



A CEFIC PUBLICATION

Iris.

Monthly Chemical Trends

EDITION

April 2026

Published 2026-07-02

Reference month: April 2026

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

ABOUT

A Cefic publication on the European chemical industry

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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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 sits 16% below pre-crisis levels in April 2026 as producer prices jump 6.7%

April 2026 edition, published 2026-07-02

- EU27 chemical output stood at 81.2 in April 2026 (index 2021=100), down 1.6% year-on-year and 16% below the 2014-2019 pre-crisis average. Spain led country gains at 4.6% while the Netherlands fell 4.3% and Germany, the largest producer, declined 1.5%.
- Producer prices rose 6.7% year-on-year to 127.1 in April, the sharpest acceleration since March 2022. With volumes still falling, the increase reads as cost pass-through rather than recovering demand.
- Chemical turnover fell 1.3% year-on-year in March 2026 to an index of 96.0, weighed down by a 40.2% drop in pharmaceuticals; only Spain and Poland gained ground among the seven countries tracked.
- The structural constraints remain in place: capacity utilisation ran at 78.0% in the second quarter, 2.2 pp below its long-run average, industrial confidence held at -7.5 with order books at -19.2, and EU industrial gas prices ran at roughly 3.4 times delivered US levels.

Chemical output

81.2

-1.6% YoY

Trade balance

1.28 bn€

-0.49 bn€ YoY

Producer prices

127.1

+6.7% YoY

Capacity utilisation

78.0%

+0.2pp YoY

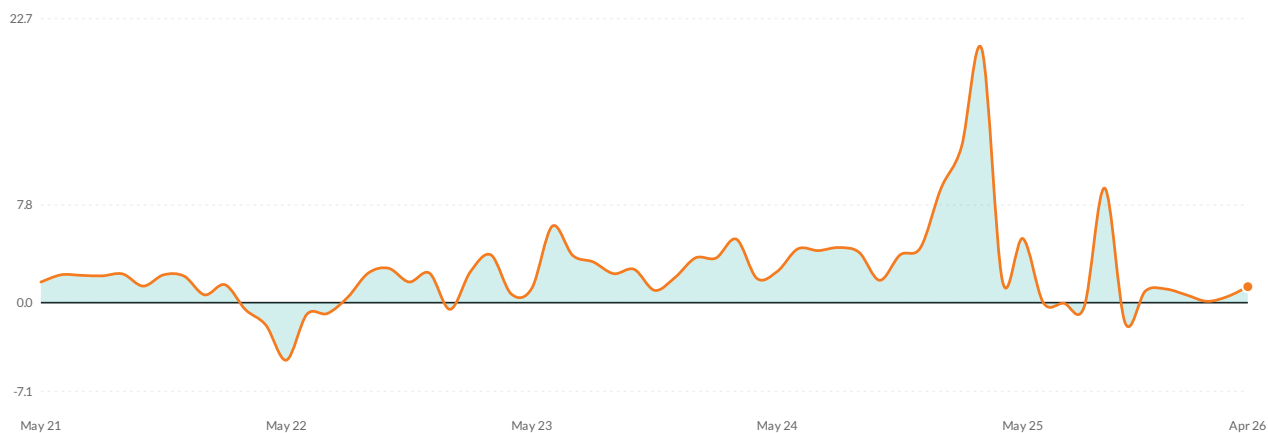
Source: Cefic analysis based on Eurostat data (2026). The in-depth sections that follow detail each indicator with its chart and analytical commentary.

EU27 chemical output sits 16% below pre-crisis levels in April 2026, as prices jump 6.7% YoY

Published 2026-07-02

<p>CHEMICAL OUTPUT</p> <p>81.2</p> <p>-1.6% YoY</p> <p>index 2021=100</p>	<p>TRADE BALANCE</p> <p>1.28 bn€</p> <p>-0.49 bn€ YoY</p>	<p>PRODUCER PRICES</p> <p>127.1</p> <p>+6.7% YoY</p> <p>index 2021=100</p>	<p>CAPACITY UTILISATION</p> <p>78.0%</p> <p>+0.2pp YoY</p> <p>%</p>
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EU27 chemical trade balance, 60-month context.



