

# HOUSE VIEWS

## DECEMBER 2021



## FAVOURABLE OUTLOOK FOR 2022

**Strong recovery to continue in advanced economies.** Growth will probably lower after this year's rebound but should remain pretty dynamic. Company and household finances look strong and built-up savings should keep consumption ticking over. Monetary and financial conditions are also helpful, with real interest rates still clearly negative. Prices remain under upward pressure from production and supply chain tensions, but these should gradually decline allowing inflation to ease back over the year, though it is likely to top central bank targets for some months yet. Another COVID wave could pose a threat to mobility, particularly in Europe just now, but greater vaccine take-up and new treatments should limit its reach.

**A higher-growth environment will bring higher inflation – albeit mostly short-lived – prompting central banks in several countries to shift monetary policy back toward normal.** The Fed will likely continue tapering its asset purchase programme and could start hiking rates in 2022. The ECB, meanwhile, will likely stick to its highly accommodative policy as euro zone inflation is more modest.

**We went to an Overweight allocation to equities.** Indeed, even if the uncertainties (concerning COVID and economic recovery) could generate some volatility, the context will remain globally favorable for risky assets. We raised our exposure to the US market, where the earnings outlook remains bullish. We also went to Overweight on emerging Asian equities. China faces some serious short-term risks, but its equity prices are looking particularly tempting for an economy that can still offer strong mid-term growth. Other emerging markets look less attractive, facing the threat of embedded stagflation (meagre growth and high inflation). On the other hand, we are cutting exposure to US high-yield corporate debt and hedge funds, now less appealing in relative terms.

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Unless otherwise specified, all statistics and figures in this report were taken from Bloomberg and Datastream on 26/11/2021

# OUR STRONGEST CONVICTIONS

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## Continued dynamic recovery in 2022 in developed economies

Economic growth is expected to remain sustained in the coming quarters, particularly in the developed economies, thanks to normalizing labor markets and still very accommodative monetary and financial conditions. However, growth is likely to be uneven across the world's regions and subject to various risks that could affect its strength.

## A mainly transitory inflation

The recent price pressures reflect mostly transitory factors. Inflation is expected to return to levels more comfortable for central banks in developed economies by the end of 2022.

## An allocation that favours equities

We have opted for an overall Overweight allocation to the equity markets, particularly to the United States and the Eurozone for the developed economies, and to Asia for the emerging markets.

## Rebalancing in favor of cyclical and value stocks

We continue to favor a balanced mix of cyclical sectors such as materials, industrials, financials, consumer cyclicals and energy, and value stocks.

## An overweight of the dollar against the euro

The dollar will continue to appreciate against the euro as a result of faster tightening by the Federal Reserve relative to the ECB. The dollar also offer a position of "safe haven" currency in the event of proven financial market turbulence.

## Gold and hedge funds: assets to consider for diversification

Against a backdrop of volatility and inflation fears, gold and hedge funds will continue to play a valuable decorrelation role.

# OUR ASSET ALLOCATION

The table below presents the latest conclusions of our Global Investment Committee (GIC)

		Summary house views					Change since last GIC	
		Strong U/W	U/W	N	O/W	Strong O/W		
EQUITY	GLOBAL EQUITY				O/W		+	
	United States				O/W		+	
	Eurozone				O/W			
	United Kingdom			N			-	
	Japan			N				
	Emerging				O/W		+	
FIXED INCOME	SOVEREIGN	GLOBAL RATES	U/W					
		U.S. Treasuries	O/W					
		Bunds	O/W					
		Gilts	O/W					
		EM Govies (\$)			N			
	CORPORATE	U.S. IG		O/W				
		U.S. HY		O/W				-
		EMU IG		O/W				
		EMU HY			N			
		UK IG		O/W				
UK HY		O/W						
FOREX	EUR against USD		O/W					
	USD against JPY			N				
	GBP against USD			N				
	EUR against CHF			N				
	Emerging FX against USD			N				
ALTERNATIVES	Brent			N				
	Gold				O/W			
	Hedge funds			N			-	

# ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

## Advanced economies continue their recovery



**Recovery should continue at a healthy pace in 2022 across the advanced economies, albeit slower than during the 2021 post-COVID rebound. Inflation will ease back over the year but is likely to top central bank targets for some months yet. All of which gives the Fed good reason to start to normalise its monetary policy, while the ECB will stick to its accommodative tone. Emerging economies outside Asia face the threat of embedded stagflation (meagre growth and high inflation).**

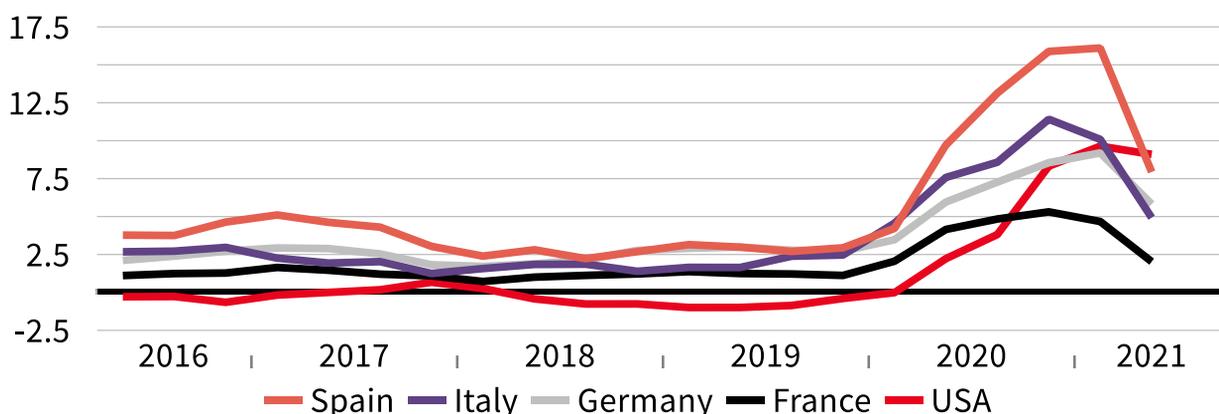
**Different factors buoy activity in developed economies.** Company and household finances (overall) look strong and built-up savings should keep consumption ticking over. Normalising labour markets and still favourable monetary and financial conditions are other ongoing positives. Note that another COVID wave could pose a threat to mobility, particularly in Europe just now, but greater vaccine take-up and new treatments should limit its reach.

**Uncertainty remains as to fiscal policy.** After weighing in with strong support for their economies at the peak of the COVID crisis, governments are now looking to move policy gradually back to normal. How fast they do this will be a matter of delicate political negotiation on both sides of the Atlantic and represents a risk to our economic outlook.

**Inflationary risks need close watching, particularly in the United States.** Strong demand and constraints on supply are generating severe pressures on production chains and pushing up input prices. These pressures should gradually ease over the course of the year, allowing inflation to fall back to levels more comfortable for central banks, who will then be able to take a gradual approach to normalising policy. But there is a real risk these pressures will persist, particularly in the United States, meaning monetary policies could tighten faster and further than expected. In the euro zone, price pressures are mainly due to external factors and the threat is more of weaker economic activity than of lastingly higher inflation. The ECB will thus leave monetary policy unchanged.

**Emerging economies at risk of stagflation.** Many emerging economies are confronting stagflation, as inflation rises while growth stagnates. Their central banks are also tending to tighten policy more than expected. One exception is China, where inflation remains under control. But the ongoing policy of retuning its economic growth engines is likely to dampen growth again in 2022.

**Households : Accumulated Savings**  
(measured by changes in demand deposits in GDP points)



Sources: SGPB, Macrobond, Fed, BEA, Banque de France, INSEE, BUBA, DESTATIS, Bank of Italy, Istat, BDE, INE, 10/2021

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# FIXED INCOME

## Still limited appeal



The current environment with its ongoing recovery is tough for bonds. We remain strongly Underweight sovereign debt. We are lightly Underweight US HY corporates on grounds of Federal Reserve tapering and an expected hike in the Funds rate in H2 2022. We are Neutral on local currency emerging bonds, with a strong preference for Asian markets.

