



A CEFIC PUBLICATION

# Iris.

Monthly Chemical Trends

EDITION

# December 2025

Published 2026-05-07

Reference month: December 2025

Data: Eurostat, Comext. © 2026 Cefic, European Chemical Industry Council.

## ABOUT

# A Cefic publication on the European chemical industry

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Cefic, the European Chemical Industry Council, is the forum for large, medium, and small chemical companies across Europe, accounting for 1.2 million jobs and 13% of world chemical production. On behalf of its members, Cefic's experts share industry insights and trends, and offer input and perspectives on the EU agenda. Cefic also provides its members with services such as guidance and training on regulatory and technical matters, while contributing to the advancement of scientific knowledge.

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## GENERAL ENQUIRIES

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**Iris.** The Iris monthly report distils Eurostat data into a snapshot of the EU27 chemical industry: business confidence, output, prices, sales, extra-EU trade, capacity utilisation, and partner / product concentration. Issued monthly, the report follows the same descriptive register as the quarterly Chemical Trends Report.

## SUMMARY

# EU27 chemical industry closed 2025 with nominal export value gains masking a 3% volume contraction

December 2025 edition, published 2026-05-07

- EU27 chemical output edged up 0.9% year-on-year in December 2025 to an index of 80.5, against a weak December 2024 reference. The sector remains 16.8% below the 2014-2019 pre-crisis average, with no recovery visible since the March 2022 step down. Poland alone has gained ground over the period.
- Chemical export value rose 11.2% over 2025 to 288.92 bn€, but the gain reflects higher unit prices rather than activity: volumes fell 3.0% over the same window. Imports grew 6.6% to 230.65 bn€, outpacing export value growth and compressing the trade balance to 1.09 bn€, down 3.3 bn€ from 2024.
- Producer prices declined 1.3% year-on-year in December, with the Netherlands posting the steepest fall at 5.2% and Italy the only major producer recording a price gain at 0.5%. Chemical sales fell 5.7% over the year, underperforming the broader manufacturing sector across every quarter.
- The headline value-side picture is one of stable nominal aggregates masking weaker real activity. The 2025 outturn underscores three structural pressures the sector has carried since 2022: subdued domestic demand, a stalled production index, and an eroding trade surplus. The January 2026 reading will provide the first base-effect-free comparison.

Chemical output

**80.5**

+0.9% YoY

Trade balance

**1.09 bn€**

-3.30 bn€ YoY

Producer prices

**116.6**

-1.3% YoY

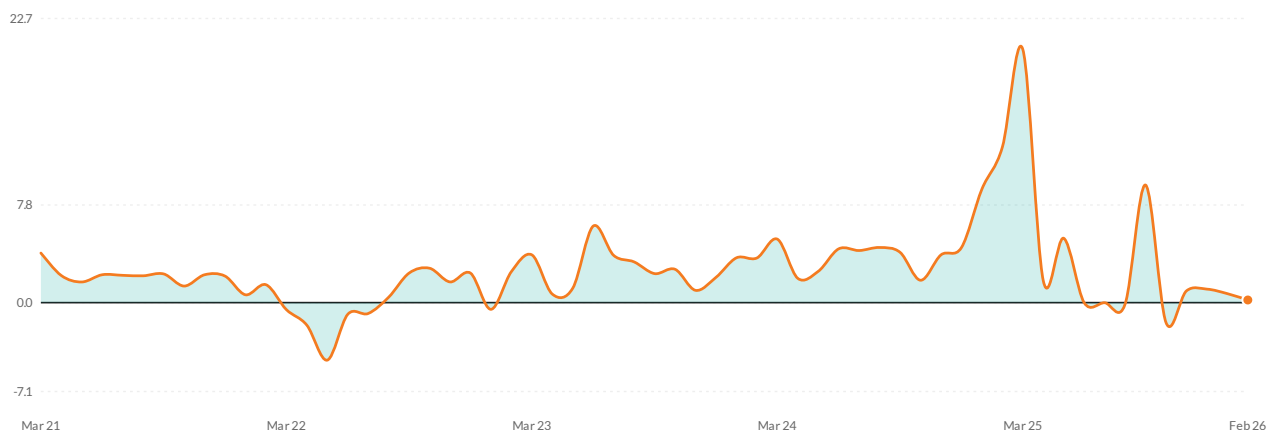
Source: Cefic analysis based on Eurostat data (2025). The in-depth sections that follow detail each indicator with its chart and analytical commentary.

