



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Diminutive consumption growth in April

Volume growth of domestic consumption in April was 0.4%, the lowest growth rate in years. Consumers spent less on durable goods and on food, beverages and tobacco than in April 2000, according to Statistics Netherlands.

Less spent on goods

The volume of expenditure on durable goods in April was down slightly over 3% on April last year. The drop is mainly due to the falling number of purchases of means of transport. Also the purchases in food, beverages and tobacco were down in April. The pattern of shopping days was unfavourable for the buying pattern in April: for instance the food needed for 1 April, a Sunday, was bought in March.

Prices of food, beverages and tobacco are rising fast. In April the products groups potatoes, fruits and vegetables as well as the group fish, meat and meat products was 10 to 15% more expensive than in April last year.

Consumption growth in services levelling off

Consumers spent 2.5% more on services in April. The volume growth in expenditure on this consumption category was less than in previous years in the first months of 2001. The high growth rate is slowing down in financial and business services and in transport and communication. Almost 60% of domestic consumption is spent in services.

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Consumption growth rate slowing

The beginning of 2001 seems to be the end of a long period of substantial growth in consumption that started in 1995. In 2000 the growth rate was still over 3%, while the average increase in the first four months of 2001 was limited to 1.3%. This development can be attributed in part to the new tax system that came into effect on 1 January 2001. The higher VAT rate led to early purchases in the fourth quarter of 2000. The cut in tax rates did not yet have a positive effect on consumption during the first four months of 2001.

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