



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Inflation rises further in April

Inflation rose to 4.9% in April, up from 4.6% in March. This is the highest rate of inflation Statistics Netherlands has measured since October 1982. The increase in April was caused mainly by higher prices for petrol and meat.

Although part of the inflation can be attributed to the increases in the rates of VAT and environment taxes in January 2001, the derived index, which corrects for the effects of these measures, also shows the highest figure since October 1982.

The rate of inflation for April according to the European harmonised index was 5.3%.

Inflation continues to rise

The rate of inflation rose to 4.9% in April. In January it was 4.2%, in February 4.5% and in March 4.6%. The figure for April is the highest since October 1982 and equals the figure for December 1991. A long period of high inflation ended in December 1982. In the 1970s inflation was over 5% for a number of years, peaking at 10.9% in October and November 1974. Between 1983 and 2000 inflation rates stayed below 4%, with the exception of a blip between July 1991 and June 1992.

Compared with April last year, the strongest price rises were reported for food (+8.6%), especially fish (+14.1%), meat (+12.9%), vegetables and potatoes (+10.6%) and fruit (+9.4%).

Energy products, too, are still contributing heavily to inflation, although a price decrease for electricity reduced their share slightly in April. However, electricity and gas bills are still 14.1% higher than they were last year. In March they were 17.5% higher than twelve months previously. Motor fuels cost 4.5% more while they were 3% cheaper in April last year. Consumers now have to pay 9.3% more for petrol than this time last year.

Package holidays are 7.2% more expensive this summer than last year.

Prices of clothing and footwear have hardly had an effect on inflation, they were less than one per cent higher than last year.

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Electricity prices down in April

On average, consumer prices rose by an average 0.6% between March and April. Food cost nearly 2% more in March, prices of fruit, meat and fish in particular increased. Car fuels, too, were substantially more expensive in April. Consumers also had to pay more for a number of goods and services in the area of cultural and recreational activities, while telephone rates were also up.

Electricity rates went down in April, as suppliers had to pay less for electricity in the months November to January. Passports were also cheaper in April.

Record increase for derived consumer price index

The derived index for employee households in the low income bracket was 4.0% higher on average in April than in April 2000. For March this was 3.6%. In 2000 inflation according to this derived index was on average still only 2.1%. This index is used to adjust government tariff rates, in collective agreement procedures and for other legal contracts.

The derived index eliminates the effects of among other things the rise in VAT and environmental taxes in January. According to this index, too, inflation is the highest it has been since October 1982.

Dutch inflation way above European average

In addition to the national consumer price index, Statistics Netherlands also calculates the European harmonised consumer price index for the Netherlands. This index is a component of the Eurozone inflation rate, the official guideline for the monetary policy of the European Central Bank.

In April 2001 inflation in the Netherlands according to the harmonised index rose to 5.3%, 0.4 of a percent point higher than in March. The April figures for the Eurozone and for all the countries in the European Union will be published by Eurostat on 16 May.

In March average inflation in the Eurozone was 2.6%. Of the EU countries, only Portugal had a higher rate of inflation than the Netherlands. Compared with March last year, inflation in the Eurozone rose from 2.1 to 2.6%. In the Netherlands inflation rose by much more in this period: from 1.6 to 4.9%.

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