



## Chemicals Trends Report

Monthly Summary, April 2013

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### EU chemicals sector output contracts 1.7 per cent during first two months of 2013

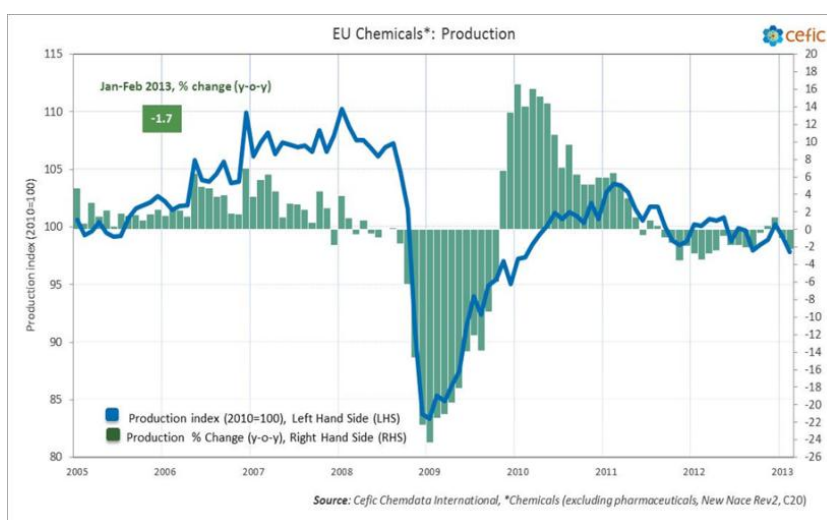
*Industry confidence indicator shows third straight decline in April*

BRUSSELS, May 16, 2013 – EU chemicals production dropped 1.7 per cent in the first two months of 2013, according to the latest Cefic Chemicals Trends Report. Monthly data for February showed a 2.3 per cent drop compared with February the year prior. The EU chemicals production level for the first two months of the year remains 8.1 per cent below the peak in 2007, data show. Monthly data for February show prices for chemicals in the European Union climbed on a year-on-year basis in February, up 1.1 per cent.

The overall EU chemicals industry confidence indicator continued to deteriorate in April, the third straight month of decline, mainly due to lower order-book assessments. Recently published data show sales were slightly lower in January 2013 compared with January 2012, but stood 3.5 per cent higher than the pre-crisis, full-year peak level reached in 2008. The EU chemicals industry capacity utilisation level, compiled by Cefic and based on Eurostat data, nudged downward to 78.3 per cent in the first quarter from 78.8 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2012. Latest data show the EU chemicals sector employment level for 2012 was 0.1 per cent lower compared with 2011.

#### February output edges down

Monthly data for February 2013 showed a 2.3 per cent decline compared with February the year prior. The EU chemicals production index for February was dragged down by specialty chemicals, which dropped 4.2 per cent year-on-year during the month. Lower overall production was also affected by petrochemicals, down 1.5 per cent in February compared with February 2012. Basic inorganics and consumer chemicals production decreased 1.2 per cent and 1.1 per cent respectively on a year-on-year basis in February. Polymers output registered no significant changes.



#### Prices for plastics climb 3.0 per cent in February

Year-on-year EU chemicals prices rose by 1.1 per cent in February, driven by the price for plastics, which increased by 3.0 per cent in February as compared with the year prior. Prices climbed for consumer chemicals by 1.2 per cent, while pharmaceuticals prices edged down by 0.1 per cent in February as compared with the year prior. EU chemicals producer prices recorded a 1.8 per cent upward bump in the first two months of the year compared to the same two-month period in 2012.

#### EU sales in January 2013 up 3.5 per cent from 2008 pre-crisis period

January 2013 EU chemicals sales were 1.4 per cent lower compared with January the year prior. For the whole year 2012, total sales were 0.1 per cent lower as compared with 2011. Compared to full-year 2008 sales levels, the total value of sales was up 3.5 per cent in January.

#### EU employment in Q4-2012 down 0.5 per cent compared to Q3-2012

Employment for the whole year 2012 was 0.1 per cent lower compared the 12-month figure for 2011. Fourth quarter EU chemicals sector employment levels fell slightly to 1.15 million in 2012, a decline of 0.5 per cent compared to the third quarter of the same year. Employment in the fourth quarter of 2012, based on latest data available, was 8.2 per cent below the pre-crisis level in first quarter 2008.

#### EU chemicals confidence indicator weakens in April

The EU chemical industry confidence indicator (CCI), generated by Cefic, declined in April by 3.5 per cent compared with an already negative reading the month prior. The average of production expectation for the three following months, current overall order books and current stock of finished products, the CCI worsened for the third consecutive month. CCI underlying data point to a worsening in assessment of order-book levels.

#### 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 one-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](http://www.cefic.org).