



# Press release

PB05-046  
19 April 2005  
9:30 AM

## ***Unemployment continues to rise***

An average 518 thousand people were out of work in the Netherlands in the first quarter of 2005. This is 7.0 percent of the labour force. After correction for seasonal effects unemployment comes to 498 thousand, 8 thousand higher than in the period December 2004-February 2005, according to figures from Statistics Netherlands.

Unemployment has been rising slowly in recent months. The increase has been steady for nearly six months now. On average it is rising by 4 thousand a month.

### ***More women unemployed***

Unemployment was 17 thousand higher in the first quarter of 2005 than in the first quarter of last year. Female unemployment accounts for most of this increase. In the first three months of this year an average 256 thousand women were unemployed. This is an increase of 15 thousand in the last twelve months. The increase is mainly for women in the age group 25-44 years. It may have been caused by the sharp fall in employment in education and the care sector. Many women had started work in these sectors in recent years.

### ***Unemployment tops half a million***

There were 518 thousand unemployed people in the Netherlands in the first quarter of this year. Half a million unemployed is not unique in a historical sense. In 1983 and 1984 unemployment was around 530 thousand, and in the early nineties the economy also faltered, pushing up unemployment to over half a million between 1994 and 1996. The highest level in the last 35 years was reached in 1994. The average for that year was 547 thousand. At the beginning of 2004, too, unemployment topped 500 thousand for a short period.

However, in earlier periods the labour force was much smaller than it is now. Therefore the rate of unemployment was higher. In 1983 and 1984, for example, more than 10 percent of the labour force were out of work, and in 1994 more than 8 percent were jobless. In the first quarter of this year the rate of unemployment was 7.0 percent.