# EU27 chemical export value rises 11% in 2025, driven by unit-value gains despite volume contraction

Published 2026-05-07

<p>CHEMICAL OUTPUT</p> <p><b>80.5</b></p> <p>+0.9% YoY</p> <p>index 2021=100</p>	<p>TRADE BALANCE</p> <p><b>1.09 bn€</b></p> <p>-3.30 bn€ YoY</p>	<p>PRODUCER PRICES</p> <p><b>116.6</b></p> <p>-1.3% YoY</p> <p>index 2021=100</p>
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EU27 chemical trade balance, 60-month context.



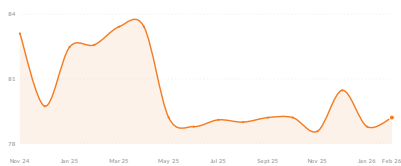
## Key takeaway

The EU27 chemical industry posted mixed performance in 2025, with export value rising 11.2% to 288.92 bn€ despite a 3.0% volume decline, reflecting higher unit prices rather than increased demand. Chemical output edged up 0.9% to reach an index level of 80.5 in December 2025, yet remains 16.8% below pre-crisis levels (2014-2019 average), underscoring persistent structural challenges since March 2022. The trade balance narrowed to 1.09 bn€, down 3.3 bn€ from 2024, as import growth of 6.6% to 230.65 bn€ outpaced the value gains in exports. Producer prices declined 1.3% year-on-year to 116.6, with the Netherlands experiencing the steepest decrease at 5.2%, while Italy was the only major economy to record a price increase at 0.5%.

# EU27 chemical output edges up 0.9% in December 2025, remaining 17% below pre-crisis levels

Production, prices, sales

Output index, EU27 chemicals (2021=100)



79.3

-4.5% since Nov 24

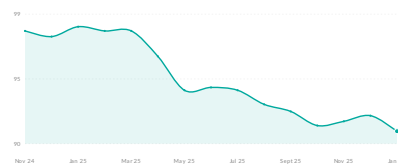
Producer prices, EU27 chemicals (2021=100)



117.2

-0.9% since Nov 24

Chemical sales, EU27 (2021=100)



90.8

-7.3% since Nov 24

## Sector context

### EU27 CHEMICAL OUTPUT EDGES UP 0.9% IN DECEMBER 2025, REMAINING 17% BELOW PRE-CRISIS LEVELS

EU27 chemical output reached an index level of 80.5 in December 2025, up 0.9% compared to December 2024. For the full year 2025, chemical output averaged 80.5, down 1.1% compared to 2024. The sector remains 16.8% below pre-crisis levels (2014-2019 average), underscoring the persistent structural challenges facing European chemical production since March 2022.

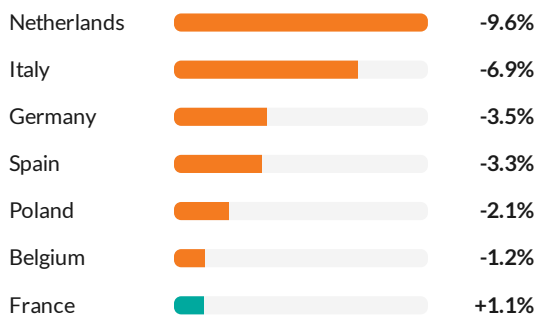
### EU27 CHEMICAL PRICES DECLINE 1.3% YOY IN DECEMBER 2025

EU27 chemical producer prices decreased by 1.3% in December 2025 compared to December 2024, reaching an index level of 116.6. For the full year 2025, chemical prices averaged 118.0, down 0.2% from the 2024 average of 118.2. Chemical prices underperformed total manufacturing, which posted a 0.2% increase in December 2025.

### EU27 CHEMICAL SALES FALL 5.7% IN 2025, UNDERPERFORMING TOTAL MANUFACTURING

EU27 chemical sales declined by 5.7% in 2025, with the turnover index reaching 91.9 (2021=100) in December. Chemical sales underperformed total manufacturing, which grew by 2.1% to 118.8, leaving the sector 26.9 index points below the broader industrial average.

