

'INFLUENTIALS' EXPECT THE EURO WILL LIVE ON BUT GREECE WILL LEAVE THE EUROZONE

In this month's YouGovStone survey, which looks ahead to potential developments in 2012, a majority of influentials expect the Euro to live on, but Greece to have to leave the eurozone. Ed Miliband's approval rating slumps whilst David Cameron's rises. Respondents predict positive political developments in Libya and Tunisia in 2012, but are overwhelmingly pessimistic about developments in Iran and Syria. For the survey, YouGovStone interviewed 803 members of its online ThinkTank of 4000+ influential Britons, drawn from politics, business, media, academia, NGOs, the public sector and beyond.

Man/Woman of the Year

The YouGovStone panel of 'influentials' was asked to name their Man and Woman of 2011. David Cameron came in the top spot for the men, with 20%. Runner up is the late Steve Jobs with 7%, narrowly beating Mohamed Bouazizi, the Tunisian street vendor who set himself on fire, catalysing anti-government protests in his country and the wider region. For the women, Angela Merkel came first, with a similar score of 19%. Burmese activist Aung San Syu Kii comes in close second spot at 16%, with the Duchess of Cambridge third, gaining 11% of the vote.



Man and Woman of the Year 2011 (Top 5)



MAN OF THE YEAR		
Position	Person	%
1.	David Cameron	20%
2.	Steve Jobs	7%
3.	Mohamed Bouazizi	6%
5.	Tom Watson	4%
5.	Christopher Hitchens	4%

WOMAN OF THE YEAR		
Position	Person	%
1.	Angela Merkel	19%
2.	Aung San Syu Kii	16%
3.	Katherine Middleton	11%
5.	Queen Elizabeth II	9%
5.	Christine Lagarde	7%

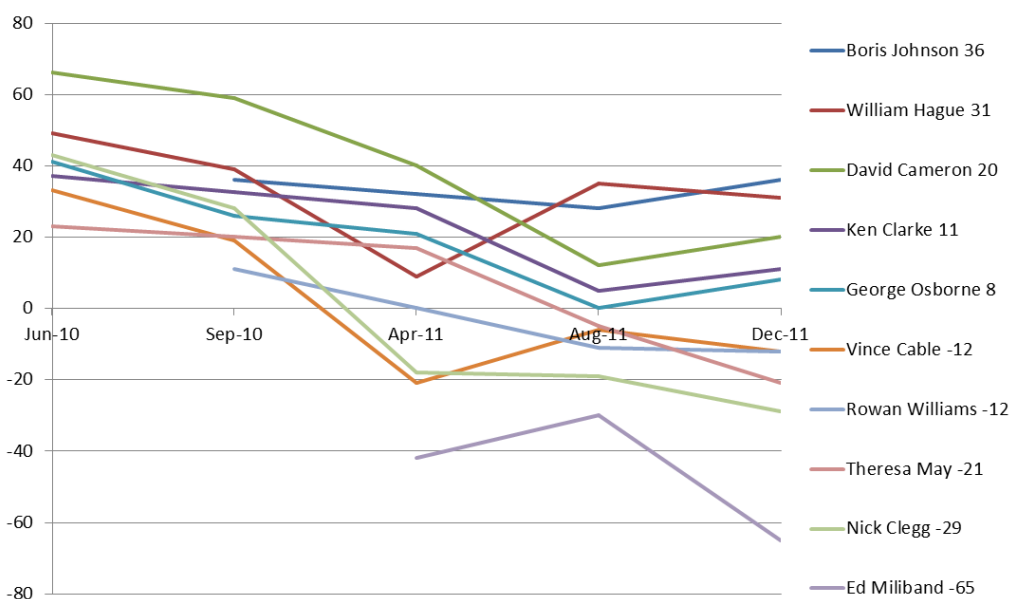
Base: Man of the Year, 500 UK 'influentials'; Woman of the Year, 374 UK 'influentials', December 16th 2011 – January 6th 2012.

