



Statistics Netherlands

Press release

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Consumer confidence down again

Consumer confidence has fallen further in April. According to Statistics Netherlands' consumer confidence survey, the confidence index is five points down on March at -14, the lowest value since the beginning of 1994. Consumers are now more pessimistic than in October last year, following the terrorist attacks in the United States. The decrease in April is mainly caused by a more negative opinion on the economic climate. To a lesser extent consumers are also less positive about their own financial position and are less inclined to spend their money.

Willingness to buy down further

Consumers are again less willing to spend their money in April. Since the beginning of the year willingness to buy has been lower each month than in the previous month. It is now at its lowest level since December 1996. Willingness to buy is one of the component indices of the consumer confidence index. It is based on how consumers assess their own financial situation and whether they think it is a good time to buy large items. While their future financial prospects have hardly changed, consumers are increasingly sombre about their financial situation in the previous twelve months. The percentage of respondents who say they still have some money left at the end of the month has fallen slightly in recent months. At the same time an increasing number of consumers say that prices have gone up sharply in the last twelve months. They do not think it is a favourable time to buy large expensive items. The percentage of consumers who think it is a good time to buy, say, a television set or personal computer has fallen to 15 in recent months. Over 25 percent think it is not a good time to invest in such items. The last time such percentages were measured was at the end of 1993.

Consumers again negative about economic climate

Consumers are significantly more negative about the economic climate in April than last month. This was also the case in March compared with February. Both expectations for the coming twelve months and the opinion on the last twelve months were more negative. Consumers' assessment of the economic situation is the second component of consumer confidence.

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