



A CEFIC PUBLICATION

# Iris.

Monthly Chemical Trends

EDITION

# March 2026

Published 2026-05-13

Reference month: March 2026

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 output falls 5% YoY in March 2026, remaining 17% below pre-crisis levels

March 2026 edition, published 2026-05-13

The EU27 chemical industry continued its contraction in March 2026, with output declining 5.0% year-on-year to an index of 79.9 (2021=100), marking the sector's persistent underperformance against total manufacturing, which fell only 1.6%. Over the first three months of 2026, chemical output averaged 79.3, down 1.5% from 2025, while remaining 17.4% below pre-crisis levels (2014-2019 average). Producer prices edged down 0.3% to 120.1, though this decline reflects an anomalous March 2025 base when prices spiked 2.0 standard deviations above trend. Country performance remained fragmented, with Spain leading growth at 6.1% while Italy posted the steepest decline at 8.7%. Sales data through February showed a sharper 5.6% contraction, with the Netherlands experiencing the most severe drop at 16.1%.

Chemical output

**79.9**

-5.0% YoY

Producer prices

**120.1**

-0.3% YoY

Source: Cefic analysis based on Eurostat data (2026). The in-depth sections that follow detail each indicator with its chart and analytical commentary.

# EU27 chemical output falls 5% YoY in March 2026, remaining 17% below pre-crisis levels

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## CHEMICAL OUTPUT

79.9

-5.0% YoY

index 2021=100

## PRODUCER PRICES

120.1

-0.3% YoY

index 2021=100

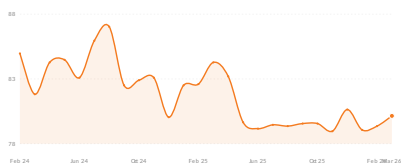
### Key takeaway

The EU27 chemical industry continued its contraction in March 2026, with output declining 5.0% year-on-year to an index of 79.9 (2021=100), marking the sector's persistent underperformance against total manufacturing, which fell only 1.6%. Over the first three months of 2026, chemical output averaged 79.3, down 1.5% from 2025, while remaining 17.4% below pre-crisis levels (2014-2019 average). Producer prices edged down 0.3% to 120.1, though this decline reflects an anomalous March 2025 base when prices spiked 2.0 standard deviations above trend. Country performance remained fragmented, with Spain leading growth at 6.1% while Italy posted the steepest decline at 8.7%. Sales data through February showed a sharper 5.6% contraction, with the Netherlands experiencing the most severe drop at 16.1%.

# EU27 chemical output falls 5% YoY in March 2026, remaining 17% below pre-crisis levels

Production, prices, sales

Output index, EU27 chemicals (2021=100)



79.9

-5.8% since Feb 24

Producer prices, EU27 chemicals (2021=100)



120.1

+1.6% since Feb 24

Chemical sales, EU27 (2021=100)



92.1

-7.6% since Feb 24

## Sector context

### EU27 CHEMICAL OUTPUT FALLS 5% YOY IN MARCH 2026, REMAINING 17% BELOW PRE-CRISIS LEVELS

EU27 chemical output declined by 5.0% in March 2026 compared to March 2025, with the production index reaching 79.9 (2021=100). The sector remains 17.4% below pre-crisis levels (2014-2019 average). In the first three months of 2026, chemical output averaged 79.3, down 1.5% compared to the same period in 2025.

### EU27 CHEMICAL PRICES EDGE DOWN 0.3% YOY IN MARCH 2026, DISTORTED BY ELEVATED 2025 BASE

EU27 chemical producer prices stood at 120.1 (index 2021=100) in March 2026, down 0.3% compared to March 2025. In the first three months of 2026, chemical prices averaged 118.0, unchanged from the same period in 2025.

### EU27 CHEMICAL SALES FALL 5.6% YOY IN FEBRUARY 2026

EU27 chemical sales declined by 5.6% in February 2026 compared to February 2025, with the index reaching 92.1 (2021=100). The sector underperformed total manufacturing, which fell by 2.0% over the same period.

## Country output, YoY

Netherlands	<div style="width: 9.6%;"></div>	-9.6%
Italy	<div style="width: 6.9%;"></div>	-6.9%
Germany	<div style="width: 3.5%;"></div>	-3.5%
Spain	<div style="width: 3.3%;"></div>	-3.3%
Poland	<div style="width: 2.1%;"></div>	-2.1%
Belgium	<div style="width: 1.2%;"></div>	-1.2%
France	<div style="width: 1.1%;"></div>	+1.1%

DRILL-DOWN

# Drill-down, March 2026

United States · China · United Kingdom

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## 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).