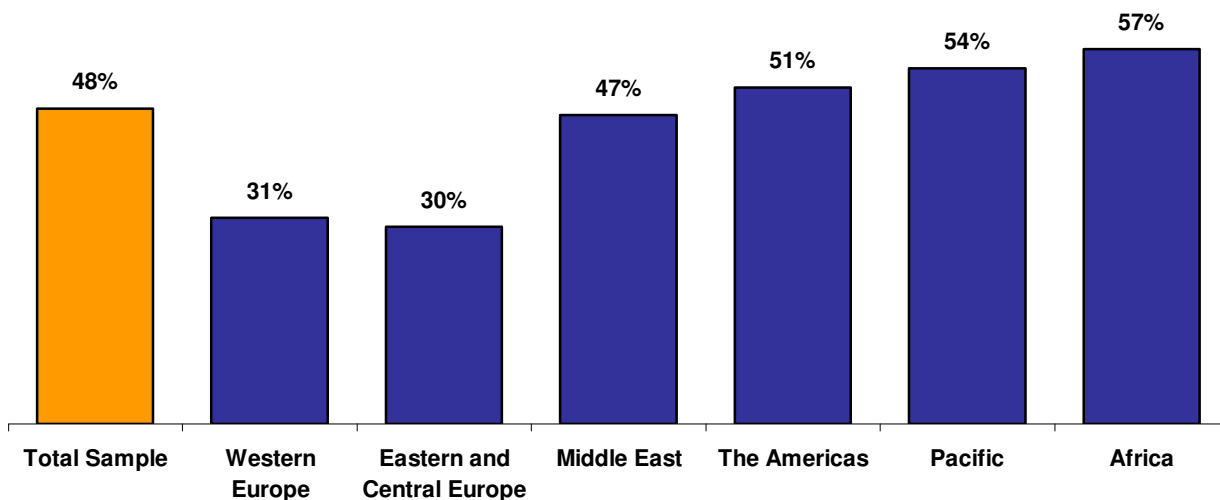


## Press Release of Survey findings Voice of the People ©

- Almost half the 52,000 citizens (48%) representing more than 2.1 billion people who were interviewed in a **Gallup International Voice of the People Survey** in 62 countries across the world think that 2006 will be a better year than 2005. The survey was conducted in November and December and asked “**So far as you are concerned, do you think that 2006 will be better, or worse than 2005?**”
- Optimism is particularly high in countries which are upbeat about economic prospects and do not have major concerns about unemployment or industrial disputes increasing in 2006.
- On the international front, a third of those interviewed globally (30%) felt 2006 would be a troubled year, with much international discord whilst only one in five felt it would be a peaceful year (20%), the remainder feeling that internationally, things will stay much as they were in 2005.

Do you think that 2006 will be *BETTER* than 2005?



### Optimists and Pessimists

Looking at regions across the world, Africa is the most optimistic region, whilst Europe – both Western and Central/Eastern – is the least optimistic about prospects for the coming year.

Turning to the results for individual countries, despite bird flu, Vietnam is the most optimistic place in the world, along with Beijing (China). UN administered Kosovo follows as the 3<sup>rd</sup> most optimistic country in the survey.

These results are remarkably consistent – Vietnam has been at the head of the optimists' league for the last 3 years. Similarly, UN administered Kosovo has occupied one of the top places for the last 5 years, suggesting that the peacekeeping operation there brings both stability and continued

optimism for the future. Beijing, where the economy is booming, was also one of last year's most optimistic locations.

The survey was also conducted in Afghanistan and this year, for the first time in Iraq. In Afghanistan, two thirds of those interviewed (69%) felt 2006 would be a better year than 2005. In Iraq, half those interviewed (49%) felt 2006 would be a better year, whilst only one in ten (11%) thought the opposite.

<b>Top Optimists</b>	
2006 will be <i>better</i> than 2005	
<b>Vietnam/Beijing</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>UN Kosovo</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>India/Venezuela/Nigeria</b>	<b>61%</b>
<b>Senegal/South Africa</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>59%</b>
<b>Canada/Equatorial Guinea</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Hong Kong</b>	<b>56%</b>

Opinions in USA are interesting – over half those interviewed (51%) are optimistic about prospects for 2006, although last year the figure was considerably higher at two thirds (65%) which put the States as one of the 10 most optimistic countries in the world in 2004.

Looking at the other end of the optimism/pessimism scale, apart from the Philippines, all the most pessimistic countries in world are to be found on the continent of Europe but again, this is very similar to last year, which also found European countries dominating the pessimists league.

<b>Top Pessimists</b>	
2006 will be <i>worse</i> than 2005	
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina/Greece</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Serbia</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>Portugal</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>43%</b>

