



Press release

PB03-97
26 May 2003
9:30 AM

Consumer confidence remains low

Dutch consumer confidence in May remained at about the same level as in April. The consumers are slightly less negative about the future, though. The expectations about the economic climate and their own financial situation improved. The opinions expressed by consumers about their own financial situation in the last twelve months were worse, according to the economic survey among consumers by Statistics Netherlands.

More positive about the economy

Dutch consumers were more positive about the economic situation for the second month in a row. This is the seasonally corrected figure. The main reason is that consumers were more positive about the economic situation in the next twelve months. The seasonally corrected index figure on the future economic situation improved by 9 points to reach -34. This is the largest improvement since January 2002. The opinions expressed about the last twelve months remained virtually the same.

Willingness to purchase remains very low

In May the willingness to purchase among consumers stayed about the same as in April. This means it is still at the lowest level since April 1985. Willingness to purchase is one of the two parts from which the consumer confidence index is made. Willingness to purchase is based on how consumers feel about the financial situation of their own households and about making major purchases.

Consumers were more positive about the financial situation of their own household in the next twelve months. The seasonally adjusted figure increased by 4 points to -1. Dutch consumers had not been as positive as this about their future within 2003. However, it is too early to draw far-reaching conclusions on the basis of this figure.

Consumers also feel that this is a better time for making major purchases, such as computers and televisions, than last month. However, they were more negative about the development of their own financial situation over the last twelve months than they were in April. The balance between the optimists and the pessimists is -26. This is the lowest level since January 1985.

www.cbs.nl

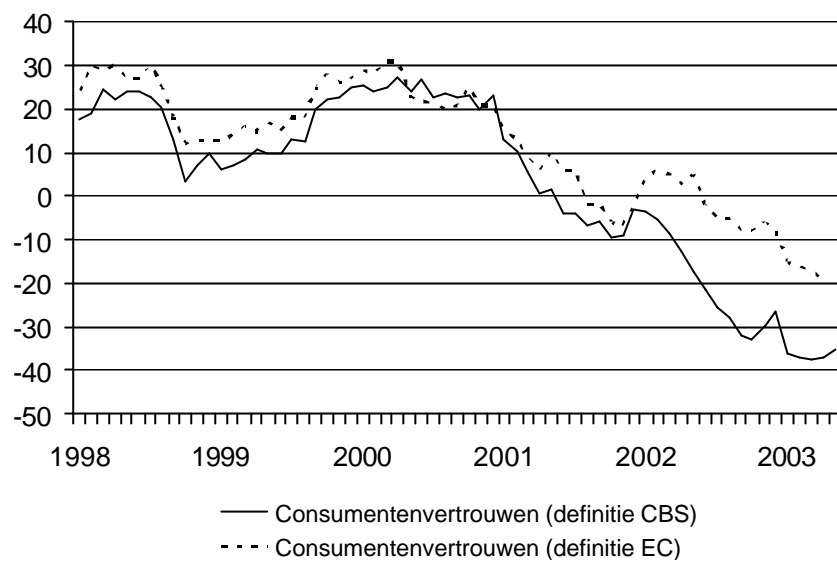
For further information please contact the press office.

Tel. +31 70 337 58 16

Fax +31 70 337 59 71

E-mail: persdienst@cbs.nl

Graph 1: Consumer confidence according to the definitions of Statistics Netherlands (CBS) and the European Commission (EC), seasonally corrected figures



Source: CBS