

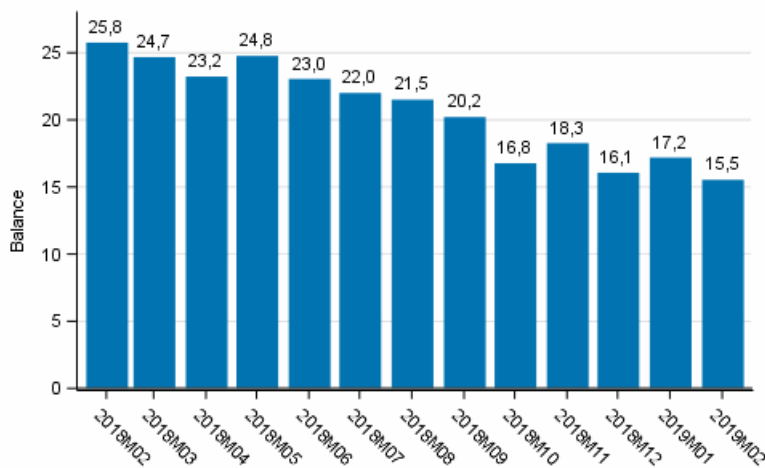
Consumer Survey

2019, February

Consumers believe in saving and the decrease of unemployment

Consumer confidence in the economy weakened for a change in February but is still at a good level. The consumer confidence indicator (CCI) stood at 15.5 in February, having been 17.2 in January and 16.1 in December. In last year's February, the CCI received the value 25.8. The long-term average for the CCI is 12.7. The data are based on Statistics Finland's Consumer Survey, for which 1,183 people resident in Finland were interviewed between 1 and 18 February.

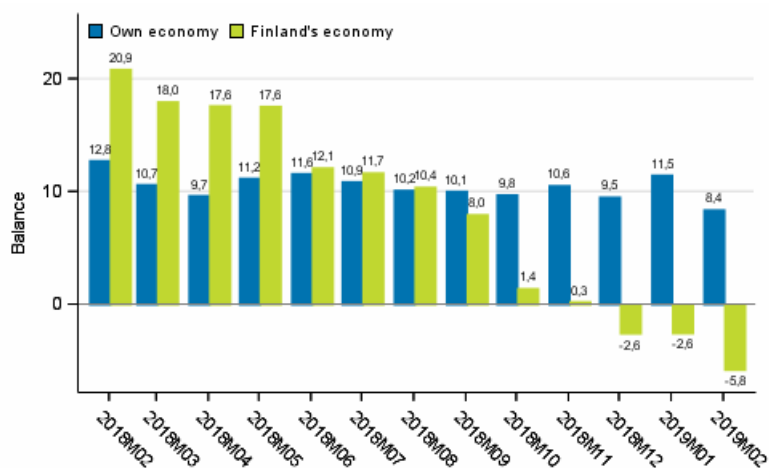
Consumer confidence indicator (CCI)



Of the four components of the CCI, expectations of one's own and Finland's economy weakened in February compared to January. The views on one's own economy still remained reasonable, whereas the views on Finland's economy were fairly gloomy. At the same time, the assessment about the development of unemployment improved slightly and was at a confident level. In February, expectations on consumers' own saving possibilities remained almost unchanged and very bright.

Compared with the corresponding period last year, only the views on saving possibilities improved in February. The other components weakened clearly over the year.

Consumers' expectations concerning their own and Finland's economy in 12 months' time



In February, consumers considered their household's financial situation to be very good. Employed consumers felt that their personal threat of unemployment has decreased significantly in recent times. The time was regarded very favourable for saving and, for a change, also good for taking out a loan but not so much for buying durable goods. In February, intentions to spend money on durable goods showed some signs of picking up compared to last year and especially to January.

Consumer confidence by major region and population group

In February, confidence in the economy was strongest in Western Finland (consumer confidence indicator 18.0). Among population groups, upper-level salaried employees were most optimistic (23.5). Only pensioners had gloomy expectations concerning economic development (5.5).

