

Persbericht

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Many jobs still vacant

There were 124 thousand job vacancies in the private sector at the end of last December, 7 thousand more than at the end of September. A rise is quite customary in the fourth quarter. In the last quarter of 1997 the number of vacancies rose by 24 thousand. The much lower figure for 1998 points to a less turbulent demand for labour, according to Statistics Netherlands.

Strong rise in vacancies at an end

The highest number of vacant jobs in the last period of strong economic growth was 134 thousand in March 1990. This was followed by a fall to only 33 thousand by the end of 1993. Since then it has been growing again, with a strong surge in 1997 and the first half of 1998. At the end of June last year the previous record was broken, with 139 thousand jobs vacant.

The strong increase came to an end in the third quarter of last year, when the number of vacancies fell by 22 thousand to 117 thousand, a much sharper drop than usual in the third quarter. At the end of December the number of job vacancies was 124 thousand, 7 thousand up again on September. In the previous year the number of vacancies had risen by as much as 24 thousand in the last quarter.

Undiminished demand for labour

Although well below the record of June 1998, the number of vacancies was still high at the end of the year: 124 thousand was even the highest end-of-December figure ever reported. This confirms the picture of a continuing strong demand for labour in the last quarters of last year. Indeed, earlier figures from Statistics Netherlands on job trends showed that the number of vacant jobs had continued to grow at the same rate. Unemployment fell by around 5 thousand a month in the same period.

New and filled vacancies

The number of vacant jobs at the end of a quarter is the outcome of newly created jobs on the one hand, minus filled existing vacancies on the other. These numbers have never been so high in the fourth quarter since Statistics Netherlands started measuring numbers of vacancies. Some 183 thousand new vacancies were created in the fourth quarter, and 176 existing vacancies were filled, thus adding 7 thousand to the number of jobs still vacant

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Sectors of industry

The increase in the number of job vacancies in the fourth quarter was completely on account of the small businesses (1 to 9 employees). In medium-sized and large companies the number of vacancies remained about the same. Most of the 124 thousand vacancies still open at the end of December were in commercial services (73 thousand), especially in trade (23 thousand) and business services (39 thousand).

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