



# Press release

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## ***International trade dwindles in 2002***

In 2002, the value of Dutch international trade in goods decreased compared to 2001. Provisional figures by Statistics Netherlands show that the value of exported goods fell by 3 percent in 2002 to 235 billion euro. Imports decreased by 6 percent to over 204 billion euro. The decline in imports and exports can partly be accounted for by a slight fall in prices in 2002. The trade surplus, however, rose in 2002 compared to the previous year.

### ***Quarterly developments***

Especially in the first six months of 2002, international trade dropped. Though imports fell in the third quarter by 5 percent, exports remained stable, compared to the corresponding quarter of 2001. In the fourth quarter, the value of exports rose, whereas imports levelled out. Imports as well as exports had to contend with lower prices in the first three quarters, according to the Quarterly accounts by Statistics Netherlands. The fourth quarter saw a slight rise in prices.

### ***Imports and exports up in December***

The most recent (provisional) figures available refer to December 2002, when the value of imports and exports grew by 1 and 4 percent respectively, compared to December 2001, a continuation of the trend observed in the previous months. It should be realised that December 2002 had an extra working day compared with December 2001.

### ***Trade with EU countries***

In 2002, imports from EU countries amounted to 116 billion euro, a 3 percent decrease on 2001, mainly in the first six months.  
The value of exports to EU countries totalled 178 billion euro in 2002, 5 percent down on 2001, mainly in the first three quarters of 2002. In the fourth quarter, the value of exports slightly rose.

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### ***Trade with countries outside the EU***

In 2002, the Netherlands imported goods worth more than 88 billion euro from countries outside the EU, a decrease by 11 percent on 2001. Throughout 2002 imports fell, although less in the closing months of the year. The total exports to non-EU countries in 2002 was worth 57 billion euro, a rise by 5 percent on 2001. From March monthly exports rose continually.

### ***High trade surplus***

The trade surplus, i.e. the difference between the value of exports and imports, was worth nearly 31 billion euro, an increase of almost 8 billion euro, compared with 2001. Mainly accountable for the increase is a reduction of the trade deficit with countries outside the EU by over 13 billion euro.

In 2002, the trade balance of the Netherlands with all EU countries was positive, with the exception of Ireland. The trade balance with non-EU countries in 2002 was negative, just as in the previous years. The main contributors to the negative trade balance were the USA, China and Japan.

**Imports and exports, 2001-2002**

	Imports	Exports	Trade surplus	Imports	Exports
	billion euro			% change compared to the same period last year	
<b>2001</b>	218.3	241.3	23.0	1	4
January	19.3	20.6	1.4	25	26
February	18.0	19.9	1.9	7	11
March	20.2	22.5	2.3	8	11
April	17.7	19.4	1.6	8	12
May	19.1	21.0	2.0	4	6
June	18.9	21.0	2.1	5	10
July	17.8	18.9	1.1	6	5
August	17.0	18.5	1.4	1	-1
September	17.4	19.7	2.3	-8	-5
October	18.4	20.7	2.3	-8	-3
November	18.1	20.3	2.2	-13	-8
December	16.4	18.9	2.5	-14	-7
<b>2002*</b>	204.3	234.9	30.6	-6	-3
January	16.4	18.7	2.3	-15	-9
February	16.1	18.5	2.4	-11	-7
March	18.0	20.9	2.9	-11	-7
April	17.5	18.9	1.5	-2	-2
May	17.1	19.7	2.6	-10	-6
June	17.1	19.8	2.7	-10	-6
July	16.5	18.9	2.4	-7	0
August	15.5	18.0	2.4	-9	-3
September	17.4	20.4	3.0	0	4
October	18.5	20.8	2.3	0	0
November	17.7	20.8	3.1	-2	3
December	16.6	19.6	3.0	1	4

\* provisional figures

**Source: Statistics Netherlands**