EU results

The (seasonally adjusted) Consumer Survey results for all EU countries are released monthly on the European Commission website: [Press releases](#).

Concepts

The **balance figures** are obtained by deducting the weighted proportion of negative answers from that of positive answers (see [Methodological description](#)). The **consumer confidence indicator** (CCI) is the average of the balance figures for the CCI components. The components are: own economy, Finland's economy, general unemployment and household's saving possibilities (all concerning next 12 months). The balance figures and the confidence indicator can range between -100 and +100 – the higher (positive) balance figure, the brighter the view on the economy.

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Review

Consumers' own and Finland's economy

In February, only 19 per cent of consumers believed that Finland's economic situation would improve in the coming twelve months, while 30 per cent of them thought that the country's economy would deteriorate. In January, the corresponding proportions were 22 and 27 per cent and in last year's February optimistic 49 and 8 per cent.

In all, 26 per cent of consumers believed in February that their own economy would improve, while 11 per cent of them feared it would worsen over the year. One month earlier, the corresponding proportions were 29 and 10 per cent, and one year earlier 30 and 9 per cent.

Unemployment and inflation

Altogether 35 per cent of consumers thought in February that unemployment would decrease over the year, while 21 per cent of them believed it would increase. The shares were 33 and 21 per cent in January and very confident 55 and 12 per cent one year ago.

In February, 30 per cent of employed persons felt that they were not threatened by unemployment at all. Nineteen per cent of employed persons reckoned that their personal threat of unemployment had lessened over the past few months, while 12 per cent thought it had grown.

In February, consumers predicted that consumer prices would go up by 1.8 per cent over the next 12 months. In December, the predicted inflation rate was still 2.2 per cent and its long-term average is 2.1 per cent.

Saving and taking out a loan

In February, 72 per cent of consumers considered saving worthwhile. The long-term average proportion is 59 per cent. In February, 72 per cent of households had been able to lay aside some money and as many as 82 per cent believed they would be able to do so during the next 12 months. The long-term averages of these proportions are 61 and 75 per cent.

In February, 66 per cent of consumers regarded the time good for raising a loan. Fourteen per cent of households considered raising a loan within one year.

Buying of durable goods

In February, 40 per cent of consumers considered the time favourable for buying durable goods. The long-term average proportion is 45 per cent. Twenty-one per cent of consumers planned on increasing and 30 per cent planned on reducing their spending on durable goods over the next 12 months. In January, the corresponding shares were 17 and 37 per cent.

In February, fewer households than usual, or 15 per cent, were fairly or very certain to buy a car during the next 12 months. On the other hand, more households than usual, or nine per cent, considered purchasing a dwelling. Nineteen per cent of households were planning to spend money on renovating their dwelling within a year.

Method of the Consumer Survey

The Consumer Survey is a telephone interview survey by means of which it is possible to measure Finns' images - assessments and expectations - of the general economic development and the financial situation of one's own household. In addition, the survey is a tool for finding out households' intentions to make major purchases, save money or take out a loan. For the Consumer Survey, answers are given by means of answer options (qualitative survey).

The first Consumer Survey interviews were conducted in November 1987. Until 1991, the survey was carried out twice a year, in May and November. In 1992, the survey times increased to four: the survey months were February, May, August and November. Since October 1995, the Consumer Survey data have been collected monthly on assignment and partial financing of the [European Commission](#).

Sampling and data collection

The population of the Consumer Survey comprises 4.5 million persons aged 15 to 84 and their 2.7 million households in Finland. A sample of 2,350 persons is drawn for the survey for every month. The same sample is also used for the data collection of the Finnish Travel Survey. The target area is the whole country and the respondents of the survey represent the population in Finland, according to age, gender, region of domicile and native language. The interviews are mainly conducted from Statistics Finland's Telephone Interview Centre (CATI), during the first two or three weeks of the month.