Government performance

The ThinkTank was also asked to judge the performance of leading UK political figures. Several trends emerge here, the first being that approval of most leading Conservative figures has risen since the question was last asked in August. Boris Johnson gets a net score of +36 and David Cameron now has a net score of +20. (The net score indicates the % that state the politician is doing a good job minus those that state he/she is doing a poor job). These figures vary strongly by party preference – for those that voted Conservative in the 2010 election, the Prime Minister’s net score lies it +72, whereas it is – 30 for Labour voters.

Of the Conservatives, only Theresa May’s rating fell significantly, to -21. Conversely, leading figures from the two other main parties dropped in the ratings. Nick Clegg’s score continued to fall, now to -29; even among the Liberal Democrat voters he gets a negative net score, at -17. Even more dramatically, Ed Miliband, who recorded a small rise in his rating from April to August, now plummeted to -65; 73% of the ‘influentials’ now believe that he is doing a poor job as Labour Leader and Leader of the Opposition. This figure rises to -88 for the Conservative voters on the panel, but even most Labour voters are negative, giving a score of -33.

How well do you believe each of the following are doing in their current roles? Net score (% positive - % negative)



Base: 803 UK 'influentials', December 16th 2011 – January 6th 2012

Economic confidence

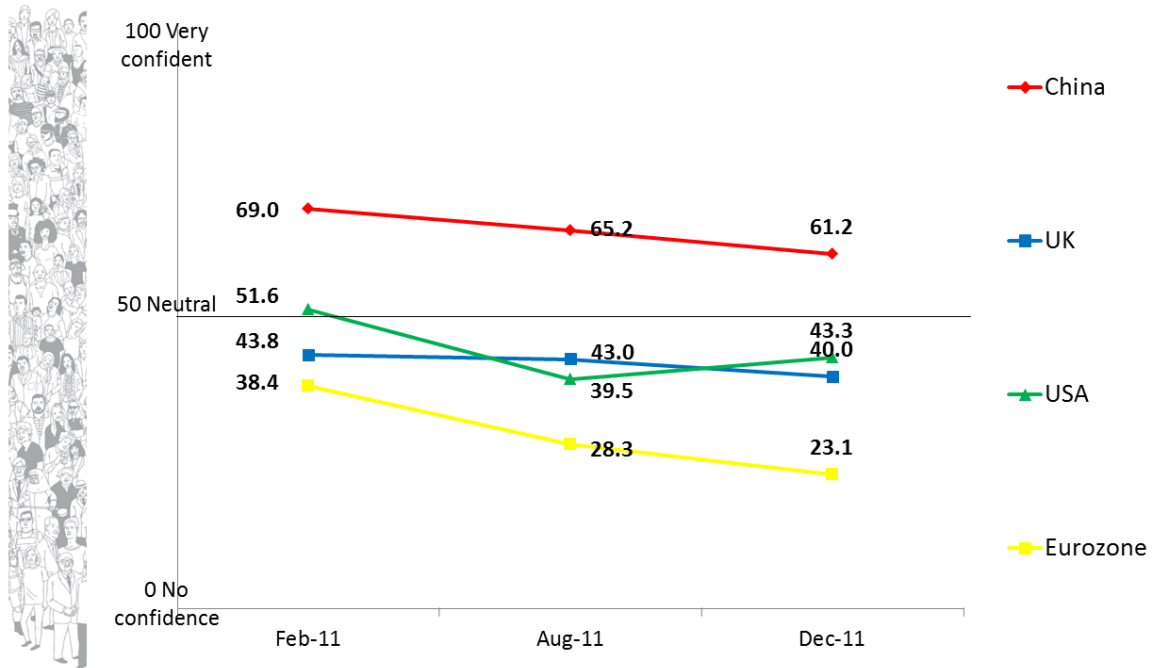
Turning to economic issues, the ‘influentials’ are largely pessimistic about most of the 4 leading economies under scrutiny. Compared to August, confidence has dropped for the economies of the UK, China, and especially the eurozone. Only the USA has managed to improve its outlook slightly, but still scores below 50 which indicates low confidence.

