



# Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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## ***Households spend 3.9% more in February***

The volume of household spending in February was 3.9% higher than in the same month last year, significantly more substantial than modest increase (1.8%) in January. Statistics Netherlands' figures show further that the strong rise in spending on durable goods noted in 1998 continued into the beginning of the year.

### ***Less spent on food***

The volume of spending on food, drink and tobacco fell in February compared with last year, although only slightly. The less favourable pattern of shopping days led to a sharper fall in January. In both months the largest decrease was in spending on potatoes, vegetables, meat and meat products.

This decline continues to put spending on food under pressure. The increase for the whole of 1998 was only 0.2%, the lowest growth rate for the last five years.

### ***Consumers favour new cars and consumer electronics***

In contrast with the fall in spending on food, drink and tobacco, spending on durable goods was clearly higher than last year in both January (6.9%) and February (7.7%).

Within this category, the largest rise is for means of transport, and more especially new cars. In addition, to cars, consumers also spent a lot on consumer electronics and home furnishings. They spent hardly any more than last year on shoes, however.

### ***Services and other goods: volume growth 3.8%***

Around two-thirds of consumer spending is destined for the category services and other goods. The volume of spending on this category was 3.8% higher than in February last year. Spending on gas, electricity and water in particular was up, probably because of the colder weather than last year.

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