In February 2019, in all, 1,183 responses were gained, so the non-response rate of the survey was 49.7 per cent. The non-response rate includes those who refused from the survey or were otherwise prevented from participating, as well as those who could not be contacted. Possible over-coverage (dead, moved abroad etc.) is also included in non-response here.

Weighting

The response data of the Consumer Survey are expanded to the whole population with weighting coefficients. Weighting corrects the effects of non-response and improves the statistical accuracy of the data. The weights are established by using a calibration method (Calmar) and the probability of each observation to be included in the sample. The figures and series presented are not seasonally adjusted.

For more information, see [Methodological description](#).

Appendix tables

Appendix table 1. Consumers' views and intentions

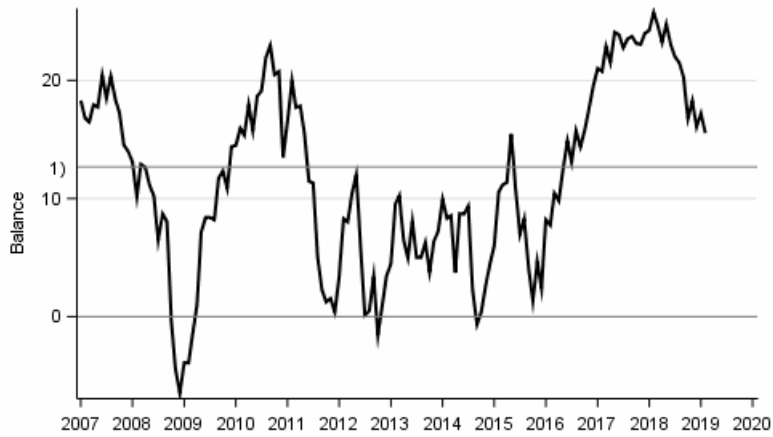
	Average 10/1995-	Max. 10/1995-	Min. 10/1995-	02/2018	01/2019	02/2019	Outlook ¹⁾
A1 Consumer confidence indicator, CCI = (B2+B4+B7+D2)/4	12.7	25.8	-6.5	25.8	17.2	15.5	+
A2 Old CCI = (B1+B2+B3+B4+C1)/5	6.9	20.6	-15.0	19.6	10.4	7.7	=
A3 Micro indicator = (B2+D1+D2)/3	25.9	34.0	9.5	31.0	34.0	32.7	++
A4 Macro indicator = (B4+B7)/2	1.0	22.8	-39.1	21.4	1.8	0.7	=
B1 Own economy now (balance)	4.0	9.8	-4.0	7.1	6.9	7.5	++
- Better (%)	23.5	30.6	16.4	26.8	26.1	27.0	
- Worse (%)	16.4	22.7	11.4	15.0	14.3	14.8	
B2 Own economy in 12 months' time (balance)	8.5	14.1	2.3	12.8	11.5	8.4	=
- Better (%)	25.9	33.4	18.2	30.1	29.2	25.7	
- Worse (%)	11.3	17.7	6.6	9.1	9.7	11.4	
B3 Finland's economy now (balance)	-1.0	29.5	-60.9	28.7	10.8	8.0	+
- Better (%)	28.1	62.1	2.0	59.4	35.9	31.4	
- Worse (%)	27.2	88.5	4.2	7.0	15.2	15.4	
B4 Finland's economy in 12 months' time (balance)	4.3	25.3	-27.1	20.9	-2.6	-5.8	-
- Better (%)	32.1	57.3	11.6	48.5	22.2	19.1	
- Worse (%)	22.1	57.3	6.0	8.1	27.3	29.9	
B5 Inflation now (per cent)	2.2	5.8	-2.0	1.3	1.6	1.5	
B6 Inflation in 12 months' time (per cent)	2.1	4.6	0.6	1.7	1.9	1.8	
B7 Unemployment in Finland in 12 months' time (balance)	-2.3	27.6	-51.1	22.0	6.2	7.2	+
- Less (%)	31.2	60.8	6.4	55.2	33.2	35.2	
- More (%)	33.2	83.3	6.9	12.0	20.8	20.9	
B8 Own threat of unemployment now (balance)	-0.5	9.8	-18.8	6.5	3.4	6.2	++
- Decreased (%)	13.5	20.4	5.3	17.8	16.2	19.2	
- Increased (%)	16.6	31.9	7.9	10.1	13.3	11.7	
C1 Favourability of time for purchasing durables (balance)	18.8	41.8	-14.2	28.3	25.2	20.2	=
- Favourable time (%)	44.6	62.4	29.6	44.1	44.4	40.3	
- Unfavourable time (%)	25.7	45.7	15.2	15.8	19.2	20.1	
C2 Favourability of time for saving (balance)	11.5	36.8	-19.6	26.5	28.1	28.8	++
- Good time (%)	58.6	80.7	33.4	69.9	71.3	72.5	
- Bad time (%)	35.8	58.5	15.5	23.9	22.6	22.5	
C3 Favourability of time for raising a loan (balance)	18.6	42.0	-47.1	29.5	21.9	22.4	+
- Good time (%)	62.9	78.2	13.3	71.5	64.8	66.1	
- Bad time (%)	30.0	83.4	12.1	20.8	26.6	26.2	
D1 Household's financial situation now (balance)	29.0	37.3	14.7	32.9	36.9	37.2	++
- Can save (%)	60.5	72.2	38.6	66.7	71.9	72.2	
- Uses savings or gets into debt (%)	6.8	10.1	4.5	8.2	6.3	6.7	

