

Sector Profile July 2026

CHEMICALS & PHARMACEUTICALS – A KEY SECTOR FOR INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND TRANSFORMATION

Verband der
Chemischen Industrie e.V.
Elementar für Deutschland

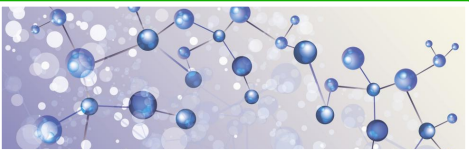


CHEMICALS & PHARMACEUTICALS: VITAL FOR GERMANY



MAJOR INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

The driving force behind industry, high-quality jobs, a strong SME sector



AT THE START OF MANY VALUE CHAINS

A wide range of products; chemical products are used in almost all industrial sectors



STRONG IN RESEARCH AND EXPORTS, GLOBALISED

Highly innovation-driven and with a strong international position



KEY TO TRANSFORMATION

Climate neutrality, the circular economy and a new raw materials base require the chemical industry



AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE TO ENSURE A STRONG BUSINESS LOCATION

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DASHBOARD 2025 – INDUSTRY KEY FIGURES

€220 billion

Turnover

62% abroad



No. 1

in Europe (share of turnover)

No. 3
worldwide



No. 3

of industrial sectors in Germany (share of turnover)



476,300

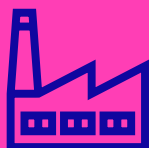
Employees



2,100

companies

96% of which are SMEs



€252.9 billion

Exports



€16 billion

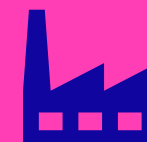
R&D expenditure



€8.9 billion

Investments in Germany

€10.7 billion abroad



Sources: Destatis, Chemdata International, Stifterverband, VCI

DASHBOARD 2025 – KEY FIGURES FOR THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

€158.4 billion

Turnover
62% in
abroad



No. 1

in Europe (share of
turnover)

No. 3
worldwide



No. 4

of industrial sectors
in Germany
(share of
turnover)



342,100

Employees



1,700
businesses

97% of which
are SMEs



€135.1 billion

Exports



€5.5 billion

R&D expenditure



€7.2 billion

Investments in
Germany (2024)



Sources: Destatis, Chemdata International, Stifterverband, VCI

DASHBOARD 2025 – KEY PHARMACEUTICAL FIGURES

€61.9 billion

Turnover

63% overseas



No. 2

in Europe (share of
revenue)

No. 4
worldwide



No. 10

of industrial sectors
in Germany
(share of
turnover)



