



# Press release

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## ***More job losses in private sector***

The number of jobs for private sector employees was 92 thousand lower in the first quarter of 2003 than in the same quarter of 2002. In the care and government sector on the other hand there were 101 thousand jobs more than in the same period last year. This resulted in an overall slight increase of 10 thousand jobs in the first quarter of 2003 according to new labour market figures from Statistics Netherlands.

In terms of full-time jobs, total employment fell by 0.5 percent. Employment is therefore in line with the economy, which also showed negative growth in the first quarter. The increase in wage costs fell to 3.9 percent in the first quarter.

### ***Private sector employment continues to fall***

The number of jobs of employees in the private sector, i.e. all companies minus the government and care sectors, fell by 91 thousand. In the second quarter of 2002 the number of private sector jobs was lower than twelve months previously for the first time since 1994 (9 thousand). Since then job losses have increased by more and more. In the third and fourth quarters of 2002 the decreases were 36 and 60 thousand respectively.

### ***Job losses now affect trade, hotels and restaurants***

The largest decreases in job numbers are in the manufacturing industry and in financial and corporate services. In both sectors there were 31 thousand fewer jobs than in the same period last year. In the construction industry, too, employment is shrinking quickly. And even the trade, hotels and restaurants, and repairs sector the number of jobs fell for the first time since 1993: by 7 thousand.

### ***Another 100 thousand jobs in government and care***

The increase in employment in the first quarter of 2003 is completely accounted for by the care and government sectors. In the care sector 66 thousand jobs were created in the space of one year, and the government (including education) employed an extra 35 thousand people. This puts the growth rate of jobs in the government sector at 3.5 percent and in the care sector at even 4.9 percent, continuing the historically high levels of 2002.

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### ***More jobs for women, fewer for men***

The total number of jobs in the Netherlands grew by 0.1 percent in the first quarter of 2003. This is the lowest growth rate since 1994. The number of jobs for men even fell by 0.9 percent. The number of jobs for women continued to rise. The difference in the developments for men and women is connected with the increase in jobs in the care sector, which employs more women than men. However, the increase in the number of jobs for women has now become smaller than the increase in the supply of women on the labour market, pushing up female unemployment.

### ***Employment down in terms of full-time equivalents***

In terms of full-time equivalents (labour-years) employment fell by 0.5 percent in the first quarter. In 2002 it grew by 0.6 percent, while in the years before that the growth rates were over 2 percent. Employment in terms of labour-years is therefore decreasing more quickly than in terms of jobs. This is because the most new jobs are in sectors employing many part-timers. These jobs are usually done by women, relatively more of whom work part-time.

### ***Wage costs increase levelling out***

The wage costs per labour-year rose by an average 3.9 percent in the first quarter of this year. This is a much smaller increase than the average 4.6 percent in 2002. Collectively negotiated wage increases were also smaller, decreasing from an average 3.7 percent in 2002 to 3.1 percent in the first quarter of this year. The average increase in wage costs is now highest in the care sector and other services, and lowest in the government sector.

### ***Decrease in employment in line with the economy***

Economic growth dropped sharply in the beginning of 2001. Since then quarter-on-quarter economic growth has been hovering around the zero line. Initially employment continued to grow, but in the course of 2002 it responded more and more to the standstill in economic growth. In the first quarter of 2003 employment in terms of labour-years fell by 0.5 percent while the economy shrank by 0.3 percent.

The lack of economic growth also had consequences for job vacancies and unemployment. The number of vacant jobs has been falling since the second half of 2001. After seven years of decrease, unemployment started to rise again in 2002. In the period February-April 2003, 102 thousand more people were unemployed than twelve months previously.