	Average 10/1995-	Max. 10/1995-	Min. 10/1995-	02/2018	01/2019	02/2019	Outlook ¹⁾
D2 Household's saving possibilities in the next 12 months (balance)	40.3	53.6	10.9	47.3	53.6	52.3	++
- Can save (%)	74.5	82.3	56.6	79.2	81.5	81.7	
- Cannot save (%)	23.7	40.3	16.5	19.0	17.2	16.8	
D5 Household's intentions to raise a loan in the next 12 months (% of households)	13.1	17.8	9.1	12.8	13.2	13.9	+
- Yes, certainly (%)	5.6	8.5	3.1	5.7	7.2	6.5	
- Possibly (%)	7.5	11.4	5.0	7.1	6.0	7.4	
E1 Spending on durables, next 12 months vs last 12 months (balance)	-8.9	-2.4	-18.2	-9.1	-13.4	-7.2	+
- More (%)	21.3	30.8	13.9	20.2	17.5	20.9	
- Less (%)	32.6	40.4	25.6	31.7	36.7	29.6	
E2 Intentions to buy a car in the next 12 months (% of households)	16.7	21.7	12.7	16.0	15.0	14.9	--
- Very likely (%)	8.5	12.1	5.1	7.2	7.9	7.6	
- Fairly likely (%)	8.2	10.4	5.3	8.8	7.0	7.3	
E4 Intentions to buy a dwelling in the next 12 months (% of households)	7.0	11.3	4.1	8.5	8.1	9.1	++
- Yes, certainly (%)	3.0	5.2	1.3	2.6	3.3	2.8	
- Possibly (%)	4.0	6.3	2.2	5.9	4.8	6.3	
E5 Intentions to spend money on basic repairs of dwelling in the next 12 months (% of households)	18.8	27.0	9.8	19.9	18.9	19.0	=
- Very likely (%)	12.4	19.0	5.0	12.4	11.7	11.7	
- Fairly likely (%)	6.4	9.1	3.2	7.5	7.2	7.3	

1) Outlook: ++ very good, + good, = neutral, - poor, -- very poor; deviation of balance from average has been compared to standard deviation