134,200

employees



350

businesses

92% of which
are SMEs



€117.8 billion

Exports



€10.5 billion

R&D expenditure



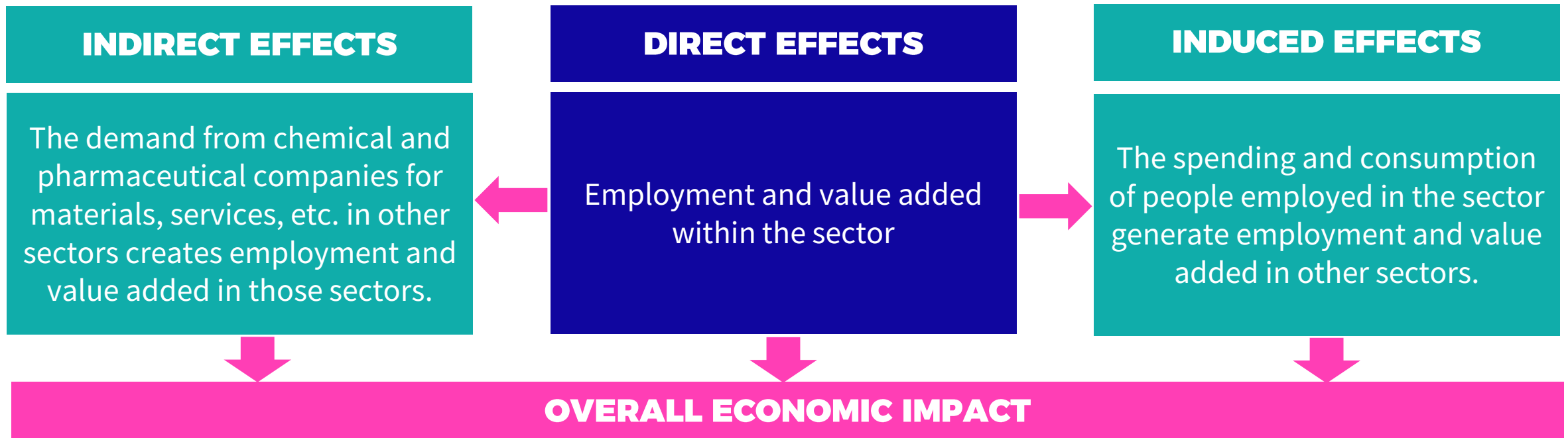
€2.6 billion

Investments in
Germany (2024)