## Sovereigns

**US.** The yield of the 10-year T-Note continued to trend upward in November, breaking 1.5%. This gradual rise reflects strong inflation and expectations the Federal Reserve will start hiking rates in summer 2022. The Fed already announced its plans for tapering, cutting net securities purchases by USD 15 billion a month (USD 10 billion of Treasuries and USD 5 billion of mortgage-backed securities) which will stabilise its balance sheet by June. But it also said sums could vary higher or lower depending on the economy. We still see the economy growing strongly in coming quarters with inflation easing back in H2 2022. So, we expect the Fed to begin a gradual cycle of Funds rate hikes in H2 2022 as 10-year yields continue to rise. As a result, we remain heavily Underweight US sovereign bonds.

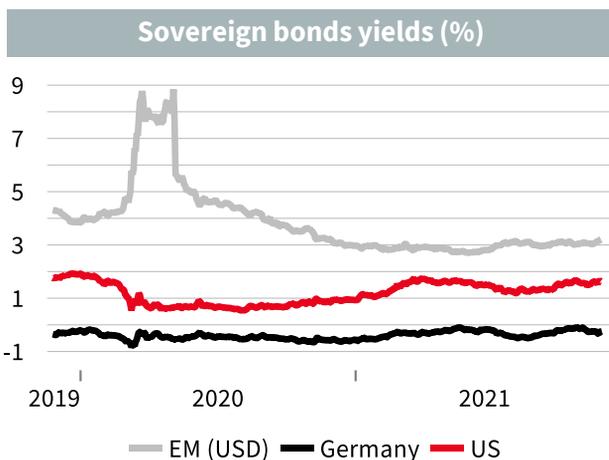
**Euro zone.** Sovereign yields dipped slightly last month as the health picture took a turn for the worse. Yields on the 10-year Bund slid back toward -0.3% and on the OAT toward 0.05%. The ECB is likely to sustain security purchases in 2022, with inflation set to drop back toward 2% and economic recovery easing back in some member states. We therefore remain strongly Underweight euro zone sovereign bonds.

**UK.** Having touched 0.85% the 10-year Gilt bounced back to 1% in the last two weeks on the prospect the Bank of England may start tightening policy. The Bank looks poised to start raising its policy rate (to 0.25%) and trimming its asset buying at its December meeting. We therefore remain strongly Underweight the sovereign bond.

## Credit

**US and euro zone credit.** We went slightly Underweight US high-yield corporate bonds on expectations of Fed monetary policy tightening and recent spread widening vs. sovereign yields. We remain Neutral on European HY corporate bonds as the ECB's accommodative policy should permit HY yield spreads over sovereigns to tighten further.

**Emerging markets.** We remain Neutral on EM dollar sovereign debt. The benchmark yield rose from 4.6% to 4.85% over the month against the global backdrop of a strong dollar and financial pressure in Turkey. That said, we reckon the Asian bond market should continue to do well, helped by sustained strong growth and still solid economic fundamentals.



Sources: SGPB, Bloomberg, 25/11/2021

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# EQUITIES

## Equities still have upside

We are now **Overweighting equities**. Indeed, even if the uncertainties (concerning COVID and economic recovery) could generate some volatility, the context will remain globally favorable for risky assets. We are increasing our exposure to the **United States and emerging markets in Asia**. We remain **Overweight on Eurozone markets** but are now **Neutral on the United Kingdom**. Sector-wise, we are still seeking to balance quality growth and underpriced cyclical sectors.

**United States.** We think the environment will continue to favour US equity markets in 2022. Stocks may look expensive but will continue to draw support from further earnings growth in 2022 in a still dynamic economy. Financial conditions remain generally helpful. Real interest rates are still clearly negative, allowing markets to shrug off the expected monetary tightening by the Federal Reserve. We continue to balance our portfolio between “growth” and “value” stocks in cyclically sensitive sectors, while favouring companies insensitive to rising input costs or with the pricing power to pass them on.