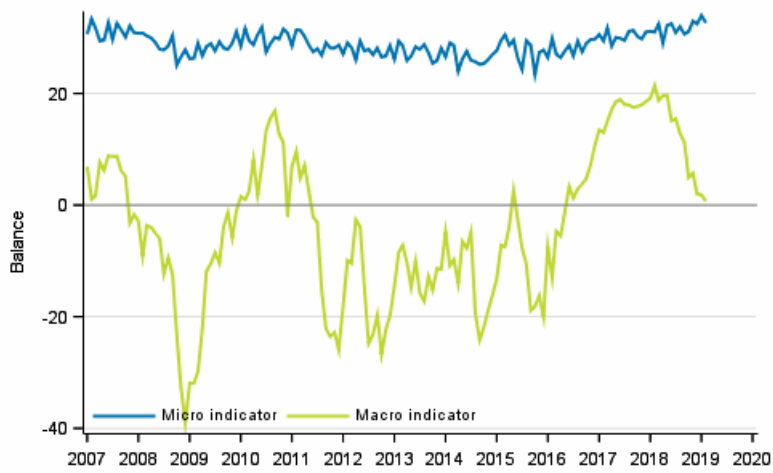
Appendix figures

Appendix figure 1. Consumer confidence indicator (CCI)

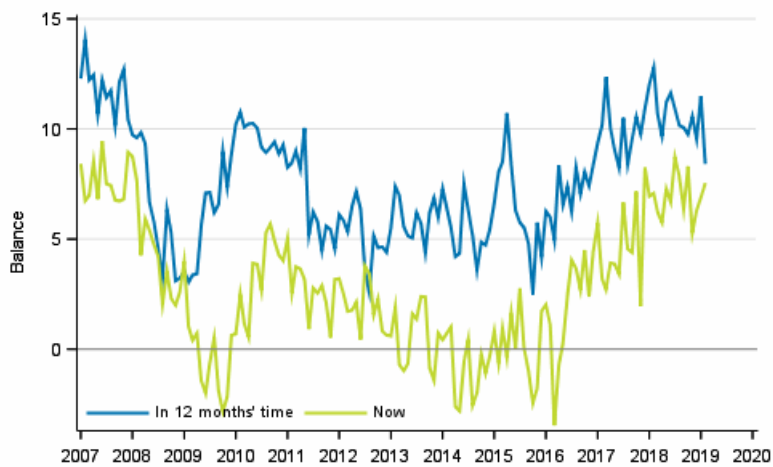


1) average 10/1995 - 02/2019

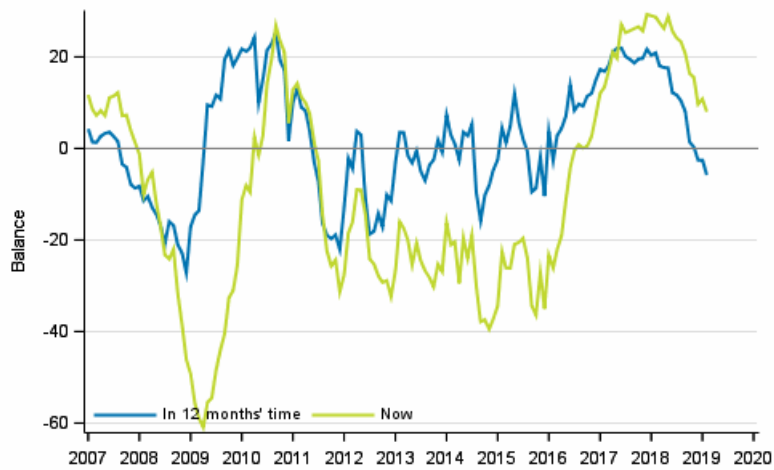
Appendix figure 2. Micro and macro indicators



