



# Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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## ***Higher turnover in car branch in 1998***

The car branch had a good year in 1998. Car-related businesses (garages which sell, maintain or repair cars) did 51 billion guilders worth of business, nearly 11% more than in 1997, according to figures from Statistics Netherlands. For car importers 1998 was an extremely successful year: they saw a 20% rise in turnover to 23.7 billion guilders.

### ***More than half a million new cars sold***

The strong rise in new car sales in 1998 had a clear effect on the turnover of importers of new cars. Last year 64,800 more new cars were sold than in 1997, bringing the total sold to 543,110, the highest since 1987. The high number of sales could be connected with the strong increase in consumer credit: an attractive financing option with the low interest rates on the capital market.

### ***Importers benefit most from higher sales***

The rise in sales pushed up the turnover of car importers by 20% in 1998. In the first half of the year sales were up 16.7% on the first half of 1997; in the second half of 1998 the increase was even greater at 24%. The largest increase in turnover was in the fourth quarter (27.6%).

In the slipstream of the importers, businesses selling and maintaining cars also did very well. In the first half of the year their turnover was up 8.3% on 1997, while in the second half of the year it increased by as much as 13.6%.

### ***Car services also doing well***

The car services companies (tyre services, body repair shops, car washes etc.) also did well, realising an increase in turnover of 11.3% on 1997. Damage from hail storms in June 1998 contributed to the increased business of body repair companies in the last two quarters of 1998. Retail outlets of car parts and accessories, on the other hand, saw their turnover lag at 4.3%, compared with the 5% growth in 1997.

### ***Results of petrol stations tempered***

Petrol filling stations had a lower turnover growth than in 1997: while they realised just over 8% in 1997, the increase fell to 4.5% in 1998.

The differences in average fuel prices were highest in August 1998. One year previously, in August 1997, the prices were affected by the rise in excise duties introduced in July. In August 1998 the average fuel prices were substantially lower than a year before. This might be one explanation of the small monthly increase in 1998 (1%). Other factors that might have had an effect were that the majority of Dutch holiday

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Statistics Netherlands  
is a department of  
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makers left the country later than usual because of the football World Cup and the later school holidays.

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