



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Inflation 2.2 per cent in 1999

With consumer prices on average 2.2% higher in 1999 than in 1998 according to Statistics Netherlands' consumer price index, inflation was at the same level as in previous years.

In December inflation was 2.2%, the same as in November. Prices fell by an average 0.4% between November and December. Such a decrease is normal at this time of year and is caused mainly by cheaper clothing and lower postal charges.

Inflation stable

Inflation in the Netherlands is measured as the increase in the consumer price index compared with the same month in the previous year. On average, inflation in 1999 was 2.2 %, about the same as in the last three years. In 1996 and 1998 it was 2.0%, in 1997 the same as last year: 2.2%.

Some items were considerably more expensive in 1999 than in 1998: fish (+6.8%), fresh vegetables (4.6%) and potatoes (+23.5%), water (+13.4%), electricity (+6.8%) and petrol (+5.2%). Prices of hairdressers (+6.5%) and consumption taxes and public services (+3.7%) also rose by more than average. Other items were cheaper than in 1998: eggs (-6.4%), coffee (-12.9%), gas (-2.6%), telecommunication (-5.4%), audio- and video equipment (-4.9%) and computers (-28.7%).

The monthly inflation rate fluctuated only very slightly around the average. The lowest was 2.1% and in only one month was it above 2.3%. In December inflation was 2.2%, the same as in November.

Derived consumer price index

In the derived consumer price index of Statistics Netherlands the effect of changes in the rates of indirect and consumption-related taxes are eliminated from the price developments. The derived index was on

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average 1.7% higher than in 1998. So half of one percent of the total inflation in 1999 can be attributed to the two above-mentioned tax categories. For the price increases according to the derived index, too, the 1.7% for December was the same as in November and as the average for the whole year.

Prices down by an average 0.4% between November and December.

On average, consumer prices fell by an average 0.4% between November and December 1999. Such a decrease is normal at this time of year and is caused mainly by cheaper clothing and footwear, and lower postal charges (special Christmas stamps). Apart from this, no noticeable price changes were reported.

Harmonised consumer price index

In addition to the national consumer price index, since March 1987 Statistics Netherlands also compiles a so-called harmonised consumer price index for the European Union (EU). The harmonised index is used to compare inflation between countries of the EU, but is less accurate for national developments.

In November average inflation for the 15 countries of the EU was 1.5%. In the 11 countries of the Eurozone it was 1.6% on average. In November inflation in the Netherlands according to the harmonised index was 2.0%.

In December the Dutch rate according to the harmonised index fell to 1.9%. No figures for December are available for the other EU countries.

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