



Press release

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Manufacturing industry sombre

Producers' confidence, the sentiment indicator for the manufacturing industry, fell slightly in August 2002, after a strong rise in July. Statistics Netherlands' business sentiment survey further reveals that the order position of the Dutch manufacturing industry has deteriorated slightly. Manufacturers are also more sombre about their order position.

Companies pessimistic about production and order position

Following a strong improvement in confidence in July, confidence in the manufacturing industry fell by 1.8 points from 1.5 to -0.3 in August. The decrease in confidence is mainly caused by manufacturers' expectations about production for the period September-November and negative opinions on order positions. Just as in the preceding three months, on balance twelve percent of manufacturers foresee a decrease in staff numbers in the coming three months.

Production lagging

In July manufacturing companies still expected production to improve. But although it decreased in August, manufacturers remain optimistic for the period September–November. Adjustment for seasonal effects, however, dampens their optimism compared with July.

Order position down slightly

Orders received by the total manufacturing industry in August were a fraction lower than one month earlier. The order position index fell by 0.5 of a percent point to 92.9 (June 2000=100). In the consumer goods sector orders received in August rose slightly and the order position improved. The sector making semi-manufactured products received fewer orders in August than in July. This pushed down the order position by one percent point. In the investment goods industry orders received were hardly lower than in July: the order position fell by nearly one percent point. In all three sectors manufacturers' opinions on the order position were more negative than in July.

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