



# Press release

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## ***Job growth slows down in first quarter***

According to labour market figures just published by Statistics Netherlands the growth in the number of jobs slowed down in the first quarter of 2002. Compared with the same time last year there are 1.5 percent more jobs. In 2001 the average increase in the number of jobs was 2.3 percent. In the care and government sector together the number of jobs rose by just under 4 percent while in the rest of the economy the increase was only 0.5 percent. The total number of jobs increased by 108 thousand to nearly 7.5 million. The increase in wage costs fell slightly in the first quarter to 4.6 percent.

### ***Most new jobs in care and government sectors***

In the first quarter of 2002 there were 56 thousand jobs more in the care sector and other public services than in the same period last year. Jobs in the government sector rose by 28 thousand. Together these non-commercial sectors account for more than three quarters of the growth in the number of jobs in the Netherlands. The increases of 3.0 percent for the government sector and 4.3 percent for the care sector are the same as those in 2001.

### ***Hardly any increase in private sector employment***

If care and the government sectors are left out of account, the number of jobs was 24 thousand higher in the first quarter of this year than in the same quarter last year. The rate of increase, less than 0.5 percent, is much smaller than in 2001, when it had already dropped to 1.8 percent.

There were fewer jobs in manufacturing and financial and business services than twelve months previously, and the increase in jobs in trade, hotels and restaurants, and repairs (1.4 percent) and transport and communications (1.1 percent) were below average. In previous years these sectors had above average growth rates.

### ***Growth in labour years also down***

In terms of labour years (full-time jobs) employment growth fell to 1.4 percent in the first quarter of 2002. In 2000 and 2001 the number of labour years rose by 2.1 percent. Employment growth slowed down for both men and women. The numbers of labour years rose by 0.7 percent for men and by 2.6 percent for women.

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### ***Wage costs 4.6 percent up***

Wage costs per labour year were slightly lower in the first quarter of 2002. The average increase was 4.6 percent. In all sectors of industry the rise is smaller than in the previous quarter and in nearly all cases lower than in 2001. This is partly caused by smaller wage increases agreed in collective negotiations: the these fell from an average 4.8 percent in 2001 to 4.1 percent in the first quarter of 2002.

The increases in wage costs for government employees was lowest, at 3.2 percent and is remarkably lower than the figure for 2001. Care and other public services are also below average, wage costs in these sectors rose by 3.8 percent. The increase in wage costs per labour year were highest in financial and business services in the first quarter, at 6.0 percent.

### ***Delayed response by employment to lower economic growth***

Dutch economic growth slowed down considerably in the course of 2001. Employment is now reacting with some delay to this development, although in the first quarter of 2002 employment growth is still slightly above economic growth. Other signs of a changing labour market situation are an increase in unemployment, the lower number of job vacancies and the decrease in the number of new and filled vacancies.