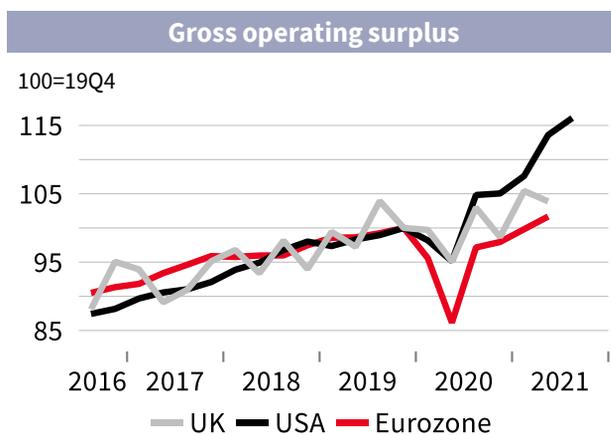
**Euro zone.** Attractively priced and with some of the best earnings outlooks of the main developed markets, euro zone equities continue to offer interesting upside. The latest wave of COVID cases has led some states to clamp down in the run-up to Christmas, but we think higher vaccination rates and new treatments will limit the wave's reach. We therefore remain at Overweight on this market, preferring cyclical sectors and companies that can mitigate input price pressures.

**United Kingdom.** Surging inflation will push the Bank of England to tighten monetary policy faster than expected, dampening economic growth. Labour shortages and supply bottlenecks could further tarnish companies' prospects. We therefore moved to Neutral on British equities, even though the market remains very cheap in value terms.

**Switzerland.** Analysts still expect earnings growth to outstrip other developed countries. Also, the market remains dominated by quality defensive stocks, less prone to sharp rebounds but less vulnerable to a market downturn.

**Japan.** We remain at Neutral on the Japanese market. Corporate earnings growth may be helped by the stronger economic recovery that finally seems to be taking hold, but will likely be held back by still paltry structural growth potential.

**Emerging markets.** Chinese stocks slumped in 2021 on fears of a sharp growth slowdown, tighter tech regulation and the troubles of Chinese property developer Evergrande, which raised fears of a steeper slowdown in the real estate market. While China's economy will likely continue its slowdown in 2022, the authorities look to have the fire-power to avoid any brutal crash. On this reading, stocks now look attractive given the still healthy medium-term growth outlook for China and wider Asia. For this reason, we have gone to Overweight these markets. Other emerging markets look less attractive, facing the threat of embedded stagflation (meagre growth and high inflation).



Sources: SGPB, Macrobond, Eurostat, BEA, ONS, 10/2021

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# CURRENCIES

## Fair winds for the dollar



**We remain Overweight the dollar vs. the euro, first because the Fed is set to raise rates faster than the ECB and second because it counts as a safe haven in case of market turbulence.**

**Dollar index (USD).** The dollar strengthened 3.6% against a representative basket of the other leading currencies in November. Prospects of faster monetary tightening in the United States drove up the greenback against other developed market currencies. And rising political risks gave it an extra boost versus emerging market currencies.

**Euro against USD.** The euro lost a substantial 4.1% versus the dollar last month, to 1.12 EUR/USD, on the worsening health situation in Europe and prospects of a more hawkish Fed monetary tightening. Overall, we reckon the US's more advanced phase of policy tightening and growth gap compared to the euro zone should tip the scales toward a strengthening dollar. The dollar is also a valuable safe-haven currency in the current high-risk environment. We therefore remain Underweight the euro.

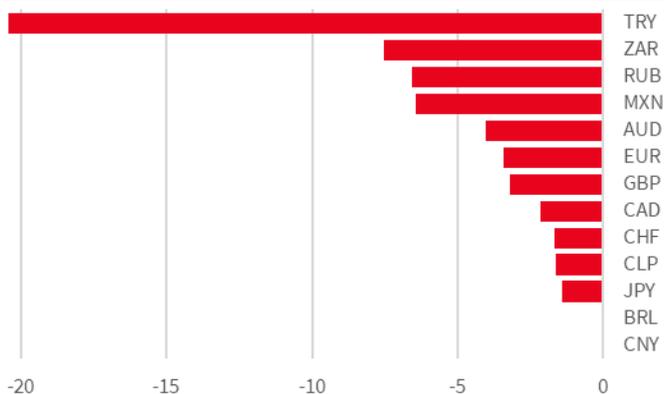
**British pound against USD.** Sterling followed the general trend against the dollar, weakening nearly 3%. We nonetheless remain Neutral on the GBP as the Bank of England looks likely to keep pace with the Fed's monetary tightening.

