



# Press release

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## ***Number of vacancies continues to drop***

The number of vacancies is declining rapidly. According to the latest figures by Statistics Netherlands there were 178 thousand unfilled vacancies in March, down 38 thousand on March last year. The decrease is of the same magnitude as the one in late 2001. The largest decrease occurred in business services.

### ***Constant decrease***

At the end of the first quarter of 2002 there were 178 thousand unfilled vacancies, against 216 thousand a year ago. This brought the the number of vacancies down by 38 thousand, or 18%. In the fourth quarter of 2001 the number of vacancies fell by 40 thousand. This means that the rate with which the number of vacancies is declining remains high.

### ***Number of filled vacancies down***

In the first quarter of this year 213 thousand new vacancies were created, 56 thousand less than a year ago. This is comparable to the drop observed in the fourth quarter of 2001, which was just over 60 thousand.

In the first quarter of 2002 some 200 thousand vacancies were filled, down 58 thousand on the year before. This means the number of filled vacancies decreased faster than in the fourth quarter of 2001 when the decrease was 32 thousand. When both the filled and the newly created vacancies decrease it means that the job market is becoming far less dynamic.

### ***Business services sees greatest decrease***

By far the greatest decrease in the number of unfilled vacancies was found in business services. Here the number of vacancies fell from 54 to 37 thousand, down 32%. Other strong decliners were industry, construction, trade and the sector 'transport and communication'. In the non-commercial services there still was a slight increase in the number of vacancies.

This is the second quarter in a row that business services saw their number of vacancies decrease fastest. In the second quarter of 2001 this was the only sector that was still going strong. Forty percent of the subsequent stagnation

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can be attributed to a decrease in the IT sector.

### ***Economic slowdown manifest in job market***

The number of vacancies has been falling since the third quarter of 2001. This is due to the economic development: the Dutch economic growth rate has been slowing down for the fifth quarter in a row. As a consequence unemployment has started to increase since February of this year. The seasonally corrected number of registered unemployed was up by an average of 168 thousand for the period March-May. This is 34 thousand more than in the fourth quarter of 2001.

### ***Vacancies, stock and flow***

		Number of vacancies	New vacancies 1)	vacancies filled 1) 2)
		x 1000		
31 March	1997	89	151	141
30 June	1997	101	190	178
30 September	1997	92	182	191
31 December	1997	115	189	165
31 March	1998	133	220	202
30 June	1998	152	229	211
30 September	1998	129	209	232
31 December	1998	137	197	189
31 March	1999	158	241	221
30 June	1999	197	268	229
30 September	1999	171	217	243
31 December	1999	184	226	213
31 March	2000	216	283	251
30 June	2000	218	251	248
30 September	2000	183	230	265
31 December	2000	204	254	233
31 March	2001	216	270	258
30 June	2001	218	273	270
30 September	2001	171	209	256
31 December	2001	164	194	200
31 march	2002	178	213	200

1) In the quarter ending on that data.

2) Including vacancies cancelled.

**Source: STATISTICS NETHERLANDS**