



Press release

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Sharp drop in retail sales

Dutch retailers sold 7.4 percent less in August 2003 than in the same month last year. This is the sixth month in succession that retail turnover is lower than twelve months previously. Sales were down in the non-food branch, in particular. Turnover in this branch was 9.7 percent lower than in August last year. For shops selling food, drink and tobacco, turnover was 2.4 percent lower than last year, according to figures from Statistics Netherlands.

Shop prices were 0.4 percent higher overall than in August 2002, for non-food articles they were nearly 1 percent lower.

The figures for August 2003 were negatively affected by a less favourable pattern in shopping days than August last year.

Furniture shops sell less

Consumers spent substantially less in shops selling furniture and furnishings. Turnover in this sector was nearly 15 percent lower than August last year. The turnover in furniture stores has now fallen for thirteen months in a row. Clothes and consumer electronics stores also sold considerably less than in August last year. On the other hand, textile supermarkets, do-it-yourself stores and shops selling household articles realised a higher turnover in August.

Specialist food shops still losing ground

Specialist food shops such as greengrocers and butchers realised 7 percent less turnover than in August last year, while turnover in supermarkets was 1.5 percent lower.