



# Press release

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## ***Consumers slightly more positive***

Dutch consumer confidence, corrected for seasonal influences, increased by 3 points to -27 in December. This is the second improvement of consumer confidence in a row after a year in which the indicator constantly remained at a very low level. This month's improvement is entirely due to an increased willingness to buy. This is shown by the consumer survey conducted by Statistics Netherlands.

### ***Willingness to buy up***

In December Dutch willingness to buy went up for the first time this year. Willingness to buy is based on opinions Dutch consumers expressed about the financial situation of their own household and about making major purchases. In this month, which tends to be very expensive for consumers, the seasonal effects are major. Usually consumers see December as a much less favourable time for major purchases than other months. After correcting these effects, there is a 6 point increase in willingness to buy compared to November.

In December consumers were particularly less negative about major purchases than previously this year. Moreover they were far less negative about the financial situation of their households during the last twelve months. Furthermore their opinion about the financial situation of their households in the next twelve months also improved slightly.

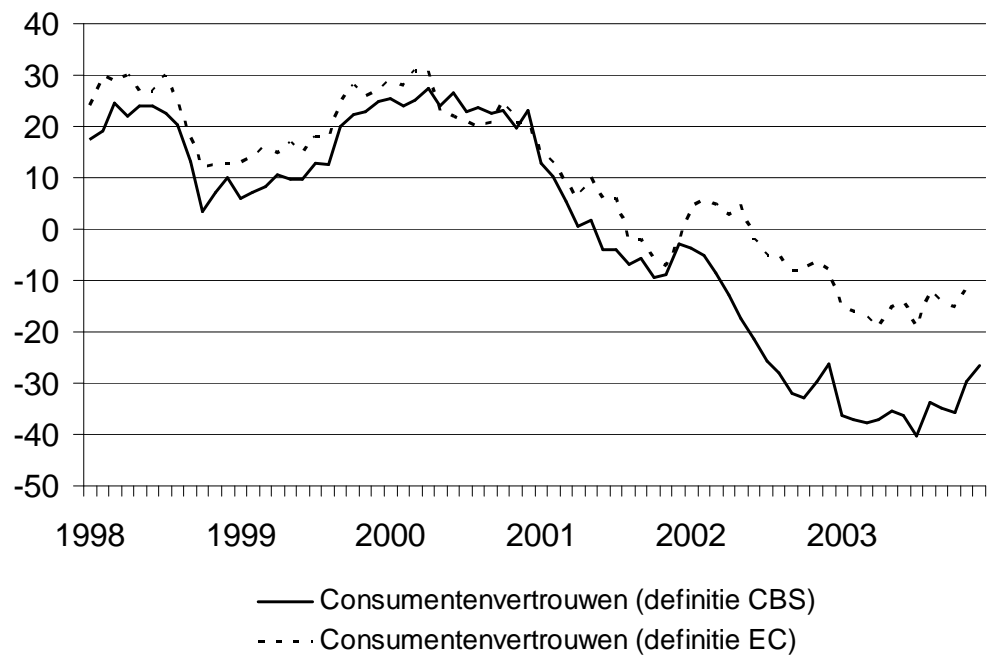
### ***Opinions on economic climate stable***

Opinions about the economic climate in December were about the same as in November. Last months the opinions improved substantially. Consumer opinion about the situation over the last twelve months and about the outlook for the next twelve months hardly changed.

### ***Confidence in 2003 at the lowest level since 1983***

In 2003 consumer confidence was virtually stable at a very low level. The confidence index averaged -35, the lowest level since 1983. This is the third year in a row in which consumer confidence did not get out of the red figures.

**Consumer confidence according to the definitions of CBS and the European Commission (seasonally corrected)**



**Source: CBS, European Commission**