



Press release

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Producers' confidence unchanged

Producers' confidence, the sentiment indicator of the manufacturing industry was -1.6 in February, about the same as in January. In December 2001 and January 2002 producers' confidence improved considerably. The business sentiment survey further showed that the order books position deteriorated further in February. For the period March-May manufacturers still expect production to increase.

Orders down further

The order position of the Dutch manufacturing industry deteriorated further in February. The index was 92.3 in February (June 2000=100), more than one point down on January, and the lowest level since May 1997. More and more manufacturers are judging their order books negatively. Their opinions on stocks of finished products on the other hand are practically unchanged. Just as in recent months, about six percent of manufacturers think their stocks are too large. The level of orders received was slightly lower in February than in January this year. Manufacturers expect the production to increase again in the period March-May. For the first time since January last year the expected production made a positive contribution to producers' confidence.

Better prospects for semi-manufactures

The demand for semi-manufactured products remained stable in February 2002. The opinions of manufacturers in this sector on orders received therefore remained unchanged. For the period March-May they expect an substantial increase in production.

The demand for investment goods fell slightly, especially for domestic investment goods. Manufacturers in this sector foresee a slight recovery in production in the period March-May. In the consumer goods sector the fall in orders from abroad was most noticeable.

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