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Announcement plan of reorganisation at Hollandse Dagbladcombinatie B.V.

The Managing Board of Hollandse Dagbladcombinatie B.V. (HDC), a subsidiary of N.V. Holdingmaatschappij De Telegraaf, has presented a plan for the reorganisation of its publishing companies. Under the plan, HDC will cease publication of Dagblad van Almere and door-to-door paper Goois Weekblad as soon as possible. Furthermore, the two publishers in Alkmaar and Haarlem, which publish daily and weekly newspapers in North and South Holland, will be merged.

With the reorganisation HDC aims to cut approximately 180 jobs, half of which editorial, so as to boost profitability to an acceptable level. HDC is consulting with the unions about a social plan. The reorganisation is necessary because the profitability of publishers has dropped sharply during the last few years as a result of stagnating turnover amid rising (wage) costs.

Dagblad van Almere, a De Gooi- en Eemlander publication (circulation approximately 3,400) will be taken off the market because it has suffered losses for many years and research has shown that a paid regional newspaper has no future in Almere. Door-to-door newspaper Goois Weekblad (circulation over 125,000), too, has been structurally loss-making. HDC aims to cease publication of these titles on 1 January 2003.

All commercial and support services of the publishers in Haarlem and Alkmaar will be merged as soon as possible. Room for further job cuts can be made through closer collaboration between the editorial boards of both publishers.

Simultaneous with the reorganisation plan, the Board announced that it intends to launch new publications, both on paper and digital, in its catchment area, in order to boost its market share.

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HDC has a staff of approximately 1,200, of whom 1,000 work at the publishing companies and 200 at the printing plants. The company is the publisher of daily newspapers Noordhollands Dagblad, Haarlems Dagblad, IJmuider Courant, Leidsch Dagblad, De Gooi- en Eemlander and Dagblad van Almere and door-to-door papers Noordhollands Weekblad, Goois Weekblad and 't Groene Weekblad. It also operates a number of Internet sites.

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