



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Manufacturing output up slightly

Production by the Dutch manufacturing industry was 1.8% higher in the first quarter of this year than in the first quarter of 2000. According to figures from Statistics Netherlands, this is a lower growth rate than those reported in the four quarters of 2000. In the fourth quarter of 2000 the increase was still as high as 4.0%. Growth rates were lower in all branches of manufacturing in the first quarter of 2001 than in the fourth quarter of last year.

Lower growth in first quarter

Although growth rates were down in all sectors of manufacturing, there were differences between the sectors. In the metal industry output was over 4% higher in the first quarter of 2001 than in the same quarter last year. In the fourth quarter of last year output was 6% higher. Growth rates in the petrochemical and rubber industries halved to 2.5% in the first quarter. In paper and publishing and wood and construction materials, output was lower than in the first quarter of last year, while output in both branches increased in the fourth quarter.

Seasonally adjusted production stable

To make it easier to spot short-term trends, production figures are corrected for seasonal effects. If these effects are taken into account, manufacturing production in the first quarter of this year was 2.9% lower than in the previous quarter. The fall in the first quarter is mainly a result of the unusually low output in the month of January, and the high production in December last year. The VAT increase which took effect on 1 January 2001 probably accounts for part of this development; buyers anticipating the VAT rise may well have increased the demand for such goods in the last months of 2000. On average, the level of production in the period December 2000-January 2001 was about the same as the level in November last year. Apart from this blip in January and December, after seasonal adjustment manufacturing output has been quite stable since September last year.

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