## Country output, YoY



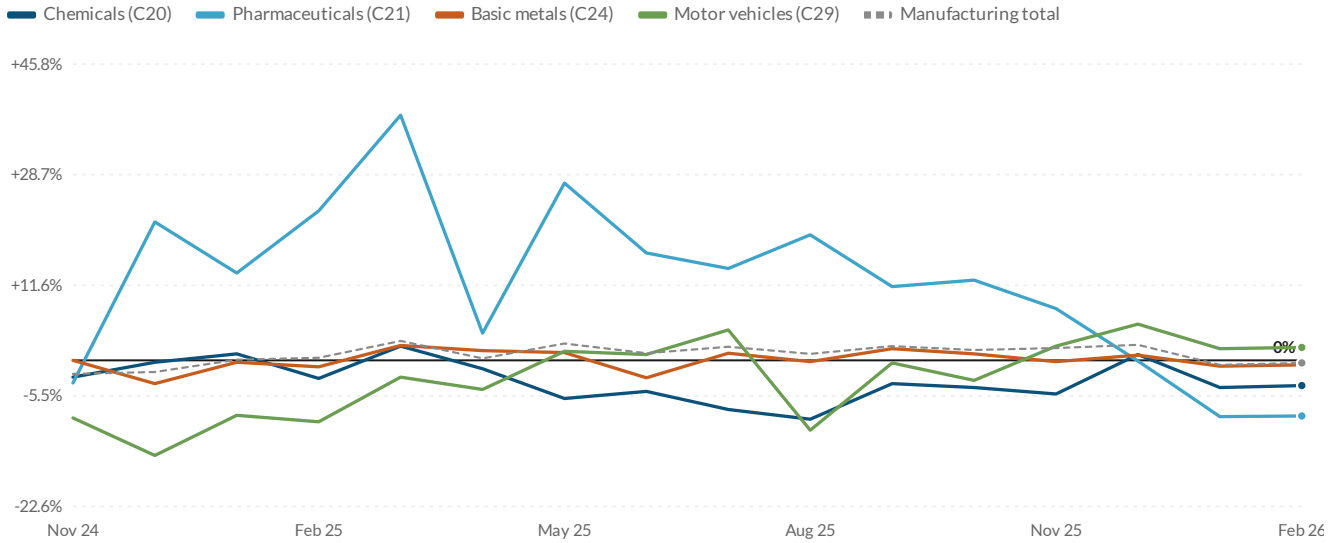
TIME SERIES

# Chemicals versus peers — 16 months

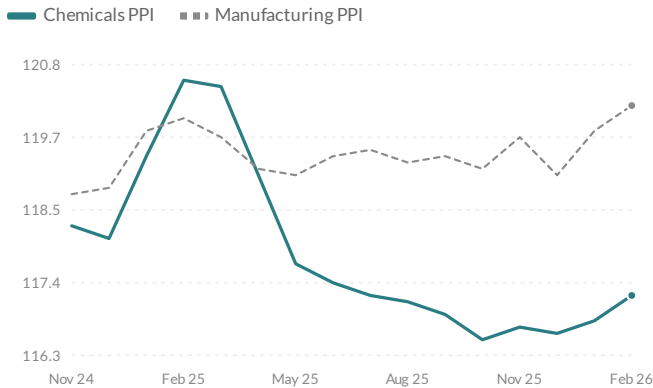
NACE C / C20 / C21 / C24 / C29 · EU27, I21, SCA where available

Over the past 16 months, EU27 chemical production has trailed total manufacturing and motor vehicles, both running near or above the 2021 baseline, while pharmaceuticals stayed well above it before rolling over from late 2025.

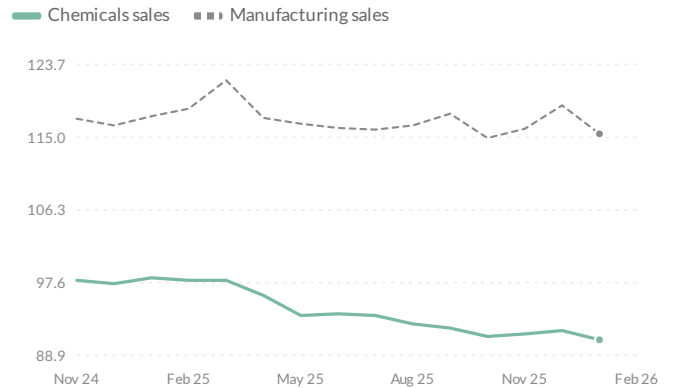
Industrial production · YoY % change · NACE C / C20 / C21 / C24 / C29