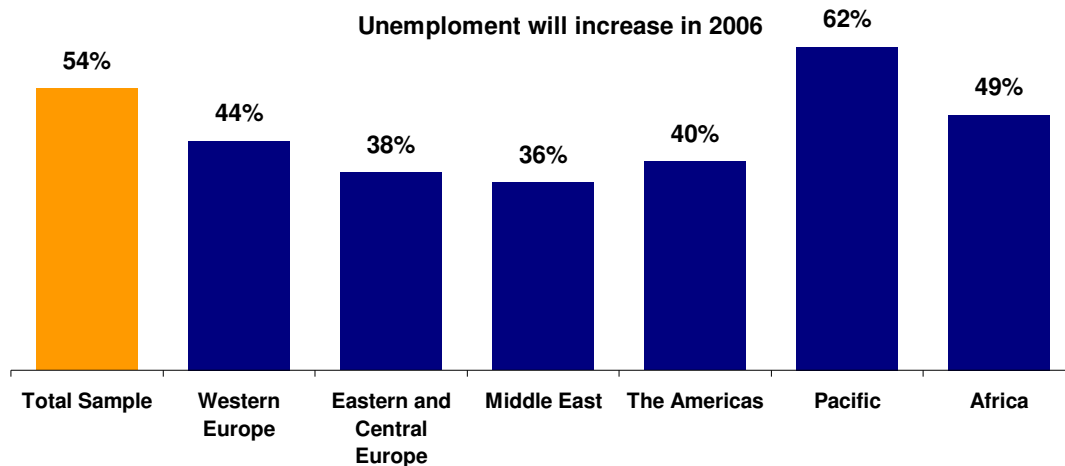
**Economic Prospects**

Turning to look in more detail at views of economic prospects, more than a third of those questioned globally (35%) think 2006 will be a year of economic prosperity, whilst a quarter (24%) feel it will be a year of economic difficulty. Again, Africa is the most upbeat region about economic prospects – over half (52%) say next year will be one of economic prosperity.

Fears that unemployment will increase in 2006 have a major effect on whether people feel optimistic about economic prospects or not. Globally, more than half of those interviewed (54%)

expect the number of unemployed in their country to increase either a lot or a little, whilst only one in five (20%) feel unemployment will decrease.

These fears are at their highest in the economies of the Pacific, although within the region, the pattern is not consistent, with some countries seeing unemployment decreasing in 2006 (e.g. 51% in Hong Kong and 40% in Singapore) but with significant proportions in the rest of the region predicting increases in unemployment.



All Europeans are gloomy about the economy – in Western Europe only 14% think the coming year will bring economic prosperity whilst a third (37%) feel 2006 will be a year of economic difficulty. In Eastern and Central Europe the figure is one in five (18%) predicting prosperity and just under a third (29%) seeing economic difficulty in 2006. This may be because there is considerable anxiety about industrial unrest here – four out of ten Western Europeans (43%) expect strikes and industrial disputes will increase in 2006, whilst only 7% think they will decrease. Eastern/Central Europeans are not quite so negative about prospects for strikes and industrial disputes – only just over a quarter (28%) think these will increase whilst four out of ten (44%) feel the level of unrest will stay the same as this year.

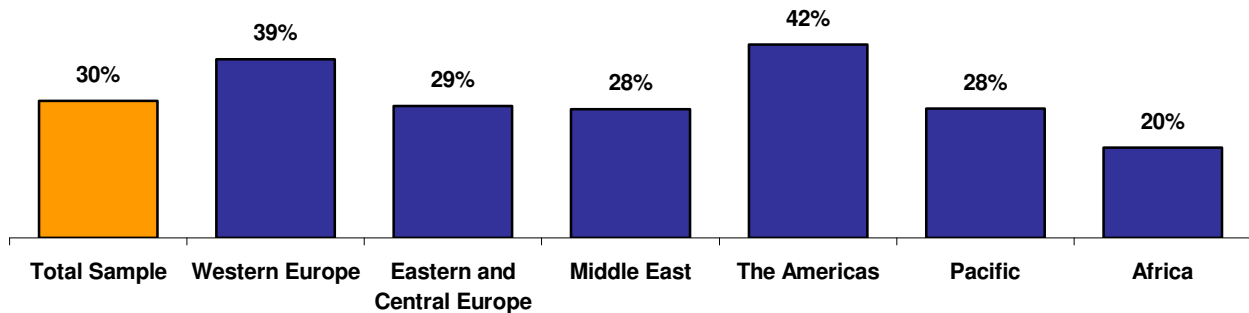
But Americans are even gloomier about employment prospects than Europeans – almost half (45%) feel unemployment will increase (a lot or a little) and only a quarter (28%) think unemployment will decrease in 2006. Nor are Americans upbeat generally about economic prospects – a third (31%) think 2006 will be a year of economic difficulty whilst one in five (21%) think it will be an economically prosperous 2006.

Africa is the most optimistic region on this issue of industrial unrest – four out of every ten interviewed (38%) felt that strikes and industrial disputes would decrease in 2006. Despite this, overall the region is markedly more downbeat about prospects for unemployment and half (49%) think this will increase in 2006.

## **A peaceful or troubled year internationally?**

Finally, respondents were asked about prospects for international peace – whether they thought 2006 would be a peaceful year more or less free of international dispute, a troubled year with much international discord or remain the same.

% who think 2006 will be a *TROUBLED* year with much international discord



The Americas (including North, Central and South) is the most pessimistic region regarding international prospects in the coming year. Overall in the region, more than four out of ten citizens (42%) think 2006 will be a troubled year, with much international discord. In the USA, citizens are even more pessimistic – here close to half (47%) feel 2006 will be as troubled year on the international front and only one in ten (11%) feel the year will be peaceful. These figures are much the same as those collected last year, although the percentage of UAS optimists has risen very slightly from 6% to 11%.

Western Europe is the next most pessimistic region on this question – four out of every ten citizens in the region (39%) think 2006 will be a troubled year and only one in ten (10%) think the opposite, i.e. that 2006 will be a peaceful year internationally. It is interesting to note that UK citizens are amongst the most pessimistic on this issue – just under half (46%) think the coming year will be a troubled one, as do majorities in Switzerland (55%), Denmark (55%), and Luxembourg (50%).

Elsewhere in the world, citizens are only marginally less gloomy about international prospects for the coming year. Globally, one in three (30%) thinks 2006 will be a troubled year with much international discord, 44% think it will be much the same as last year and only one in five (20%) think that 2006 will be a peaceful year, more or less free of international dispute.

**(Ends)**

**Editors note:**

Please ensure the survey is credited fully as Gallup International Voice of the People and that you refer to Gallup International (not Gallup or Gallup Poll).

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