China remains the only economy in which respondents predominantly have confidence, and this is mirrored in the fact that 90% predict its economy to grow in 2012, of which 45% even expect strong

growth. Most 'influentials' are also hopeful about the US economy in 2012; 62% expect it to grow. Respondents are less optimistic about UK economic growth in 2012. Only a third expect any growth, with 40% predicting stagnation and a quarter seeing the economy contract. The ThinkTank's outlook is worst regarding the eurozone economy as a whole: more than half believe it will shrink in the year ahead.



How confident do you feel about these four economies?



Base: 803 UK 'influentials', December 16th 2011 – January 6th 2012

Eurozone-future and UK relation

Similarly, the ThinkTank is not hopeful that matters will improve with regard to the sovereign debt crisis in the eurozone. Confronted with a variety of scenarios as to how it could develop in 2012, half believe Greece will have to leave the euro, and 41% believe that even more eurozone members will have to leave the common currency, although the euro will continue. Only 11% believe a rescue plan will be drawn up which will solve the problem without further defaults or members leaving. However, only 13% subscribe to the scenario of the euro breaking apart completely.

In this crisis, David Cameron's recent veto on a new EU treaty is not judged positively by the panel in terms of how it will affect Britain's relationship with the EU; two thirds believe that it will have a negative effect. There is a clear difference between the parties here: whilst exactly half of those 'influentials' who voted Conservative in 2010 see a negative effect resulting from Cameron's veto, this figure rises to 83% for Liberal Democrats, and 89% of Labour voters. More than half of respondents see the UK moving further away from the EU in the year ahead, although 45% do not see the relationship changing further this year.

