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Consumers' confidence in the economy strengthened slightly in November

Consumers' expectations concerning their own and Finland's economy, and the development of employment weakened slightly from the previous month in November. Nevertheless, the consumer confidence indicator rose to 10.8 as views about saving possibilities improved clearly from the small decline in October. However, consumers' confidence was still weaker in November than on the average since 1995. The data are based on Statistics Finland's Consumer Survey for which 1,466 persons resident in Finland were interviewed between 1 and 19 November.

Consumer views on the economic and financial conditions in Finland in November 2004

	November 2004 balance figure	October 2004 balance figure	November 2003 balance figure	Average 10/95-11/04
Consumer confidence indicator	10.8	9.6	9.1	13.5
Own economic situation in 12 months' time	11.6	12.7	10.4	8.9
Household's saving possibilities in the next 12 months	47.4	37.6	45.5	30.5
General economic situation in Finland in 12 months' time	1.1	2.8	3.2	7.5
Unemployment in 12 months' time	-17.1	-14.7	-22.7	7.0
Inflation in 12 months' time, %	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.9
Personal threat of unemployment at present	0.8	2.5
Financial situation of household at present	32.0	27.0	28.7	24.0
Favourable time to make major purchases at present	21.6	21.8	23.7	20.2
Favourable time to save at present	15.2	14.5	13.0	4.6
Favourable time to raise a loan at present	24.6	25.6	30.3	21.9

The balance figures are obtained by deducting the weighted proportion of negative answers from that of positive answers. The consumer confidence indicator is the average of the balance figures for four questions concerning the next 12 months: own and Finland's economy, unemployment and household's saving possibilities. The balance figures and the confidence indicator can range between -100 and 100. A positive balance figure denotes an optimistic and a negative balance figure a pessimistic view on the economy.

In November, 25 per cent of consumers believed that Finland's economic situation would improve in the next 12 months, while 22 per cent of them thought the country's economy would deteriorate. In all, 30 per cent of consumers believed in November that their own economy would improve and only 10 per cent feared it would worsen over the year.

Altogether 48 per cent of consumers thought in November that unemployment would increase in the next 12 months while 19 per cent believed it would decrease. Fifteen per cent of employed persons reckoned that their personal threat of unemployment had grown over the past few months, while slightly fewer, or 13 per cent of them thought it had lessened. Consumers predicted that consumer prices would rise by 1.9 per cent in the next twelve months.

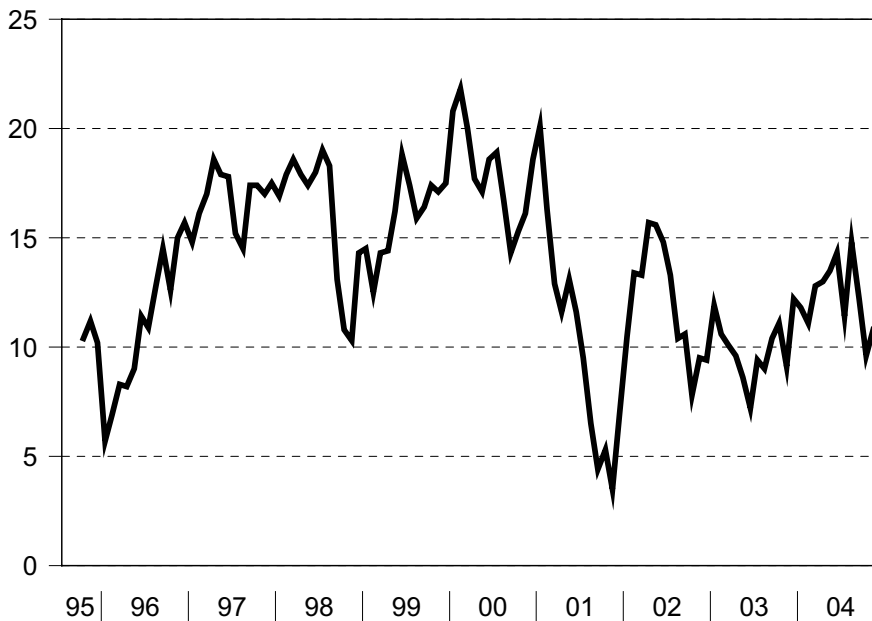
In November, 68 cent, of consumers thought the time was favourable for raising a loan, and 13 per cent of households were planning to do so in the next 12 months. Saving was considered worthwhile by 61 per cent of consumers in November. Sixty-five per cent of households had been able to lay aside some money and 79 per cent believed they would be able to do so in the next 12 months, whereas one month earlier the respective proportions were 59 and 72 per cent.