Producer prices · chemicals vs manufacturing



Sales index · chemicals vs manufacturing



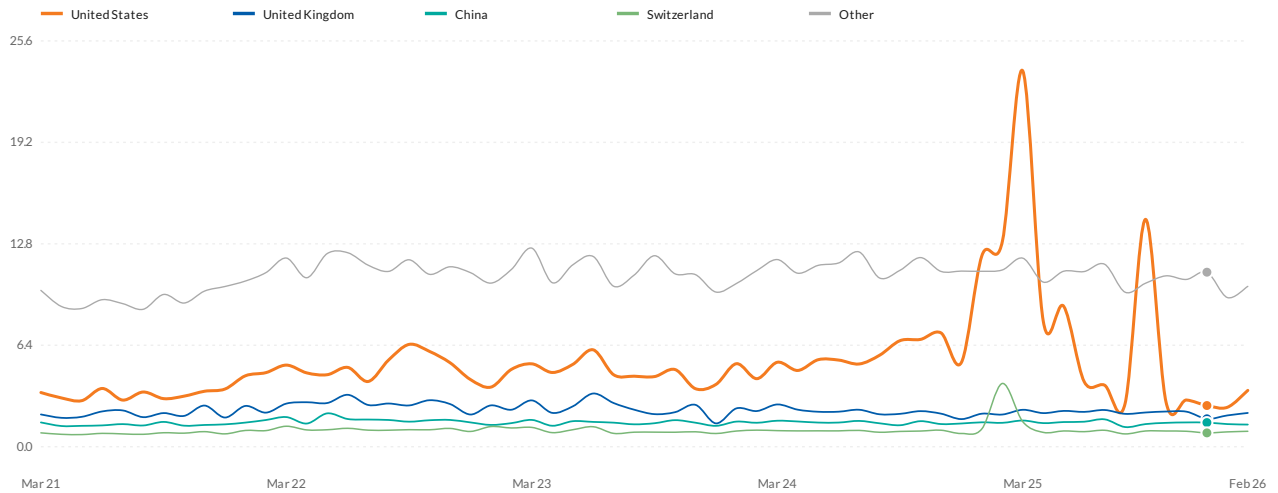
Eurostat sts\_inpr\_m + sts\_inppd\_m + sts\_intv\_m, NACE C / C20 / C21 / C24 / C29, EU27, I21, SCA where available.

DRILL-DOWN

# EU27 chemical export value rises 11% in 2025, driven by unit-value gains despite volume contraction

United States · China · United Kingdom

EU27 chemical exports by partner, 60-month context.



**United States** US

**2.60 bn€**

**-51.1%** (-2.72 bn€)

14.6% of total exports

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Basic pharmaceutical products	0.52 bn€
Other organic basic chemicals	0.44 bn€
Perfumes and toilet preparations	0.43 bn€

**China** CN

**1.52 bn€**

**+4.0%** (+0.05 bn€)

8.6% of total exports

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Other chemical products	0.41 bn€
Perfumes and toilet preparations	0.28 bn€
Plastics in primary forms	0.26 bn€

**United Kingdom** GB

**1.78 bn€**

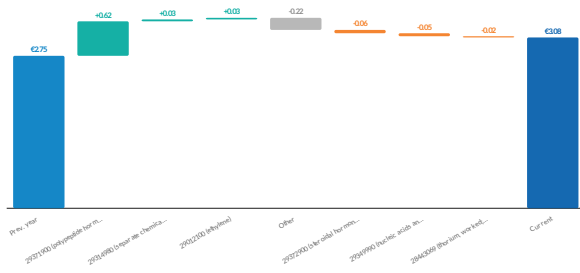
**+2.0%** (+0.04 bn€)

10.0% of total exports

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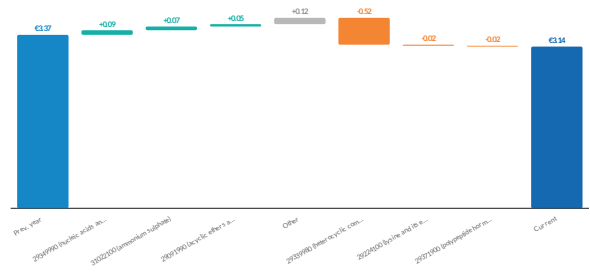
Perfumes and toilet preparations	0.35 bn€
Other chemical products	0.33 bn€
Plastics in primary forms	0.21 bn€

**Imports from United States, CN 8-digit contributions to the year-on-year change.**



Net change: **+0.33 bn€** (12.0% YoY)

**Imports from China, CN 8-digit contributions to the year-on-year change.**



Net change: **-0.23 bn€** (-6.8% YoY)

## Trade context

### EU27 CHEMICAL EXPORT VALUE RISES 11% IN 2025, DRIVEN BY UNIT-VALUE GAINS DESPITE VOLUME CONTRACTION

EU27 chemical exports increased by 11.2% in value in 2025 compared to 2024. Exports amounted to 288.92 bn€ in 2025, up from 259.83 bn€ in 2024.

