



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

PR00-060
10 March 2000
10.30 hrs

Inflation remains stable in spite of higher energy prices

In February 2000 the Dutch inflation rate was 2.0%, the same as in January.

Prices were 0.5% higher on average than in January. Clothes and petrol were more expensive, while consumers paid less for food and alcoholic beverages, according to figures from Statistics Netherlands.

The Netherlands had the lowest inflation rate in the Eurozone in January.

Higher energy prices affect inflation

Inflation in the Netherlands is measured as the increase in the consumer price index compared with the same month in the previous year. In February the Dutch inflation rate was 2.0%. Compared with one year ago, energy prices in particular have risen sharply: gas cost 7% more, electricity 13% more and petrol as much as 20% more. The increases in energy prices are partly caused by higher taxes and excise duties on these products. Energy prices have had an increasing effect on inflation in recent months. In December they accounted for one quarter, and in February for over half of inflation.

The decrease in the share of other items in inflation is largely on account of the abolition of the TV licence fee on 1 January, and of cheaper food and drink in February.

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 1.6% higher in February 2000 than in February 1999.

Statistics Netherlands
Press Office

P.O. Box 4000
2270 JM Voorburg
The Netherlands
tel. +31 70 337 58 16
fax +31 70 337 59 71
e-mail:
persdienst@cbs.nl

Statistics Netherlands
is a department of
the Ministry of
Economic Affairs

Prices 0.5% up in February

On average, consumer prices rose by an average 0.5% between January and February. Petrol prices rose sharply, and clothes and shoes were also more expensive, but that is usual following the winter sales and the introduction of the summer collections. Clothes and footwear were nearly one per cent cheaper than in February last year.

Food and soft drinks were nearly one per cent cheaper than in January. This is caused largely by the fierce competition between a number of large supermarket chains. Potatoes and vegetables were cheaper than in January, and as much as 16% cheaper than in the same month last year. The total basket of food and soft drinks was one and a half per cent cheaper than in February last year.

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 January average inflation for the 15 countries of the EU was 1.8%. In the 11 countries of the Eurozone it was 2.0% on average. In January the Dutch rate according to the harmonised index was 1.6%, the lowest rate of the 11 Eurozone countries together with Austria. In the EU countries which have not yet entered the EMU, inflation was lower than in the Eurozone, especially in the United Kingdom, Sweden and Greece.

In February the Dutch rate according to the harmonised index had fallen to 1.5%. No figures for February are available for the other EU countries.

For further information, please contact J.J. Walschots, tel. + 31 70 337 55 11; e-mail: jwas@cbs.nl.