



# Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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## ***Modest third quarter growth for retail sales***

In the third quarter of this year retail sales were 3.7% up on the same period last year. This is lowest growth rate since the second quarter of 1997, according to figures from Statistics Netherlands. Clothes shops in particular had a disappointing third quarter (-4%). The warm weather in August and September probably discouraged shoppers from buying winter clothes. Outlets of consumer electronics also showed a less rosy picture than in the first two quarters of the year, with sales only increasing by 2.7% in the third quarter.

### ***September good month for the food sector***

Retail sales were 4% up in September this year on the same month last year. Statistics Netherlands figures show that food stores (+4.9%) did better than non-food outlets (+3.8%). Consumers spent a total 12.5 billion guilders in shops in September, an average of 1,870 guilders per household. Nearly two thirds of this was spent in non-food shops.

### ***Diverse trends in non-food***

Results in the non-food sector in September show a diverse picture. On the one hand, chemists (+13.9%) and do-it-yourself stores (+10.6%) had high growth rates, while on the other hand clothes shops had a disappointing month (-7.6%). The percentages are changes compared with September last year.

### ***Non-food sector driving force of sales increase***

Since 1995 sales increases in the non-food branches have been the driving force behind the increased turnover in the retail trade. In 1999 too, this has been the case up to now. Over the first nine months of this year, the non-food sector has shown a growth

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of 6.4% compared with turnover in the same period last year, although the rate of growth seems to be falling from quarter to quarter. In the first quarter of 1999 turnover was 8.4% higher, in the second quarter 6.9% higher, while in the third quarter growth was only 4.3%.

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