

## New EU chemicals industry data reveals green shoots of recovery, but long-term outlook remains uncertain and stronger EU Industrial Policy is needed to enable large-scale Green Deal investments

Brussels, 24 February 2021 – Cefic, the European Chemical Industry Council, reports that chemical production in the European Union declined by 1,9% in 2020 compared to 2019. The chemical industry's output is expected to grow by 3% in 2021 and 2% in 2022. However, longer-term economic outlook remains highly uncertain due the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its continued economic impacts.

Commenting on the latest industry figures, Cefic Director General, Marco Mensink, said:

*“Cefic welcomes these encouraging green shoots of economic improvement for our sector. 2020 has proven the chemical value chains to be among the most resilient in Europe. The industry stood up, rose to the expectations and has delivered valuable support on for example disinfectants supply. Full recovery will need further support. A strong industrial policy does not only support the sectors in need, but also starts to build upon the sectors proven to be most resilient, who are the basis for tomorrow's economy. To secure the massive investments required for the Green Deal transformation of our industry, and to maintain the European chemical sector's export success story, we look forward to the EU Commission's new industrial policy strategy to provide the markets and conditions for industry to become more sustainable, more competitive globally and more resilient.”*

The chemical industry supplies virtually all sectors of economy, with chemicals present in 95% of all manufactured goods, from everyday items to high tech appliances and equipment. Therefore, our industry's performance largely depends on the growth of all other manufacturing sectors. The whole EU manufacturing sector was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in an 8.2% decrease in all manufacturing output in EU27, which led to decline in the chemicals output as well. This decline was slightly offset by increased demand for chemicals used for production of critical supplies for public health (e.g. plexiglass, protective gear, medicines, disinfectants, etc.).

Nonetheless, the overall capacity of the EU27 chemical industry dropped by about 6% in 2020 compared to 2019 and the EU27 chemical sales were €34.8 billion below the previous year's level (Jan-Nov 2019). The EU27 chemical exports also decreased by €7.4 billion compared to 2019 (Jan-Nov 2019, -4.5%).

**For more information please contact:**

Roosa-Maiju Huhtaniska, Media Relations Manager  
+ 32.4.899.05.703. or [rmh@cefic.be](mailto:rmh@cefic.be).

**About Cefic**

Cefic, the European Chemical Industry Council, founded in 1972, is the voice of large, medium and small chemical companies in Europe, which provide 1.2 million jobs and account for 16% of world chemicals production.