Appendix figure 3. Own economy



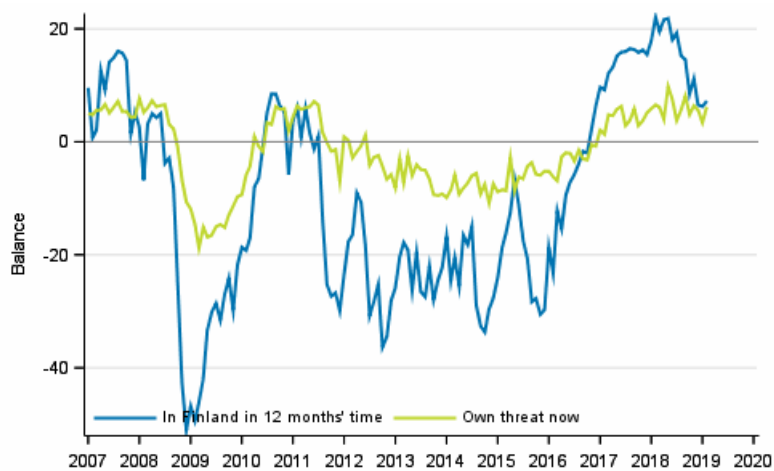
Appendix figure 4. Finland's economy



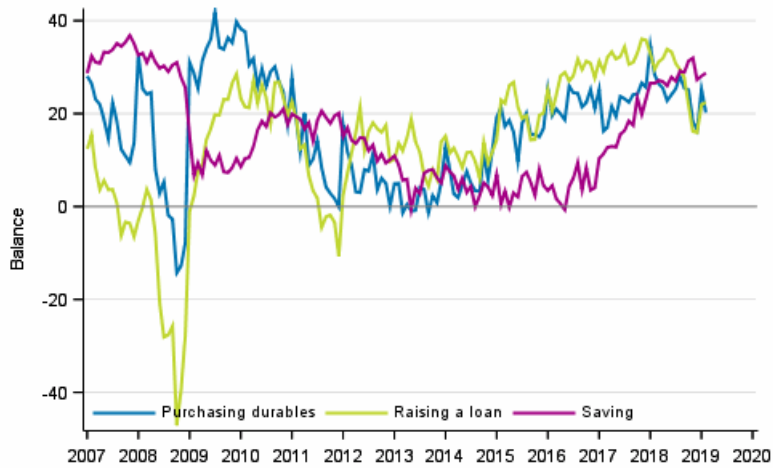
Appendix figure 5. Inflation



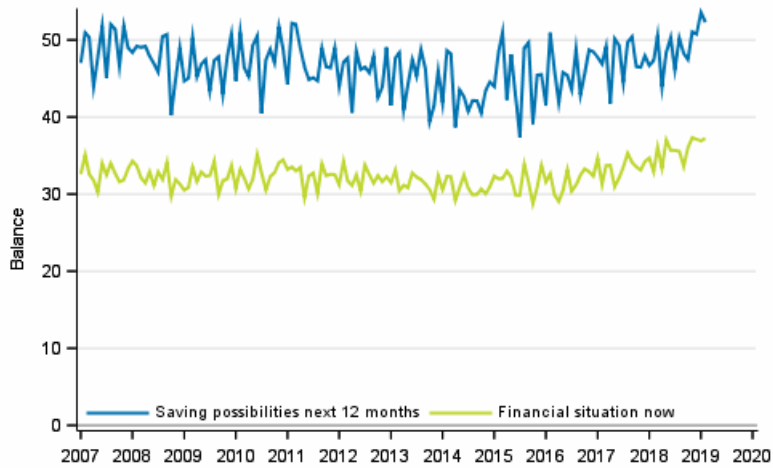
Appendix figure 6. Unemployment



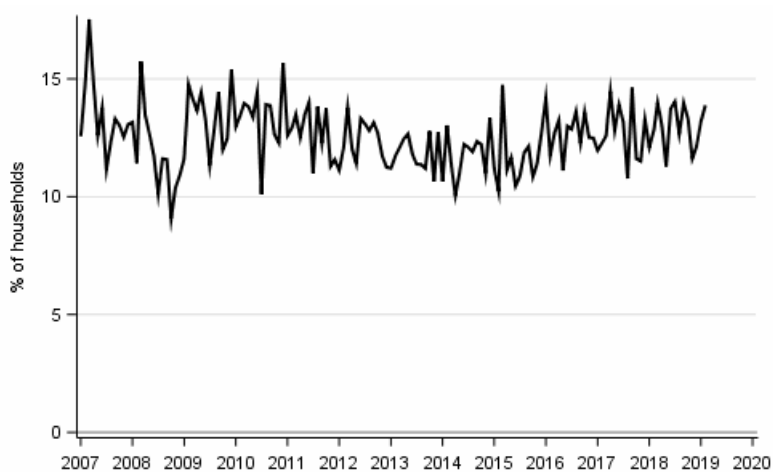
Appendix figure 7. Favourability of time for



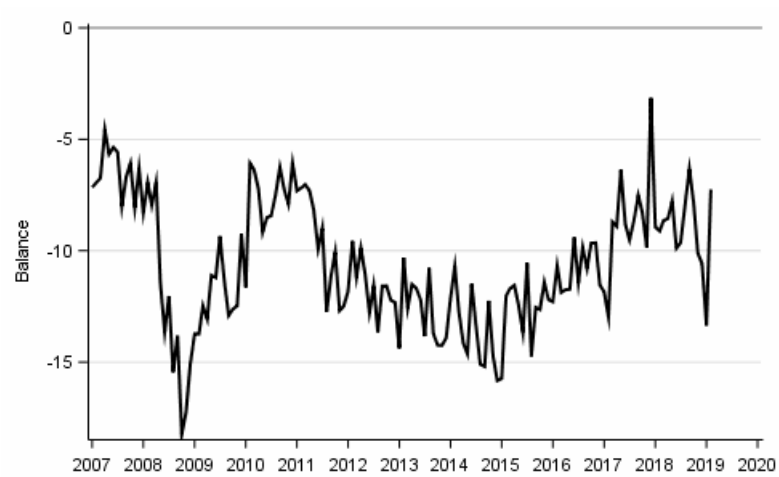
Appendix figure 8. Household's financial situation and saving possibilities



