



Press release

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Economic growth equal across the Netherlands in 2001

Economic growth in the Netherlands in 2001 was distributed evenly across the twelve provinces. This is in contrast with the period 1995-2000, when the provinces of Utrecht and Flevoland had higher growth rates than the rest of the country. In 2001 they were no longer the fastest growers.

Dip in commercial services curbs growth in Flevoland and Utrecht

In the period 1995-2000 Flevoland and Utrecht achieved the highest economic growth rates with 6.1 and 5.0 percent respectively. The average for the Netherlands in this period was 3.7 percent. In most provinces economic growth was pushed up in this period by the positive results in commercial services, which include trade, transport, communications, and financial and business services. In 2001, however, most of these services had only moderate or even negative results and the provinces with a relatively large proportion of commercial services in their value added noticed the effects of this. In Flevoland, for example, 55 percent of value added is generated by the services sector, in Utrecht 61 percent and North Holland 59 percent. The average for the Netherlands is 49 percent.

Chemicals, construction and government driving force for regional growth

A few sectors of industry in particular accounted for a large part of economic growth in 2001. In addition to the government sector, (excluding defence) these were natural gas extraction, oil refinery, the chemical and petrochemical industry, public utilities and various sectors in the construction industry. Agriculture and commercial services did less well in this period. The developments in the various sectors of industry are reflected in the economic growth of most provinces.

Highest growth in Groningen

Of all the Dutch provinces, Groningen had the highest growth in 2001, namely 2.6 percent. Generally speaking, the results for Groningen are strongly affected by the extraction of natural gas in Slochteren. However, even excluding gas extraction, growth in Groningen was slightly above that for the

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Netherlands as a whole. South Holland and Zeeland also had higher economic growth with 1.8 and 1.6 percent respectively. These rates are caused by the chemical industry and the government sector. The growth rate in Drenthe was the same as the average for the whole country at 1.5 percent.

Growth in North Holland, Limburg and North Brabant falls sharply

Compared with recent years the relatively low economic growth of 1 percent for North Holland was quite remarkable. The underlying reason for this was the lower value added generated by air traffic activities connected with Schiphol airport in 2001 compared with 2000. The volume growth of value added in Limburg (1 percent) and North Brabant (0.9 percent) was also below the Dutch average. In both provinces the growth in industry (among other things metal products and electrical engineering) was lower than the average growth rates for the same sectors in the whole of the country. Friesland, Overijssel and Gelderland remained slightly below the growth for the Netherlands. The growth rates in these provinces had been lagging for a while beforehand.