



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

PR99-007
15 January 1999
9.30 hrs

Consumer price index December 1998

Dutch consumer prices were an average 1.7 per cent higher in December 1998 than one year previously, according to figures from Statistics Netherlands. They were 0.3 per cent lower than in November 1998. Prices of clothing and footwear were lower while food cost more in December.

For 1998 as a whole consumer prices were 2.0 per cent higher than the average for 1997. In 1997 the average rate of inflation was 2.2 per cent.

Inflation 1.7 per cent in December

Consumer prices were an average 1.7 per cent higher in December 1998 than one year previously. This means that inflation has remained below the 2 per cent level for six months now. The average rate was 2.2 per cent in the first half of 1998, 1.8 per cent in the second half.

Consumer prices 0.3 per cent lower in December

Consumer prices fell by an average of 0.3 per cent between November and December 1998. Clothes and footwear in particular were cheaper. The prices of these items had fallen in previous December months, but not by as much as last year. Postal rates and petrol and diesel were also cheaper in December. Food, on the other hand was more expensive, especially potatoes and fresh vegetables. Potatoes cost nearly twice as much as in December 1997. Price rises were also observed for hotels, bars and restaurants and for flowers and plants.

Inflation in 1998: 2.0 per cent on average

For the whole of 1998, inflation averaged out at 2.0 per cent, compared with 2.0 and 2.2 per cent in 1996 and 1997 respectively. Food and soft drinks cost 2.2 per cent more than in 1997, a higher rise than in previous years. Vegetables, potatoes and fish in particular were considerably more expensive in 1998 than the year before. Tobacco products cost 5.6 per cent more, while clothing and footwear prices rose by an average 2.8 per cent, in spite of the fall in December. This is the first time since 1986 that the price increases for clothes and shoes were higher than the average rate of inflation. Housing, water, gas and electricity cost 3.1 per cent more in 1998 than in 1997, compared with a 4.5 per cent rise in the previous year. This smaller rise was caused by smaller rent increases and lower increases in energy costs. Costs of transport rose by only 0.3 per cent: lower petrol prices made driving cheaper, while public transport was 2.6 more expensive than in 1997.

Inflation was mainly curbed by the low energy prices: prices of electricity, gas and other domestic fuels were only 0.7 per cent higher than in 1997, compared with yearly increases 7.3 and 9.3 per cent in 1996 and 1997. Car fuels were an average 2 per cent cheaper than in 1997, while in 1996 and 1997 their prices had risen by 6 per cent.

Derived consumer price index

In the derived consumer price index the effect of indirect and consumer taxes is eliminated. Compared with December 1997 the derived index was 1.5 per cent higher. The average increase for 1998 was 1.7 per cent. So 0.3 of a per cent point of the total 2.0 per cent inflation can be attributed to the above-mentioned taxes.

Harmonised consumer price index

Statistics Netherlands
Press Office

P.O. Box 4000
2270 JM Voorburg
The Netherlands
tel. +31 70 337 58 16
fax +31 70 337 59 71
e-mail:
persdienst@cbs.nl

Statistics Netherlands
is a department of
the Ministry of
Economic Affairs

In addition to the national consumer price index, Statistics Netherlands calculates the harmonised index for the Netherlands for purposes of comparison of EU countries.

The Dutch harmonised index was 104.1 for December, a fall of 0.4 per cent on November and a rise of 1.5 per cent on December 1997. In November 1998, too, the rise of the harmonised index had risen by 1,5 per cent compared with twelve months before. The figure for the eleven countries participating in the Euro was 0.9 per cent. Dutch inflation is therefore about half a per cent point above the "Euro countries" average, as it indeed generally has been since mid 1997

For further information please contact:

+31 70 337 58 70; or the press office of Statistics Netherlands on 070 337 58 16.