Sources: Destatis, Chemdata International, Stifterverband, VCI

SIGNIFICANT IMPORTANCE FOR THE ECONOMY AS A WHOLE

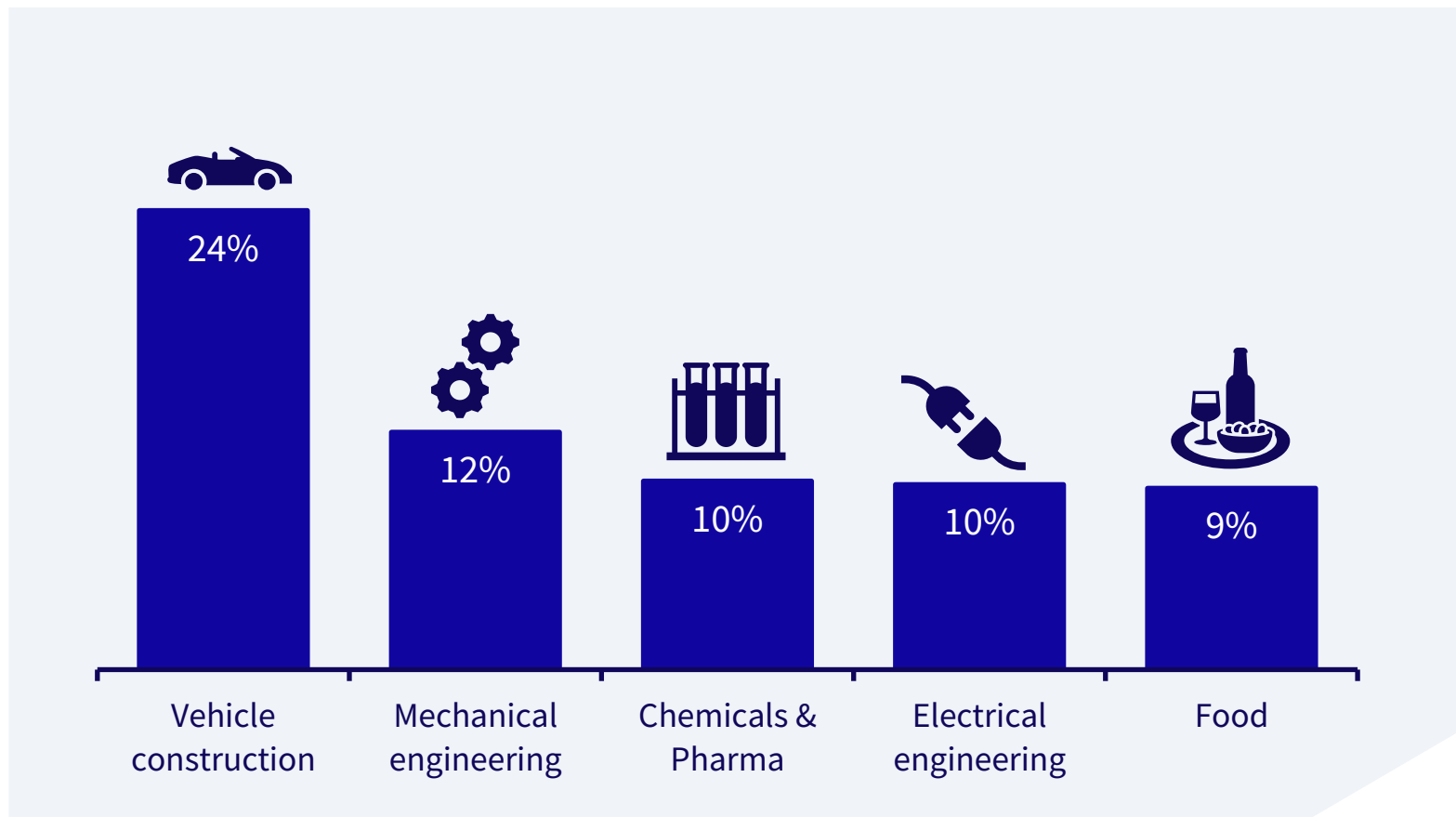


- › **The sector contributes directly to around 2 per cent of Germany's value added.**
- › **Every job** in companies within the sector **leads to around two further jobs** in the German economy.
- › **Every euro of direct value** added generated by companies in the sector triggers **a further 0.8 euros of additional value added** in the German economy.

THIRD-LARGEST INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

Share of turnover in the manufacturing sector

2025



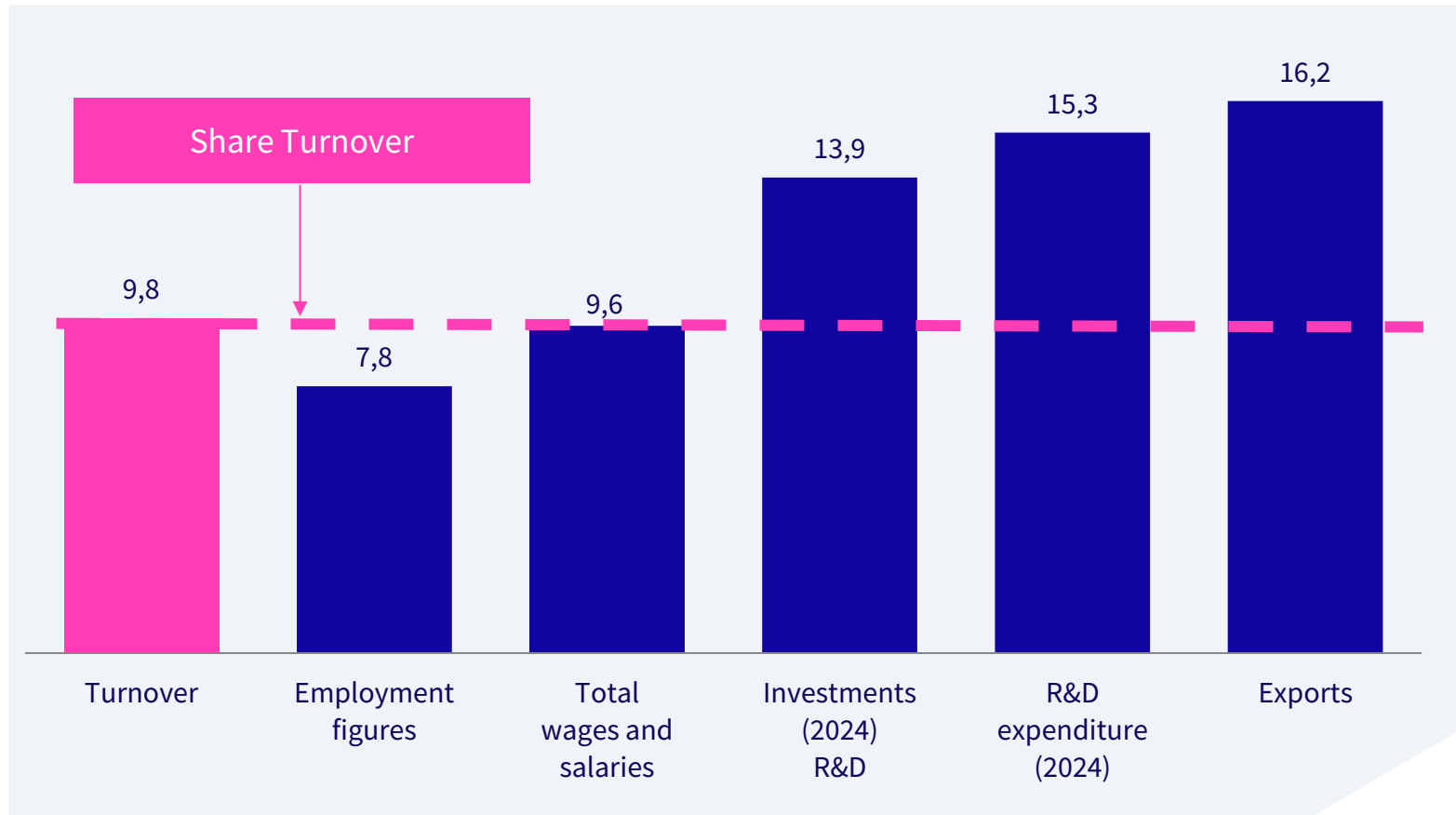
- » In 2025, the German chemical and pharmaceutical industry accounted for almost 10 per cent of turnover in the manufacturing sector.
- » This makes it the third-largest industrial sector.

