

# Chemicals Trends Report

Monthly summary, May 2013



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### First quarter EU chemicals sector slides 2.1 per cent

*March monthly production below March 2012 level, but up slightly from February level*

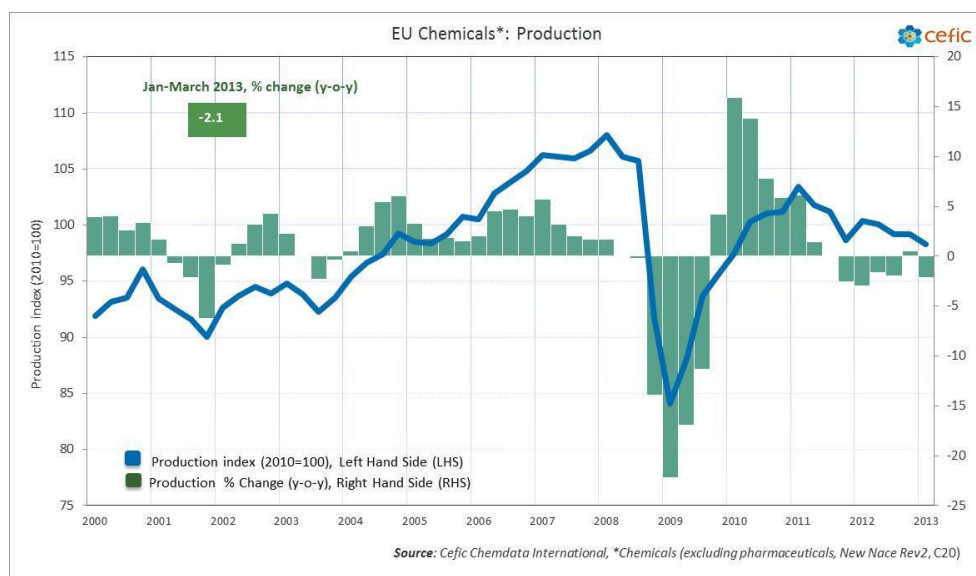
BRUSSELS, May 31, 2013 – EU chemicals production contracted 2.1 per cent in first quarter 2013 compared with the same period in 2012, according to the latest Cefic Chemicals Trends Report. Monthly production data for March showed a 2.8 per cent drop compared with the same month the year prior. March data also showed that production improved slightly from February. Prices for chemicals in the European Union increased on a year-on-year basis in March 2013, up 0.5 per cent during the month against the comparable month in 2012.

Latest trade data show the EU chemicals trade net trade surplus improved through the first two months of the year, reaching €7.8 billion – a €0.2 billion upward bump compared with the same period of last year. Data show sales were lower in January-February 2013 by 2.3 per cent compared with the first two months of 2012, but stood 3.2 per cent higher than the pre-crisis, full-year peak level reached in 2008.

### March output edges down

Basic inorganics was the main drag on the year-on-year fall in output for March (see chart at right), declining 6.1 per cent year-on-year during the month.

Lower overall monthly production was also affected by lower output in petrochemicals, which was down 3.4 per cent. Polymers and consumer chemicals production decreased 1.6 per cent and 1.0 per cent respectively on a year-on-year basis.



### Prices for plastics climb in first quarter

Year-on-year EU chemicals prices rose by 0.5 per cent in March, compared with the year-prior figure. Consumer chemicals prices edged up 1.6 per cent, while pharmaceuticals prices were down slightly by 0.1 per cent as compared with March 2012. EU chemicals producer prices recorded a 1.4 per cent increase in the first three months of 2013 compared to the first three months of last year.

### EU sales in January-February 2013 up 3.2 per cent from 2008 pre-crisis period

February 2013 EU chemicals sales were 2.8 per cent lower compared with February the year prior, but for the whole year 2012, total sales were 0.1 per cent lower as compared with 2011. The total value of sales in January-February 2013 was 3.2 per cent higher than the full-year, pre-crisis sales levels reached in 2008.

### EU trade surplus improves slightly through February

February 2013 trade data indicate a €7.8 billion overall EU chemicals net trade surplus for the first two months of the year. An EU net trade surplus with non-EU Europe contributed greatly to the additional surplus generated in January-February, reaching €2.5 billion, up €0.4 billion compared with January-February 2012. A €1.2 billion surplus occurred during that time with Asia, excluding Japan and China – up €0.2 billion compared with the same two-month period the year prior. A €1.7 billion EU net trade surplus with the NAFTA region for the same period was €0.2 billion lower, however, compared with January-February the previous year. The EU net trade surplus with China whittled down to €0.2 billion in January-February 2013 from €0.3 billion from the same period the previous year.

### 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).