



Press release

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Consumers spend less in second quarter

The volume of domestic consumption in the second quarter of 2003 was 1.4 percent down on the same period last year. This volume decrease follows a slight increase in consumption in the first quarter of 2003 by 0.3 percent. The result is a fall for the first half of the year of 0.6 percent compared with the first six months of 2002. According to figures from Statistics Netherlands less was spent on all categories of consumption in the second quarter of 2003 than in the same period last year. The strongest decrease was for the category durable consumer goods.

Consumption of services lower

After correction for price developments, consumer spending on services was 0.5 percent lower than one year previously. After three years of slowing growth the turning point came for services at the beginning of 2003. The first quarter of this year was the first time that less was spent than twelve months previously (-0.3 percent). Consumers spent less in hotels, restaurants and pubs, and on financial and business services in both quarters. Nearly half of domestic expenditure is spent on services.

Less spent on goods too

In the second quarter of this year, the volume of expenditure on goods was 2.2 percent lower than in the same quarter last year. Consumers spent substantially less on durable goods than last year. Although they spent more - after adjustment for prices - on household appliances and means of transport, this increase was not enough to compensate the decreases in other categories of durable goods. Expenditure on furniture in particular was down.

Consumption of food, drinks and tobacco were half of a percent lower than one year previously.

Monthly figures affected by difference in shopping days

Within the second quarter the largest decrease for domestic expenditure was in June (-2.7 percent). In April (-0.4 percent) and May (-1.0 percent) the falls were smaller. Differences in shopping day patterns affect the monthly figures. The figure for June this year was negatively affected by a less favourable pattern of shopping days compared with June 2002. Consumer spending in April and May this year, on the other hand, was hit less hard because of a more favourable shopping day pattern than last year.