



## Press release

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### Unemployment down

- **Unemployment down in May**
- **Contraction labour force slows down**
- **Amount of unemployment benefits further down in May**
- **More unemployment benefits over-55s in May**

Today, Statistics Netherlands announced that unemployment declined for the first time this year because more people found work. In March, the number of unemployed also declined, but this was caused by the fact that people withdrew from the labour market. Unemployment fell by 14 thousand in May; 8.6 percent in the labour force are unemployed.

Figures released by the UWV (Institute for Implementation of Employees' Insurances) indicate that the number of unemployment benefits was reduced for the fourth month in a row; 436 thousand benefits were granted in May 2014, i.e. 8 thousand fewer than in April.

#### **Fewer people out of work and more people found work in May**

Unemployment adjusted for seasonal variation was 673 thousand in May. Unemployment fell because more people managed to find paid jobs. Early this year, the number of job vacancies and temp jobs began to grow. Unemployment declined most rapidly among 25 to 44-year-olds and the growth of the employed labour force was also most obvious in this age category.

#### **Labour force contraction slows down**

Over the past three months, unemployment fell by an average of 6 thousand a month. The size of the employed labour force was the same as three months ago. The total population aged between 15 and 65 years decreased at the same rate as the labour force. In the first quarter of this year, the decrease in the labour force was more than twice as large as the decrease in the overall population because many people decided to withdraw from the labour market.

#### **Unemployment rate in the Netherlands relatively low**

In May this year, 7.0 percent in the labour force were unemployed according to the ILO definition, versus 7.2 percent in April. In an international perspective, unemployment in the Netherlands is relatively low. The unemployment rates across the eurozone and the European Union as a whole were 11.7 and 10.4 percent respectively in April. With approximately 5 percent, Austria and Germany had the lowest unemployment rates.

Unemployment was lower according to the ILO definition than according to the national definition, mainly because, internationally, all people with paid jobs – irrespective of their

working hours – are included in the employed labour force. According to the national definition, people who work fewer than twelve hours on a weekly basis, e.g. pupils and students with small jobs, are not included in the labour force.

**More unemployment benefits paid to over-55s in May**

The number of people claiming unemployment benefits was reduced by 1.7 percent in May 2014 to 436 thousand. Relative to April, the number of unemployment benefits fell across nearly all sectors. Just as in the preceding month, the most substantial reduction was recorded in sectors like agriculture, construction and hotels and restaurants, which are traditionally sensitive to seasonal variation. The number of unemployment benefits decreased across nearly all age groups, except among over-55s. Compared to May last year, the number of existing benefits only fell among under-25s. In the over-55 age group, the number of unemployment benefits rose by a quarter in May relative to one year previously.

**Nearly 50 thousand new unemployment benefits in May**

The UWV paid 49 thousand new unemployment benefits in May, 11.1 percent more than in May 2013. Some 57 thousand benefits were discontinued, 23.7 percent more than in May last year. The number of benefits terminated because the claimants found work rose by 26.5 percent to 29 thousand in May 2014 relative to the same month last year.