



Press release

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Decrease in job vacancies intensifies

The number of unfilled vacancies has fallen by a quarter in the space of a year. According to figures from Statistics Netherlands, 162 thousand jobs were vacant at the end of June, 56 thousand fewer than one year previously. The decrease is stronger than that in previous quarters. The fall in the number of new vacancies is also stronger than in previous quarters, at 73 thousand.

Fourth decrease in a row

The number of open vacancies fell by 56 thousand in the second quarter of 2002 to a total of 162 thousand. Following seven years of uninterrupted growth, the number of unfilled vacancies fell for the first time in the third quarter of 2001. The initial decrease was modest: 13 thousand. In the two subsequent quarters the number of vacancies fell by around 40 thousand compared with twelve months previously. Since the number of vacancies has started to fall, the decrease has not been as large as at the end of June, although it should be mentioned in this respect that the number reached a record level in June last year.

Number of new vacancies also down strongly

In the second quarter of 2002, 200 thousand jobs fell vacant, 73 thousand fewer than in the same period one year previously. This too is a stronger fall than in previous quarters. The number of vacancies filled came to 216 thousand in the second quarter, 55 thousand fewer than one year previously.

Decline in all sectors of industry

The number of vacancies has decreased across the board. For the third quarter in a row the strongest decrease was in business services, although in manufacturing and trade, too, there were also strong falls, just as in previous quarters. The number of vacancies in non-commercial services also fell for the first time. This was mainly caused by the decline in vacant positions in the health and welfare sector, where there were fewer new vacancies than one year previously. Only in agriculture and in the hotel and restaurant trade did the number of vacancies rise slightly.

Less tension on labour market

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The decrease in the number of vacancies has lessened the tension on the labour market. At the end of June there were 22 unfilled vacancies for every thousand jobs. On year previously this was still as high as 29. Labour market tension is relatively high in the construction industry and in the hotel and restaurant sector. In construction, it has fallen sharply though: the number of vacancies in this sector fell from 46 to 32 per thousand jobs.

Fewer jobs in private sector

The decrease in the number of job vacancies is connected with the slump in economic growth since the beginning of 2001. The effects of this are now visible on the labour market. Registered unemployment has been rising since the beginning of 2002. Furthermore, figures on jobs also released today show that the increase in the number of jobs is exclusively in the public sector. In the private sector, the number of jobs decreased.