**USD against Japanese Yen.** The JPY ended the month at 115 JPY/USD, down 1.5% on the month and 11% since the start of the year. This weakness by the yen reflects the country's weak economic growth, hampered by health measures, and various economic uncertainties. That said, we remain Neutral on the JPY. The yen is still a safe haven currency and inflationary pressures remain low (0.1% underlying inflation in October).

**Euro against Swiss franc.** The Swiss franc continues to strengthen against the euro, gaining 1.6% in a month on the back of high inflation and fears of a worsening health situation in the zone. In these circumstances, the CHF is seen as a safe haven and, since Swiss inflationary pressures remain slight, a hedge against inflation. We remain Neutral on the CHF. The Swiss National Bank continues to intervene in currency markets to cap any rise in the CHF and a likely easing of inflationary pressures in 2022 and ongoing economic recovery in the zone should tend to limit upward pressure on the CHF.

**Emerging forex against USD.** Emerging market currencies weakened sharply against the dollar, the hardest hit being the Turkish lira, which shed 20% during the month as the CRBT cut policy rates despite inflation running at over 20%. Globally, the prospect of Fed monetary tightening, a slowing Chinese economy and rising political risks look like a bad combination for emerging market currencies.

**Currencies variation over 1 month against USD (%)**



Sources: SGPB, Macrobond, 25/11/2021

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# ALTERNATIVES

## Diversification is still key



We remain Overweight on gold for its hedging properties in the event of a market downturn. Hedge funds are looking less appealing from a portfolio balancing point of view, but still offer good protection against turbulence, so we have switched from Overweight to Neutral. Pressure on commodities should ease back to normal in 2022, so we are staying at Neutral on oil.

## Commodities

**Oil.** The recent rise in the dollar, up 7% versus its currency basket year to date and 2.5% in just two weeks, has halted the spike in the oil price. On top of this, the US and China have agreed a coordinated release of strategic oil reserves to try and drive prices down. Japan, India, South Korea and the United Kingdom have done a deal to follow suit in coming weeks. We therefore still think this is a blip and Brent should trade at \$60-70 next year.

**Gold.** Everyone wants gold in the current environment, worried about a recent peak in inflation. In our view, gold prices should continue to rise as high inflation figures persist for some months, until these return to normal. We also view gold as a good diversification play against a market downturn. We therefore remain at Overweight.

## Hedge Funds

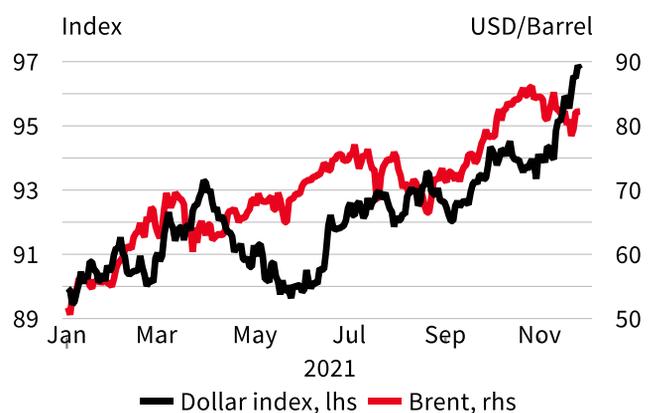
**Long/Short Equity.** Equity funds (L/S Market) are playing a particularly strong “performance protection” role as they are able to manage dispersion, particularly high in the current phase of sector rotation on equity markets.

**Event Driven.** Merger managers will continue to benefit from heavy M&A activity, led by companies that are cash-rich and/or eager to take advantage of still cheap credit in the short term.

**Fixed Income Arbitrage.** We remain cautious on funds taking positions in sovereign debt, given our scenario of a gradual rise in interest rates. We prefer funds positioned on the credit side, which stand to profit from this market where conditions are particularly tight. Such funds also offer protection against rate widening.

