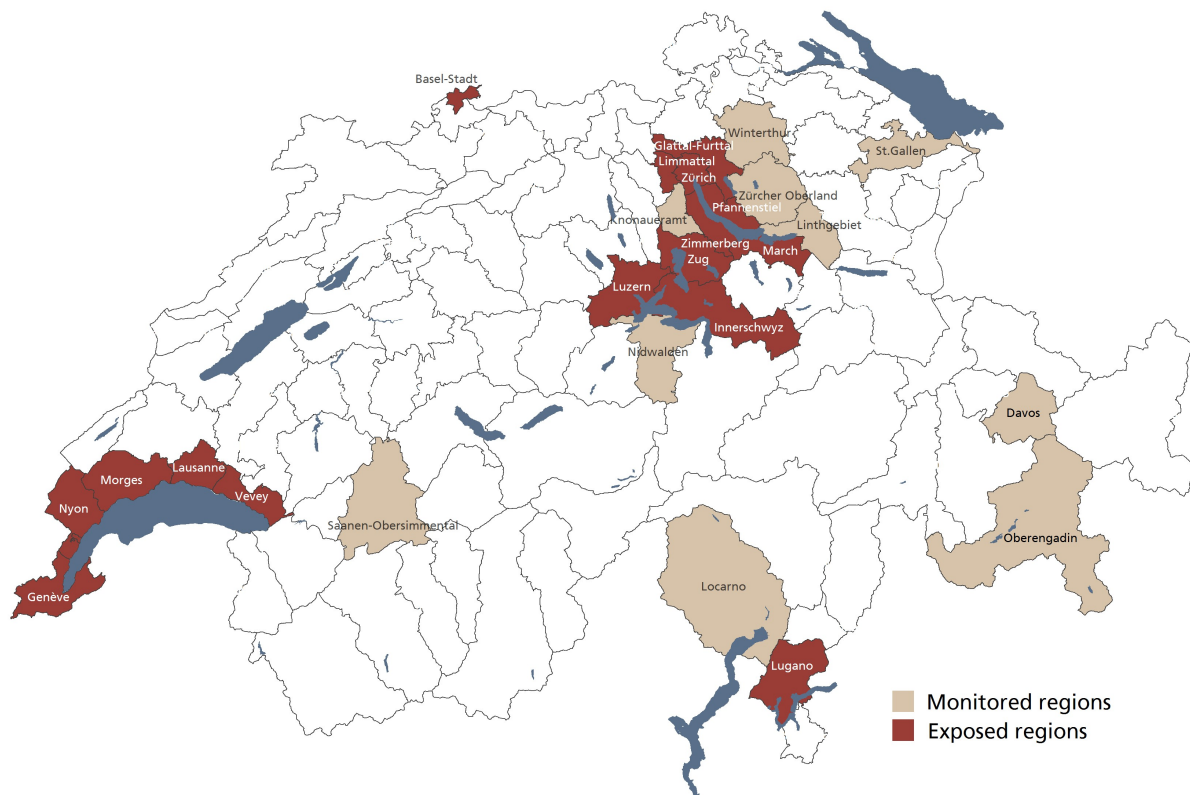
### Methodology

Our selection of exposed regions is tied to the level of the UBS Swiss Real Estate Bubble Index and is based on a multi-level selection process utilizing regional population and property price data.

Exposed regions	Monitored regions
Zürich	Knonaueramt
Glattal-Furttal	Zürcher Oberland
Limmattal	Winterthur
Zimmerberg	Nidwalden
Pfannenstiel	St.Gallen
Luzern	Saanen-Obersimmental
Innerschwyz	Linthgebiet
March	Davos
Zug	Oberengadin
Basel-Stadt	Locarno
Lugano	
Lausanne	
Morges	
Nyon	
Vevey	
Genève	

### Regional risk map - 2Q 2016

Exposed and monitored regions for the Swiss residential real estate market



Source: UBS

## Appendix

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