



Press release

PB03-179
2 October 2003
9:30 AM

Small and medium-sized stocks performed best on AEX

Prices of shares in small and medium-sized companies on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange (AEX) rose by more than twice as much as those of larger companies in the third quarter of 2003. In the first and second quarters, too, stocks of small and medium-size companies did better than larger companies. The average yield on all Dutch shares was 4.3 percent in the third quarter. For the first nine months of the year the yield is negative however: -1.2 percent, according to figures from Statistics Netherlands.

Small and medium-sized stocks popular

Share prices of small and medium-sized companies quoted on the AEX rose by 12.8 percent in the third quarter of 2003. This is more than twice the increase of the AEX index in the same period (5.2 percent). The AEX index comprises the 25 companies whose stock is traded most.

The difference in the developments in share prices is much larger for the first nine months of this year. Statistics Netherlands' CBS index for non-AEX companies, the indicator for small and medium-sized stocks rose by 22.4 percent in the first nine months of this year, while the AEX index fell by 4.9 percent in the same period.

Positive yield in third quarter

Investors in Dutch shares closed the third quarter with a positive yield. The CBS total return index for shares rose by 4.3 percent on balance in the third quarter. Share prices of Dutch shares reached their highest value of the year on 3 September, but by the end of that month average share prices were 9.6 percent lower than at the beginning.

The results were negative for the first three quarters of the year. The total yield of Dutch shares was -1.2 percent in this period.

Amsterdam outperforms world index in third quarter

The total return on Dutch shares was 4.3 percent in the third quarter of this year. Expressed in euros, the Amsterdam stock exchange did slightly better than the MSCI world index in the same period (3.4 percent). For the first nine months of 2003 Amsterdam lagged behind the world index (5.4 percent) with a yield of -1.2 percent.

Technology sector performed best

Technology companies realised the best results in the third quarter. The indicator for this sector – the CBS MIT Small index – rose by 25.0 percent in the third quarter. This is nearly six times as much as the average return on all Dutch shares (4.3 percent). The CBS MIT Small index comprises all companies in the field of micro-electronics, information technology and telecommunication, excluding heavyweights Philips and KPN. The sectors that did least well in Amsterdam in the third quarter were financial (+3.3 percent) and construction (+3.7 percent).

Investment trusts investing in Far East have highest yields

Of the investment trusts investing in shares, those investing in Asia had the highest returns in the third quarter of 2003 (17.8 percent). This is the consequence of both the increase in local share prices and favourable exchange rate developments. In Japan, for example the Nikkei 225 index rose by 12.5 percent in the third quarter and the yen gained 6.2 percent on the euro. Investment trusts investing in Dutch shares performed slightly better than average, with a yield of 5.6 percent.

Return on government bonds slightly positive

Investors in government bonds had a slightly positive quarter. The total return on bonds was 0.2 percent in the last three months. The prices of government bonds fell on balance in the third quarter. However, this fall was compensated by the coupon interest. For the first nine months of 2003 the total return on government loans was 4.1 percent.