



Statistics Netherlands

Press release

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Manufacturers fairly optimistic about investment in 2003

Figures from Statistics Netherlands show that manufacturing companies expect to spend 8 percent more on capital goods this year than last year. The expected increase is mainly the consequence of investment spending postponed from 2001 and 2002. At 8.3 billion euro, investment spending in 2003 will be back at the same level as in 2000.

Lean years

At 7.3 and 7.7 billion euro in 2001 and 2002 respectively, investment spending by manufacturing companies was substantially lower than in the late nineties. Although investment spending is expected to reach the level of 2000 this year, a considerable drop of 19 percent is foreseen for 2004. The increase in 2003 is largely the effect postponed spending. As this pattern of postponement has continued for a number of years now, it is possible that capital spending planned for 2003 will be delayed to 2004.

Food and metal industry lead the field

Manufacturers in the food, drink and tobacco industry and in metal and electrical engineering expect to invest substantially more in capital goods in 2003, with increases of 22 and 24 percent respectively. In the metal industry in particular, this growth follows a year in which manufacturers were very cautious with their resources.

2004 uncertain

All companies in the mineral extraction and manufacturing sectors are cautious with respect to 2004. This caution is typical for the spring forecasts for the subsequent year. In the spring manufacturers tend to keep their predictions on the low side. Only companies in the utilities sector expect a modest growth of 4 percent.

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