



# Press release

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## ***Manufacturers less optimistic***

Producers' confidence, the sentiment indicator for the manufacturing industry, fell to -2.0 in April 2002, more than one point down on March. Confidence had been picking up again gradually in the previous four months, following its lowest point in November 2001. In April, however, it stumbled again. The order books position did improve, though, according to Statistics Netherlands' business sentiment survey. Manufacturers expect a slight increase in production in the period May to July.

### ***Order books improve slightly***

The order books of Dutch manufacturing companies filled out a little in April, bringing the index to 93.4 (June 2000=100). Manufacturing companies are slightly less satisfied with orders received and their current portfolios than in March. Their opinions on stocks of finished products remains unchanged: on balance about seven percent of manufacturers that they have too much in stock.

### ***Fewer orders for consumer goods***

Manufacturers of consumer goods saw orders for their products shrink, both at home and abroad. Production in this sector was the same in April as in March. Orders were slightly down. Orders in other sectors of the manufacturing industry were up, though. With production at the same level and an increase in orders from both at home and abroad, the order books of manufacturers of semi-manufactured products improved by nearly one percent point. The order position in the sector making investment goods also rose by one percent point, mainly through the increase in foreign orders. Domestic orders remained about the same in this sector.

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