Sources: Destatis, VCI

AT THE HEART OF GERMANY AS AN INDUSTRIAL NATION

Key figures at a glance

The sector's share of the manufacturing sector in per cent, 2025

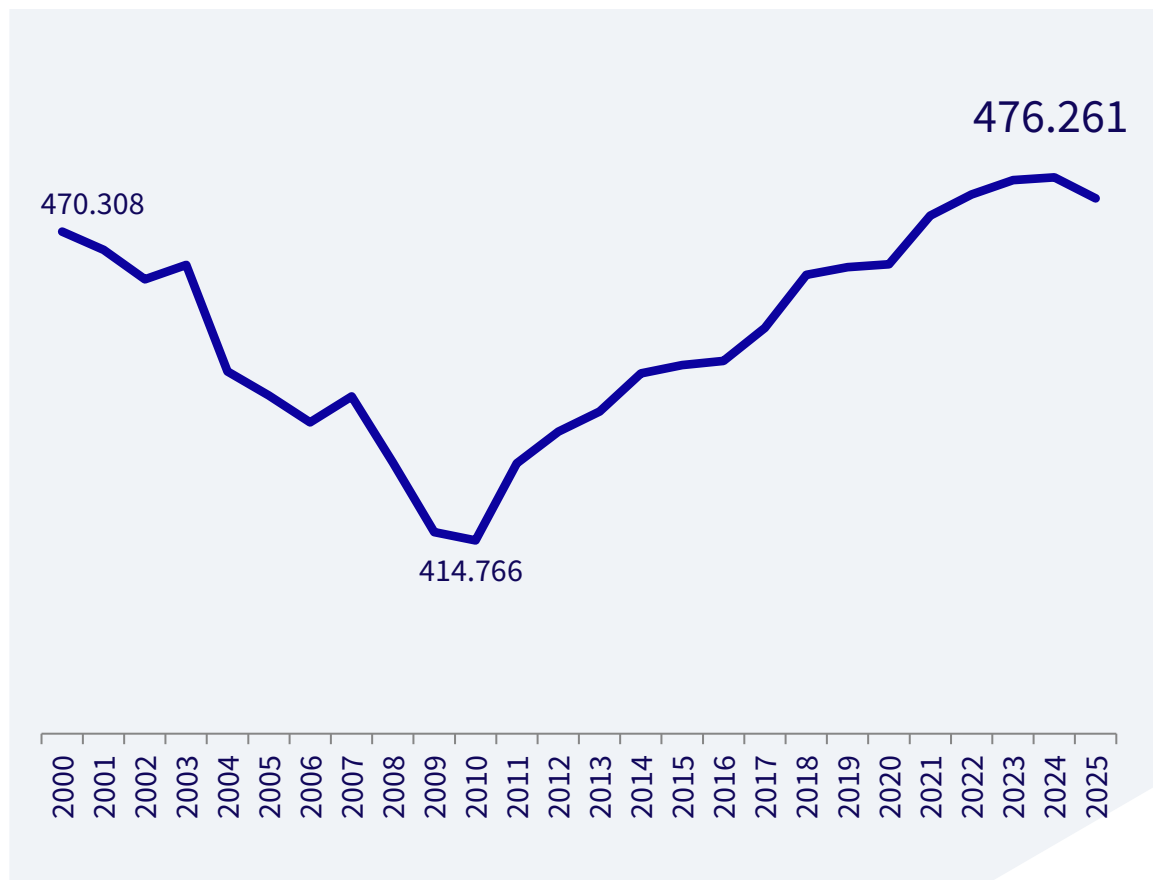


- » In 2025, the sector accounted for around 10 per cent of turnover in the manufacturing sector.
- » The shares of investment, research and development (R&D) and exports within the industry are significantly higher.
- » The sector is strong in terms of investment, research and exports.