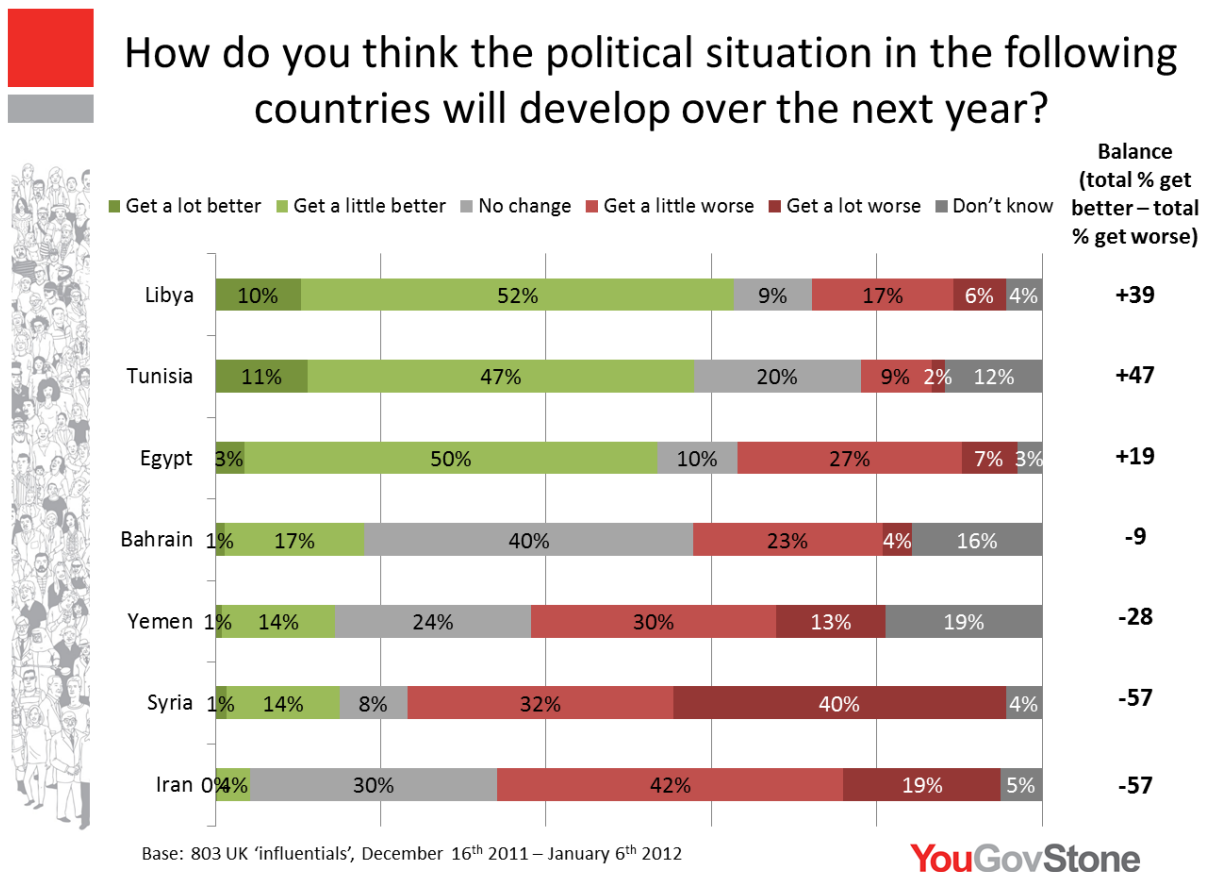
Iran/Middle East

Turning now to the Middle East, where the panel was asked how they thought relations between Iran and the West would develop in 2012. 81% of respondents believe that relations will deteriorate

in the year ahead. However, not everyone believes a military confrontation to be inevitable; 41% think that such an event is likely, but the majority, 53% think that this is somewhat, or very, unlikely.

Asked about developments in Syria, and the various possible outcomes for 2012, almost half of the 'influentials' expect the rebellion to continue until some reforms are offered by the government. 13% anticipate an intervention by the international community to restore peace, but only a quarter think that the government will ultimately be overthrown.

Concerning Egypt, respondents are divided as to whether the country will successfully manage its transition to a democratic system in 2012. 41% agree, but 52% disagree. Finally, respondents were asked to give their general outlook for the political situation in a series of countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Respondents were most hopeful about developments in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt, with more than half predicting an improvement for the next year. They are more uncertain about Bahrain's future in 2012 – 18% expect an improvement, 40% see no change forthcoming and 27% expect a deterioration. The ThinkTank is decidedly pessimistic about Syria and Iran, where 72% and 61% respectively think the political situation will deteriorate in 2012.



US elections

Looking to the United States and the run-up to the Presidential elections, the ThinkTank was asked, before the first caucuses took place, who they thought would become the Republican candidate. 36% believe Mitt Romney will eventually win the primaries, with Newt Gingrich second at 20%. None of the seven other candidates gained more than 5%. 35% of respondents were undecided, and this all suggests that the race still appears very open in the eyes of the 'influentials'. It will be a tall order for whoever wins the Republican primaries to beat Barack Obama in the election itself, as 75% of respondents now believe the current President will manage to secure a second term.

Climate change

Respondents were also asked to judge how much progress on curbing emissions the world's leading polluting nations will make in 2012 in the wake of the Durban conference. Again, respondents were given a variety of scenarios to choose from. Although a third are optimistic, expecting some progress, 37% do not think any more progress will be made in the year ahead. A further 28% believe that some countries will even abandon existing plans and commitments to reduce emissions.

Euro 2012 championship

On a lighter note, 2012 will also be the year of the UEFA European Football Championship. We asked respondents to predict the winner, and Spain is the most likely candidate, with 29% of the vote. Germany is far behind at 10%, and England a lowly third, with 3%. However, the majority (42%) did not chance a guess – stating that 'I'm not interested in football.'

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YouGov now regularly surveys MPs, business leaders and other groups of high level decision makers in the UK and internationally. If your organisation needs to know what these individuals think, please contact Oliver Rowe, Director of Reputation Research on +44 (0)207 012 6032 or email oliver.rowe@yougov.com