



Press release

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Job losses slightly down

The number of employee jobs was 75 thousand lower in the first quarter of 2005 than twelve months previously. After seasonal corrections the number of jobs was 21 thousand lower in the first quarter than in the fourth quarter of 2004. Wage costs per employee were 3.0 percent higher than one year previously, especially because of higher pension premiums, according to figures from Statistics Netherlands.

The national accounts, which also include the labour accounts, have been revised. Further, the figures on jobs, labour volume and wage costs for previous years have been adjusted, as they are every year, on the basis of more and better information. The number of jobs is 100 thousand higher, the developments have hardly changed.

Private sector job losses slowly diminishing

In the first quarter of this year there were 81 thousand jobs fewer in the private sector than in the same quarter last year. This is a fall of 1.5 percent. At the end of 2003 job losses in the private sector reached a low point with a decrease of 159 thousand. In business services, on the other hand, the number of jobs in the first quarter was higher than one year previously. In the rest of the private sector, however, the number is still falling. The fall was relatively largest in the construction sector with 4.7 percent. In the manufacturing industry it fell by 3.1 percent.

Fewer extra jobs in the care sector

The number of jobs in health care and welfare was 18 thousand higher in the first quarter of this year than twelve months previously. This increase is far smaller than in recent years. In the last three years a total 145 thousand jobs were created in the care sector. In education the number of jobs was the same as last year. This stabilisation comes after nine years of increase. In public administration the number of jobs has already been falling for more than a year; there were 12 thousand fewer jobs than in the first quarter of 2004.

Jobs also down on previous quarter

After seasonal adjustment, there were 21 thousand fewer jobs in the first quarter of 2005 than in the fourth quarter of 2004. This decrease is slightly larger than in the previous quarter. The cause is the increasingly slower employment growth in the collective sector.

The only real job growth is in business services, where the number of jobs has been growing faster since the turning point in mid 2004. This is partly caused

by the recovery of employment in the temp agency sector. But in other areas of business services, too, such as advertising agencies and ICT, employment is no longer decreasing. The fast growth in temporary jobs is a sign that the demand for labour is increasing. Employers turn to temporary employment agencies to meet this demand.

Employment also down in terms of fte's

Employment in terms of full-time equivalents (fte's) was also 1.3 percent lower in the first quarter of 2005 than one year previously. In fte's, too, employment decreased more slowly, although the loss in employment in fte's is relatively larger than in jobs, of which there were 1.0 percent fewer. This is because sectors of industry with a large proportion of part-time jobs, such as the care sector and business services, are doing better than sectors with less part-time work, such as construction and manufacturing.

Higher pension premiums push up wage costs

Annual wage costs were 3.0 percent higher in the first quarter of this year than twelve months previously. This increase is substantially larger than the collectively negotiated wage increase of 0.7 percent. The difference is mainly caused by substantially higher pension premiums. The wage costs increase was lowest in education, 2.0 percent, and highest in construction at 4.3 percent.

Labour accounts revised

The national accounts, which includes the labour accounts, have been revised for the years 2001 to 2004. Some conceptual changes have been introduced, new measurement methods implemented and source statistics improved. The annual adjustment of the yearly figures has also been implemented. There are thus two sources for the differences between the annual figures before and after the revision.

Change in employment 2002-2004 nearly unaltered

For the revision year 2001 the number of jobs of employees was 135 thousand higher, the number of fte's 105 thousand higher. For the years 2002, 2003 and 2004 the changes in employment after revision hardly differ from those before revision. The wage costs increase per labour year is clearly higher for 2004, however, mainly because of recent information on pension premiums.