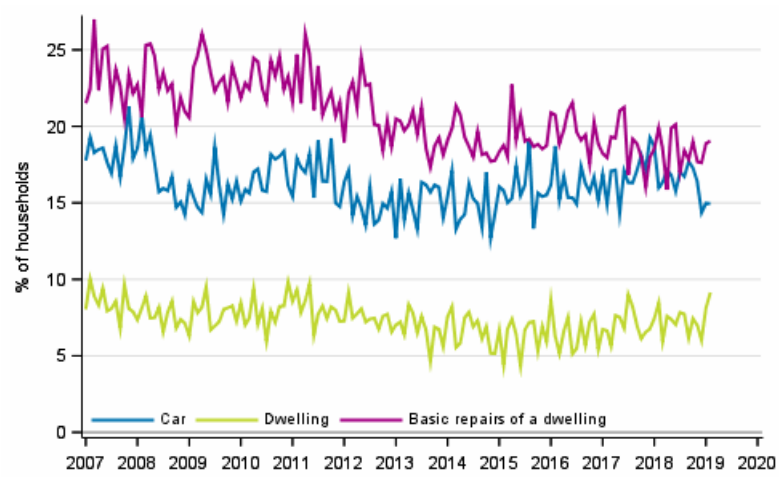
Appendix figure 9. Household's intentions to raise a loan, next 12 months



Appendix figure10. Spending on durables, next 12 months vs last 12 months



Appendix figure 11. Household's intentions to buy, next 12 months



Inquiries

Pertti Kangassalo 029 551 3598

Tuomas Parikka 029 551 3276

Director in charge:

Jari Tarkoma

consumer.survey@stat.fi

www.stat.fi

Source: Consumer Survey 2019, February. Statistics Finland