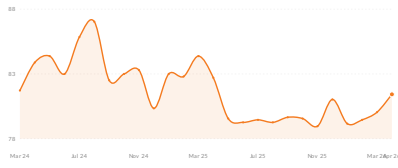
Key takeaway

The EU27 chemical industry remains in fragile stabilisation rather than recovery, with output at 81.2 in April 2026 (index 2021=100), down 1.6% year-on-year and 16% below its pre-crisis benchmark (2014-2019 average). Sentiment stays subdued: industrial confidence held at -7.5 in June 2026, still in contraction territory despite a 0.6 pp improvement, with order books at -19.2. Capacity utilisation ran at 78.0% in the second quarter of 2026, 2.2 pp below its long-run average of 80.2%, pointing to persistent underuse of installed capacity. The structural root sits in energy: EU industrial gas prices ran at roughly 3.4x delivered US levels in the second half of 2025, 48.3 against 14.0 EUR/MWh, a gap that continues to weigh on energy-intensive segments, constraining production and reinforcing relocation pressures. Producer prices rose 6.7% YoY to 127.1, the sharpest monthly acceleration since March 2022, but with volumes still falling this reads as cost pass-through, not demand. Over the past five years, output has not recovered its 2021 base.

EU27 chemical output falls 1.6% YoY in April 2026, remaining 16% below pre-crisis levels

Production, prices, sales

Output index, EU27 chemicals (2021=100)



81.2

-0.4% since Mar 24

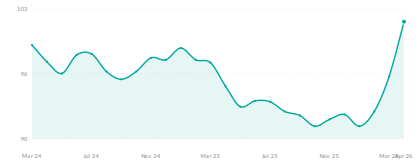
Producer prices, EU27 chemicals (2021=100)



127.1

+6.4% since Mar 24

Chemical sales, EU27 (2021=100)



101.8

+2.4% since Mar 24

Sector context

EU27 CHEMICAL OUTPUT FALLS 1.6% YOY IN APRIL 2026, REMAINING 16% BELOW PRE-CRISIS LEVELS

EU27 chemical production stood at 81.2 in April 2026 (index 2021=100), down 1.6% from 82.5 in April 2025. Over the first four months of 2026, output averaged 79.8 against 80.6 over the same period in 2025, a decline of 1.0%, pointing to a stabilisation rather than a genuine recovery.

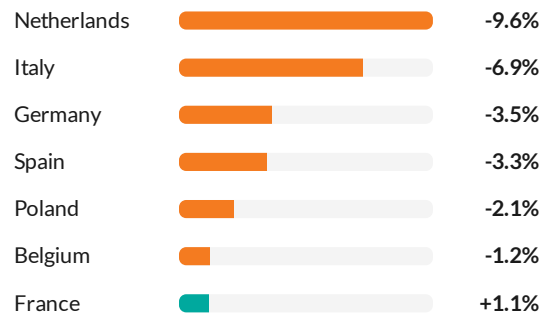
EU27 CHEMICAL PRODUCER PRICES UP 6.7% YOY IN APRIL 2026, SHARPEST MONTHLY ACCELERATION SINCE MARCH 2022

EU27 chemical producer prices reached an index value of 127.1 in April 2026, up 6.7% compared to 119.1 in April 2025. The increase marks a break from the trend observed over the preceding twelve months, when the index had drifted down from 120.6 in February 2025 to 116.6 in December 2025. Over the first four months of 2026, the average index stood at 120.3, up 1.9% against the same period of 2025, a much smaller gain than the April reading alone suggests.

EU27 CHEMICAL TURNOVER DOWN 1.3% YOY IN MARCH 2026, INDEX AT 96.0

EU27 chemical sector turnover stood at 96.0 (index 2021=100) in March 2026, down 1.3% compared to 97.3 in March 2025. Over the first three months of 2026, the turnover index averaged 93.0, down 1.3% against an average of 94.2 in the same period of 2025. This compares with a flat 0.2% increase for total manufacturing turnover over the same window, underscoring the chemical sector's continued underperformance relative to the broader industrial base.