In November, 46 per cent, of consumers thought the time was favourable for buying consumer durables. Households still had plenty of spending intentions on, among other things, home improvements and

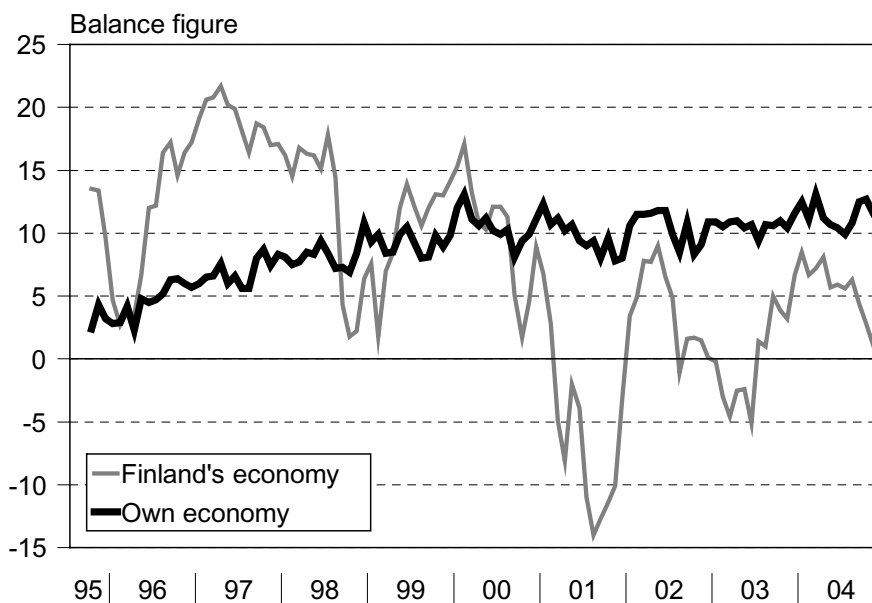
entertainment electronics. Seventeen per cent of households were either fairly or very certain to buy a car and 7 per cent a dwelling within the next 12 months.

Detailed data about the frequency of home appliances in households are also available from Statistics Finland. The most recent data were collected in connection with the November interviews for the Consumer Survey.

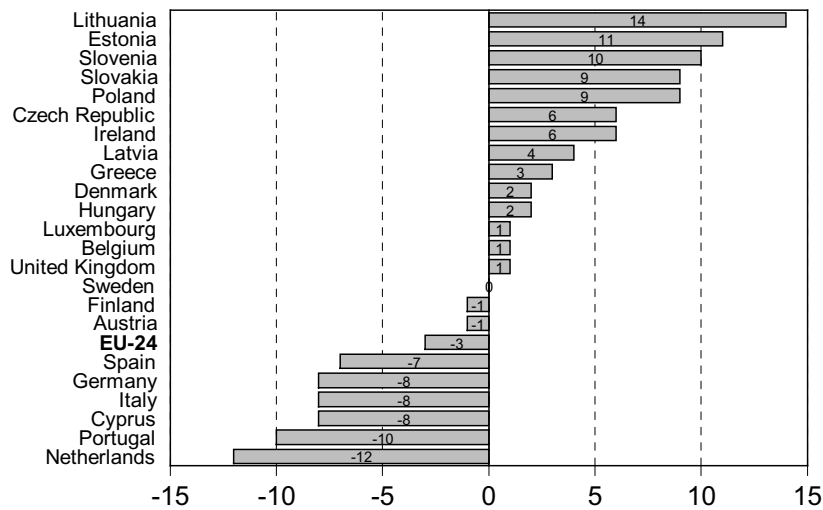
Consumer confidence indicator 10/1995-11/2004



Consumers' expectations concerning their own and Finland's economy in 12 months' time 10/1995-11/2004



Consumer confidence indicator in EU Member States, October 2004 Deviation of indicator from country average 10/1995-10/2004*



*Calculated from seasonally adjusted series. Malta does not conduct a consumer survey. Data for France are missing due to break in time series. Averages for a shorter time period: Luxembourg 1/2002 -, Cyprus, Lithuania and Poland: 1/2001 -, Slovakia: 4/1999 -.

Source: European Commission, DG ECFIN, Business and Consumer Survey Results, October 2004.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/economy_finance/indicators/businessandconsumersurveys_en.htm

Source: Consumer Survey 2004, November. Statistics Finland