



Press release

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Unemployment up sharply again

The unemployed labour force in the Netherlands comprised 392 thousand persons on average in the period February-April 2003. This is 102 thousand more than in the same period last year, thus continuing the strong rise which started in the first quarter of this year. According to the newest figures from Statistics Netherlands, unemployment is 5.3 percent. One year previously it was 3.9 percent.

High rate of increase

Seasonal effects always push up unemployment in the period February-April. If these seasonal effects are removed the unemployed labour force is reduced to 385 thousand. Seasonally adjusted employment is 18 thousand higher than in the first quarter of 2003. As the figures are subject to a margin of error, the figures can best be viewed over a longer period, six months for example. The increase in the six months up to April was 11 thousand persons a month.

Youth unemployment 10 percent

Unemployment among the younger age groups in the population also continues to rise. In the space of one year the number of unemployed young people rose from 63 thousand to 90 thousand. This means that 10 percent of people aged 15 to 24 in the labour force are now unemployed. Youth unemployment was 3 percent points higher than in the same period last year. This increase is more than twice as high as that for 25 to 44 year-olds, for whom unemployment rose by 1.3 percent points to 5 percent.

Employment starting to fall

In the months February-April 2003, 7,061 thousand people had a paid job of at least twelve hours a week. The seasonally adjusted employed labour force has risen in the last few years. However, the increase became smaller and smaller in the course of 2002, and at the beginning of this year it turned into a slight decrease.

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