**Global Macro / CTA.** Commodity Trading Advisors (CTAs) offer traditional protection against market volatility, which looks set to persist. As for Global Macro funds, managers will have to pick particularly carefully amid ongoing uncertainty about the economic recovery.

The recent rise in the dollar has slowed the rise in oil prices



Sources: SGPB, Macrobond, ICE, 25/11/2021

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# GLOBAL ECONOMIC FORECASTS

Year on Year (%)	GDP growth, volume				Inflation			
	2020	2021f	2022f	2023f	2020	2021f	2022f	2023f
World (USD)	-3.2	5.5	4.0	3.3	2.5	3.7	3.4	2.8
World (PPA)	-3.1	5.6	4.2	3.7	3.4	4.3	3.8	3.2
Developed markets (PPP)	-4.5	5.0	3.8	2.5	0.7	2.9	2.7	1.9
Emerging markets (PPP)	-2.0	6.1	4.5	4.5	5.5	5.3	4.6	4.2
<b>Developed markets</b>								
US	-3.4	5.5	3.4	2.8	1.2	4.4	3.7	2.5
Euro area	-6.5	5.1	4.2	2.3	0.3	2.5	2.3	1.1
Germany	-4.9	2.8	4.4	2.0	0.4	3.1	2.0	1.6
France	-8.0	6.7	3.6	2.2	0.5	2.0	1.8	1.0
Italy	-9.0	6.4	4.3	1.7	-0.2	1.8	1.8	0.8
Spain	-10.8	4.5	4.9	3.9	-0.3	3.0	3.1	0.4
United Kingdom	-9.7	7.1	5.3	1.9	0.9	2.4	3.6	2.3
Switzerland	-2.5	3.4	3.3	1.8	-0.7	0.4	0.6	0.8
Czech Republic	-5.8	1.9	3.5	4.0	3.2	3.6	4.8	2.8
Japan	-4.7	2.2	3.3	1.4	0.0	-0.2	0.8	0.8
<b>Emerging markets</b>								
China	-3.2	5.5	4.0	3.3	2.5	3.7	3.4	2.8
India	-3.1	5.6	4.2	3.7	3.4	4.3	3.8	3.2
Russia	-4.5	5.0	3.8	2.5	0.7	2.9	2.7	1.9
Brazil	-2.0	6.1	4.5	4.5	5.5	5.3	4.6	4.2

\*f: forecast

\*\* (USD): weighted at current prices

\*\*\* (PPA): weighted at parity purchase power

Source: SG cross asset research, Nov 2021

# MARKET PERFORMANCES & FORECASTS

Main Central Bank rate	déc.-20	nov.-21	Dec-21	+3M	+12M
US (high range)	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.50
Euro area (deposit rate)	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
UK	0.10	0.10	0.15	0.25	0.50

10Y Sovereign rates	YTD	-1M	Nov-21	+3M	+12M
US	0.96	1.63	1.64	1.75	2.35
Germany	-0.6	-0.14	-0.24	-0.10	0.15
France	-0.34	0.22	0.12	0.20	0.45
UK	0.21	1.11	0.97	1.25	1.60

Exchange rates	YTD	-1M	Nov-21	+3M	+12M
EUR/USD	1.23	1.16	1.12	1.14	1.12
EUR/CHF	1.08	1.07	1.05	1.07	1.07
GBP/USD	1.36	1.38	1.33	1.35	1.28
USD/JPY	102.8	114.2	115.4	115	113

Commodities	YTD (% , ch)	-1M (% , ch)	nov.-21	+3M (% , ch)	+12M (% , ch)
Brent	53.7%	-4.5%	82.24	-3.0%	-9.2%
Gold	-8.3%	-0.2%	1788.5	4.7%	-9.0%

Equities (MSCI tot return, EUR)	Début année (% , var)	-1M (% , var)	nov.-21	+3M (% , var)	+12M (% , var)
US	38.7%	6.2%	5 151	3.2%	6.4%
Euro area	24.1%	1.6%	2 958	1.0%	5.6%
UK	23.2%	0.3%	1 419	2.0%	4.0%
Japan	14.9%	4.1%	1 960	1.5%	5.0%

Souces: Bloomberg, Macrobond, SGPB

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