This figure reflects a pronounced divergence between value and volume trends, driven by unit-value gains and product-mix shifts. EU27 chemical exports rose by 11.2% in value and fell by 3.0% in volume in 2025, indicating higher average unit prices rather than increased demand. The movement is concentrated in a narrow set of bilateral flows, with 82.6% of the absolute variation explained by 2 partners: the United States (-2.72 bn€) and South Korea (+0.46 bn€).

With 3.78 bn€, essential oils and resinoids is the largest export chapter, followed by miscellaneous chemical products (3.05 bn€) and organic chemicals (2.99 bn€). Organic chemicals posted the steepest decline at 32.0%, followed by inorganic chemicals (31.1%) and mineral fuels (42.0%). Pharmaceuticals gained 19.2%, while fertilisers climbed 21.8%.

Exports to the United States decreased by 2.72 bn€ (51.1%), driven by basic pharmaceutical products (0.52 bn€) and other organic basic chemicals (0.44 bn€). Exports to the United Kingdom increased by 0.04 bn€ (2.0%), led by perfumes and toilet preparations (0.35 bn€, 19.7% of the total). Exports to China rose by 0.05 bn€ (4.0%), with other chemical products accounting for 0.41 bn€ (26.7% of the total).

### EU27 CHEMICAL IMPORT VALUE RISES 7% YOY IN 2025, DRIVEN BY FERTILISERS AND PHARMACEUTICALS

From January to December 2025, EU27 chemical imports increased by 6.6% in value in comparison to the same period in 2024. EU27 chemical imports amounted to 230.65 bn€ in 2025, up by 14.36 bn€ compared to 2024. EU27 chemical imports rose by 12.5% in volume and 6.6% in value between January and December 2025, reflecting a shift toward lower-value categories.

With 3.14 bn€, China is the primary source of imports of the EU27 area for chemicals, followed by the United States (3.08 bn€) and Switzerland (1.69 bn€).

Imports from China decreased by 6.8%, driven by other organic basic chemicals (1.1 bn€, 35% of the total) and basic pharmaceutical products (0.78 bn€, 25% of the total). Imports from the United States increased by 12.1%, driven by basic pharmaceutical products (1.12 bn€, 36% of the total) and other organic basic chemicals (0.57 bn€, 18% of the total). 5 CN 8-digit products explain 55% of the change in US imports between 2020 and 2025: 29371900 (polypeptide hormones), +0.914 bn€; 38221900 (diagnostic or laboratory reagents), +0.264 bn€; 29371200 (insulin and its salts), -0.083 bn€; 30024900 (toxins, cultures of micro-organisms), +0.065 bn€; 30019091 (heparin and its salts), -0.039 bn€. Imports from the United Kingdom decreased by 10.4%, driven by other organic basic chemicals (0.26 bn€, 20% of the total) and other chemical products (0.22 bn€, 17% of the total).

Fertilisers posted the largest increase at 271%, followed by nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances (279%) and animal or vegetable fats and oils and their cleavage products (62%). Organic chemicals, the largest import category, declined by 4.5%.

## How this edition was built

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**Data source.** Eurostat Short-Term Business Statistics (production, prices, turnover), seasonally adjusted where available. Trade flows from Comext (EU27 external trade), extra-EU only, declarant=EU, flow exports=2 and imports=1.

**Scope.** NACE C20 chemicals for industrial indicators; Comext chapters 28-39 filtered by the Cefic chemistry product map for trade.

**Window conventions.** YoY (year-on-year), YTD (year-to-date, first N months of the current year vs the same window of the prior year), pre-crisis baseline averages 2014-2019. Index base: 2021=100 unless otherwise stated.

**Anomalies.** When the comparison base is distorted (Z-score above  $2\sigma$  against the 12-month rolling mean, or bilateral concentration above 75% of the absolute variation), the section carries an explicit base-effect caveat.

**Publication.** Iris is a monthly Cefic publication. Past editions and full methodology at [iris.cefic.org](https://iris.cefic.org).