

Chemicals Trends Report

Monthly summary, February 2013



Contact information:

Press: James Pieper, Media Relations, Cefic, +32 491 27 43 61, jpi@cefic.be
Report details: Dr Moncef Hadhri, Chief Economist, Cefic, +32 2 676 72 82, mha@cefic.be
Cefic membership: Dr. Fabrice Tabankia, Cefic, Business Development, +32 2 676 72 95, fta@cefic.be

EU chemicals sector output down 1.5 per cent for 2012

Full-year figure slightly better than Cefic forecast due to stronger-than-expected fourth quarter

BRUSSELS, February 28, 2013 – EU chemicals production contracted by 1.5 per cent in 2012 compared with 2011, according to the latest Cefic Chemicals Trends Report. The full-year figure was slightly better than the 2.0 per cent decline Cefic had predicted in its December 2012 forecast, due to above-zero output growth in the fourth quarter. Monthly data for December 2012 show a 1.2 per cent increase compared with the same month in 2011. EU chemicals production levels remain, however, 6.2 per cent below the 2007 peak.

Trade data available through November 2012 show a €45.9 billion EU chemicals net trade surplus, €9.4 billion beyond the level seen during the same period the year prior. EU chemicals prices in December climbed by 3.0 per cent compared with the same period the year prior. The full-year overall price level for chemicals rose by 2.7 per cent compared with 2011. Overall chemicals industry confidence indicators deteriorated slightly in January, mainly due to lower order-book assessments.

December output edges up

The EU chemicals production index for December was up 1.2 per cent compared with December the year prior [see graph]. It marked the third consecutive month of above-zero index readings. Petrochemicals jumped 3.4 per cent year-on-year in December. Consumer chemicals and polymers output rose by 2.6 and 2.4 per cent respectively in December compared with the year prior. Basic inorganics production fell in December by 2 per cent year on year. Specialty chemicals output was down slightly, shrinking 0.2 per cent during the month as compared with the previous year.

2012 prices climb by 2.7 per cent,

December monthly prices up 3.0 per cent

Prices for EU chemicals were 2.7 per cent higher during 2012 compared with the previous year. Prices for petrochemicals and consumer chemicals rose on a year-on-year basis in 2012 by 1.4 and 1.3 per cent respectively. Basic inorganics registered in 2012 the highest price increase compared to 2011, up 3.2 per cent. Year-on-year EU chemicals prices rose in December by 3.0 per cent compared to the same month the year prior.

EU trade surplus expands further in November

Trade data available through November show a €45.9 billion year-to-date EU chemicals net trade surplus with other markets, up €9.4 billion compared with same 11-month period the year prior. The EU net trade surplus with the NAFTA region contributed significantly to the jump in the January-to-November overall surplus, reaching €10.7 billion, 27 per cent higher than in January-November 2011. The EU net trade surplus with non-EU Europe, which includes Russia and Turkey, reached €14.4 billion during the 11-month period, up €2.9 billion compared with the same period the previous year. A slight downtick occurred in the trade surplus with Asia, excluding Japan and China, edging up by €0.4 billion to €4.6 billion.

January-to-November EU sales surpass 2008 pre-crisis period

EU chemicals sales during the first eleven months of 2012 were 4.7 per cent higher than the pre-crisis, full-year peak level reached in 2008. November sales were 2.7 per cent higher compared with November the year prior. Sales for the first-eleven months of 2012 were 1.0 per cent below the comparable period in 2011.

EU chemicals confidence indicator weakens in January

The EU chemical industry confidence indicator (CCI) remained low in January. The CCI, generated by Cefic, showed a slight decline compared with the month prior. Based on data from the European Commission business and consumer survey report published in January, CCI underlying data point to worsening in assessment of order-book levels relating to the EU sector.

Notes to editor:

About the Chemicals Trends Report: The Cefic Chemicals Trends report provides a snapshot of the chemical industry performance in the 27 countries in the European Union and is based on available data released by Eurostat. Issued monthly, the two-page summary report distils Eurostat data into four areas: chemicals production, trade, prices and total sales.

About Cefic: Cefic, the European Chemical Industry Council, is the Brussels-based organisation representing the European chemical industry. Created in 1972, it represents 29,000 companies that produce a fifth of the world's chemicals and employ 1.2 million people. Learn more about Cefic at www.cefic.org.