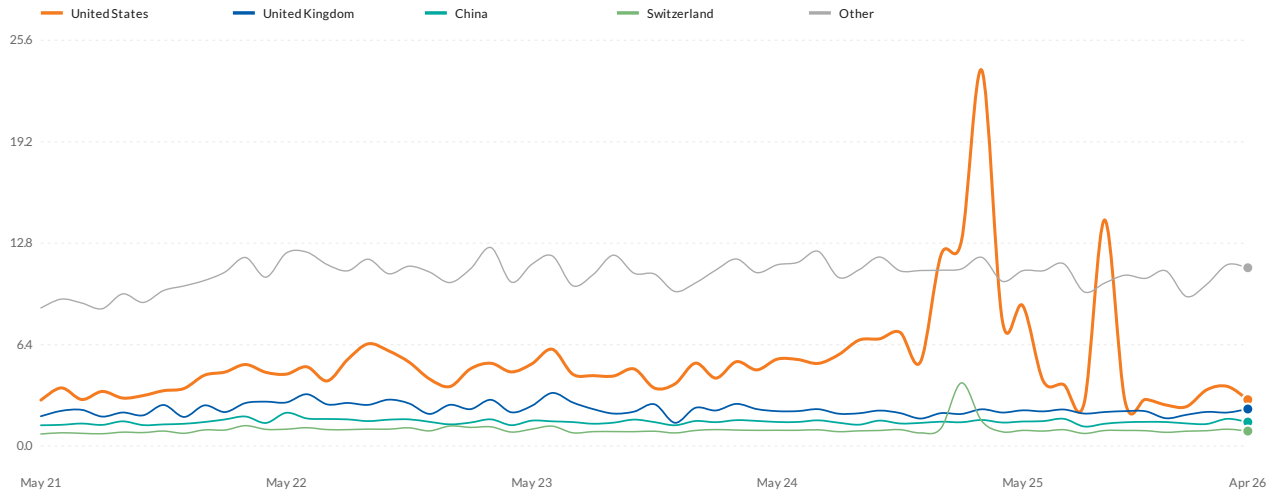
Country output, YoY



Drill-down, April 2026

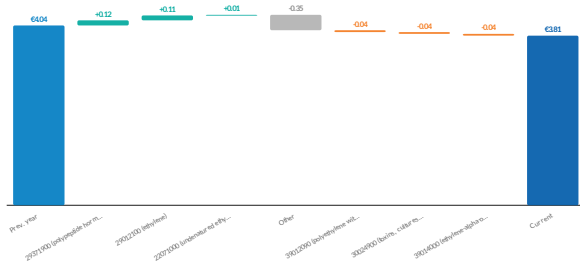
United States · China · United Kingdom

EU27 chemical exports by partner, 60-month context.



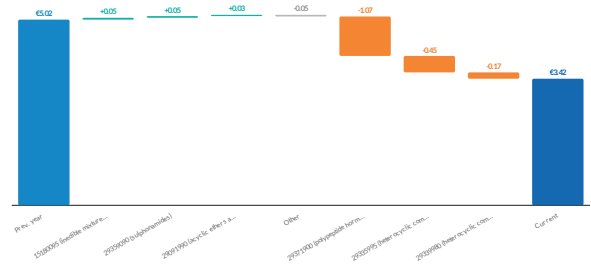
<p>United States US</p> <p>2.93 bn€</p> <p>-63.0% (-4.99 bn€)</p> <p>15.4% of total exports</p> <hr/> <p>Other organic basic chemicals 0.62 bn€</p> <p>Basic pharmaceutical products 0.55 bn€</p> <p>Other chemical products 0.46 bn€</p>	<p>China CN</p> <p>1.52 bn€</p> <p>+2.0% (+0.03 bn€)</p> <p>8.0% of total exports</p> <hr/> <p>Other chemical products 0.33 bn€</p> <p>Plastics in primary forms 0.30 bn€</p> <p>Perfumes and toilet preparations 0.27 bn€</p>	<p>United Kingdom GB</p> <p>2.34 bn€</p> <p>+10.5% (+0.22 bn€)</p> <p>12.3% of total exports</p> <hr/> <p>Other chemical products 0.43 bn€</p> <p>Plastics in primary forms 0.35 bn€</p> <p>Other organic basic chemicals 0.33 bn€</p>
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Imports from United States, CN 8-digit contributions to the year-on-year change.



Net change: **-0.23 bn€** (-5.7% YoY)

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



Net change: **-1.60 bn€** (-31.8% YoY)

How this edition was built

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 2σ 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.