



Press release

PB08-046
3 July 2008
15:00 hrs

Jobs up 2.2 percent in first quarter

- 172 thousand more jobs
- highest growth for business services and trade
- slight slowdown for temp agencies
- wage costs per employee up 3.3 percent
- 2007 still top year for job growth

There were 172 thousand more employees in the Netherlands in the first quarter of 2008 than in the same quarter last year. This 2.2 percent increase is high in a historical perspective, but still lower than the 2.7 percent in 2007.

The growth in the number of jobs was highest in the sectors with the most workers: business services (4.3 percent) and trade (3.6 percent). In the care and hotel and restaurant sectors, too, job growth was higher than average. Hardly any increases was reported in the number of workers in manufacturing, construction and government. The slight slowdown in growth was reported in precisely the sector with the highest growth rate: business services. Here the increase in the number of jobs for agency workers was smaller than in previous quarters.

Wages and salaries per labour-year were 3.1 percent higher in the first quarter than in the same period last year. Higher employer-paid costs for health care, unemployment and incapacity insurance pushed up the wage costs by slightly more in this period, namely 3.3 percent. This increase is in line with the average wage costs increase of 3.2 percent in 2007. The increase in wage costs differs per sector of industry. In the first quarter the largest increase was observed for manufacturing, the smallest for financial services.

As usual at this time of year, the figures for jobs and wages in the last three years have been revised as more and better information has become available. The growth in the number of jobs in 2005 is 0.4 percent higher than previously estimated, while the high growth rates for employment in 2006 and 2007 are largely unchanged. Last year is still one of the best ever, with an increase of more than 200 thousand jobs.

Higher estimates for production growth in 2005 and 2006 and the adjusted job growth figures have pushed up the increase in labour productivity in 2006, although it remains the same for 2005. The increase in wage costs per labour-year were 0.4 percent higher for 2007. This is mainly because bonus payments are observed more reliably than in previous years.