



# Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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## ***Profits in occupational health and security sector 1998***

The occupational health and security and labour conditions sector made a profit in 1998 for the first time since 1995. This is the result of an increase in turnover in 1998 and a smaller increase in costs. The size of this sector has changed since 1995 as a consequence of changes in the Dutch occupational health and safety act, which led to several mergers and takeovers. New figures from Statistics Netherlands show that a small number of centres now account for a large proportion of turnover. The figures also show that nearly all employees are now covered by a centre for occupational health and safety, and labour conditions.

### ***Profit in 1998***

The turnover in the sector rose by 14% in 1998 to 1,355 million guilders. In 1996 and 1997 it grew by 23% and 8% respectively. The results in the sector are in the black again for the first time since 1995, and amount to a profit of 46 million guilders. This is partly because costs rose less strongly in 1998. Not all the centres made a profit. Alongside the group with a combined profit of 66 million guilders, there was also a group with a joint loss of 20 million guilders.

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### ***Fewer but larger centres through mergers***

Since 1995 the number of occupational health and safety centres has diminished substantially. Mergers and takeovers have resulted in a reduction in the number by 50 to 148 centres in 1998. In addition, there are now large differences in the sizes of the centres. The ten largest centres account for 50% of the turnover in the whole sector, while the 100 smallest services share 13% of turnover.

### ***Types of centre***

Under the occupational health and safety act there is a certification procedure for the centres. The so-called external centres constitute the largest category of certified centres. They have several companies on their books. At the end of 1998 these centres comprised 83% of employment in the sector. Internal services are often a component of a large company and are responsible for the working conditions of employees within that company; these internal services account for 12% of employment in the sector. The other occupational health centres and services are not certified and are active more in the field of consultancy and coordination.

### ***Employees covered***

At the end of 1998 companies with access to an occupational health and safety service had a total of 6.5 employees, compared with 5.5 and 5.9 million respectively in 1996 and 1997. This is approaching the total number of employees in the Netherlands, reflecting the nearly complete coverage by the centres.

### ***Staff***

At the end of 1998 the occupational health and safety services employed 9,300 people. Over half of them women. One quarter of the staff are industrial medical officers. Nine per cent are other occupational health experts, such as hygiene and safety inspectors and labour and organisation consultants.

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