



Statistics Netherlands

Press release

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Job growth levelling off in fourth quarter

In the fourth quarter of 2001 the number of jobs was 2.2% higher than in the fourth quarter of 2000. The growth rate kept falling throughout 2001. The wage cost increased by 5.0% in the fourth quarter, according to the latest labour figures by Statistics Netherlands.

The number of jobs increased by 158 thousand to over 7.5 million. The care sector and government realised over half of the job growth rate. Recalculated into fulltime jobs the growth rate in employment decreased from 2.1% in the third quarter to 1.9% in the fourth quarter of 2001. The growth rate in jobs fell significantly in commercial services.

Job growth rate down in commercial services

In virtually all branches of industry the growth rate in employment was smaller in the fourth quarter than in the preceding quarters. The slowdown in the growth rate was strongest in the commercial service jobs. Commercial services include trade, hotels, restaurants etc. repairs, transport and communication and financial and business services. In trade, hotels, restaurants etc. and repairs the job growth rate fell from 3.8% in 2000 to 1.8% in the fourth quarter of 2001. In financial and business services the drop was from 3.6% to 1.8%.

Over half the growth rate in government and care sector jobs

In contrast with most branches of industry the growth rate in employment increased in the government and care sector. The number of jobs in the government sector increased by 1.6% in 2000, and then via 2.3% in the first quarter to 3.1% in the fourth quarter of 2001. In the care sector the growth rate also clearly picked up, from 2.8% in 2000 to 4.6% in 2001 in the fourth quarter.

The number of jobs increased by 58 thousand in the fourth quarter on the fourth quarter of 2000 in the care and other public services and by 28 thousand in government. This means almost half of the total growth rate in jobs was realised in this area.

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Growth rate in fulltime jobs down

Since the first quarter of 2001 the growth rate in employment recalculated into fulltime jobs has been falling. In 2000 the number of fulltime jobs increased by 2.7%. In the first quarter of 2001 the growth rate was 2.6%, more or less the same as in 2000, but in the fourth quarter the number of jobs only increased by 1.9%. Employment in terms of fulltime jobs increased by 1.3% for men and 2.9% for women.

Wage costs up by 5.0%

Dutch wage costs per fulltime year increased slightly in the fourth quarter. The average increase was 5.0%. In virtually all branches of industry the increase was bigger than in the previous quarter. This is because the collective wage agreements increase negotiated averaged 3.2% in 2000 and 4.8% in 2001. It is the highest cao-wages increase since 1982. In the second half of the year the wage costs increased faster in the care and government sectors. The 4.6% wage increase in the government sector was below the average. This was no longer true in care and other public services where the wages increased by 5.1% in the fourth quarter. Just like in the previous quarter the wage costs per fulltime year were lowest in industry, namely 3.9% in the fourth quarter.

Growth rate in jobs higher than the economic growth rate

The economic growth rate in the fourth quarter of 2001 slowed down substantially to 0.4%. The growth rate in employment was also levelling off, but still came out well beyond the economic growth rate.

In general employment reacts with some time lag to changes in the economic growth rate. This is the fourth quarter in a row in which productivity has been falling. The current estimate for 2001 as a whole is that productivity fell by 1.1%.