



# Press release

PB03-135  
18 July 2003  
9:30 AM

## ***Less international trade in May***

According to the latest preliminary figures by Statistics Netherlands, the value of exported goods in May was 18.9 billion euro, 4 percent less than in May 2002. The value of imported goods was down by 2 percent and amounted to 16.7 billion euro.

The trade surplus in May 2003 reached 2.2 billion euro, 14 percent less than in the same month last year. The lower value of the imports and exports can be explained in part by lower prices.

## ***More exports to Germany and Belgium during the first five months***

The Netherlands exported 14.1 billion euro worth of goods to the other EU member states in May 2003. This is 4 percent less than in May 2002. The imports from the other EU countries were down by 1 percent, reaching 9.6 billion euro.

Over the first five months of 2003 the value of exports was 1 percent higher than in the same period of 2002. The main contributors to this were the increases of exports to Germany by 0.7 billion euro (3 percent) and Belgium by 0.3 billion euro (2 percent). Dutch imports remained at the same level as last year over the first five months.

## ***Growing exports to eastern European countries***

In May 2003 the Netherlands exported 4.9 billion euro worth of goods to countries outside the EU, down 1 percent on May 2002. Dutch imports from countries outside the EU amounted to 7.1 billion euro. This is 3 percent less than in May 2002.

Over the first five months of 2003 the value of exports was 3 percent higher than in the same period of 2002. The exports to eastern European countries increased markedly by 0.5 billion euro, which is well above average with a 13 percent increase. In the first five months of 2003 the imports stayed at roughly the same level as in the same period of 2002.

**Imports and exports of goods**

	<b>Imports</b>	<b>Exports</b>	<b>Trade balance</b>	<b>Imports</b>	<b>Exports</b>
	<b>billion euros</b>			<b>Year-on-year percentage changes</b>	
<b>2000</b>	216.1	231.9	15.8	21%	23%
<b>2001</b>	218.3	241.3	23.0	1%	4%
<b>2002</b>	205.6	232.7	27.1	-6%	-4%
January	16.6	18.3	1.7	-14%	-11%
February	16.2	18.4	2.2	-10%	-8%
March	18.2	20.8	2.6	-10%	-8%
April	17.7	18.9	1.3	-1%	-2%
May	17.1	19.7	2.5	-10%	-6%
June	17.1	19.6	2.5	-9%	-7%
July	16.5	18.8	2.3	-7%	-1%
August	15.8	17.8	2.0	-7%	-4%
September	17.5	20.4	2.9	1%	3%
October	18.7	20.8	2.1	1%	1%
November	17.5	20.1	2.6	-3%	-1%
December	16.7	19.1	2.4	2%	1%
<b>2003*</b>					
January	17.3	19.7	2.4	4%	7%
February	17.1	19.3	2.3	6%	5%
March	18.3	20.9	2.6	1%	1%
April	16.6	18.5	1.9	-6%	-2%
May	16.7	18.9	2.2	-2%	-4%

\*preliminary figures

**Source: CBS**