Sources: Destatis, Stifterverband, VCI

ATTRACTIVE EMPLOYER

Employees in the chemical and pharmaceutical industries 2000 to 2025



Source: Destatis, BAVC, VCI



Sixth-largest employer in Germany



Average salary: **€72,850**
23% above the industry average



8,779 apprentices (**-13%** on the previous year)

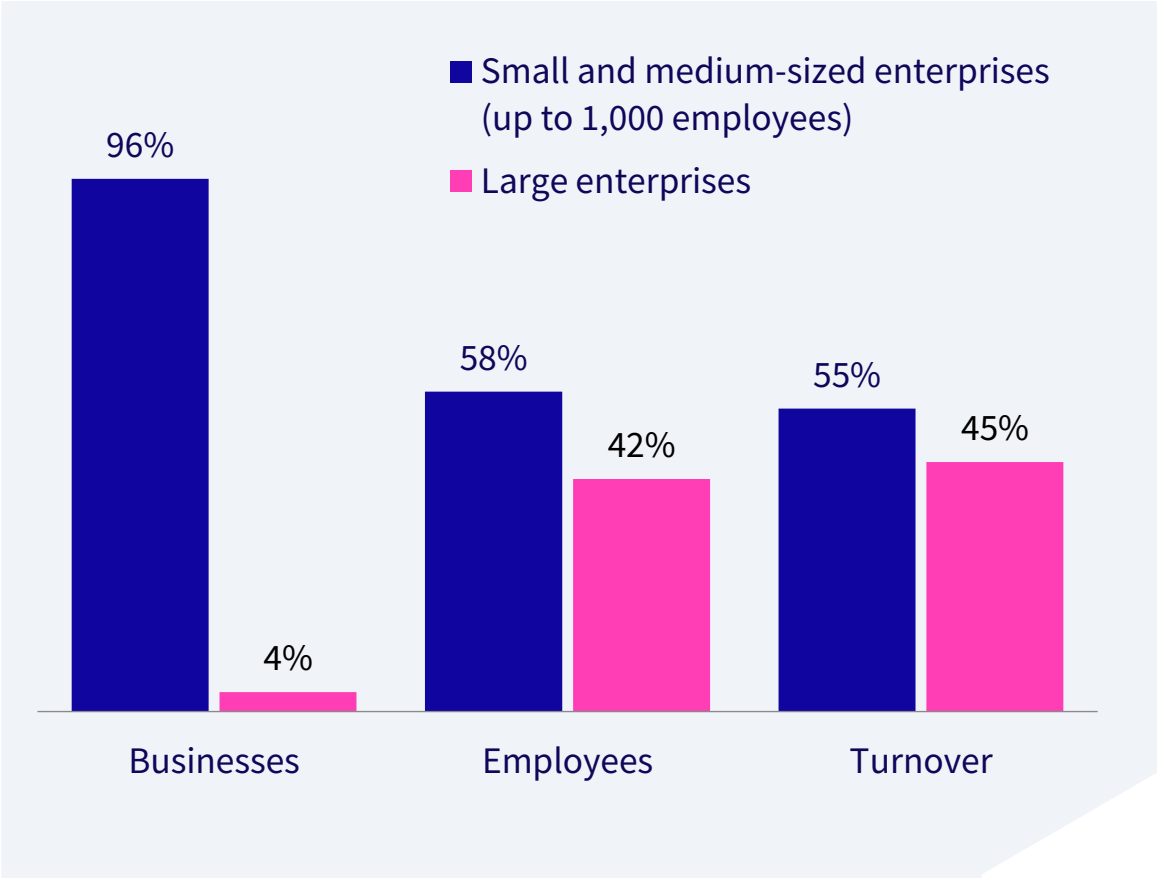
Hiring rate: **89%**

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STRONG SME SECTOR

Size structure of the sector

2025, percentages



Sources: Destatis, VCI



approx. **2,000** businesses
276,000 employees
121 billion in turnover



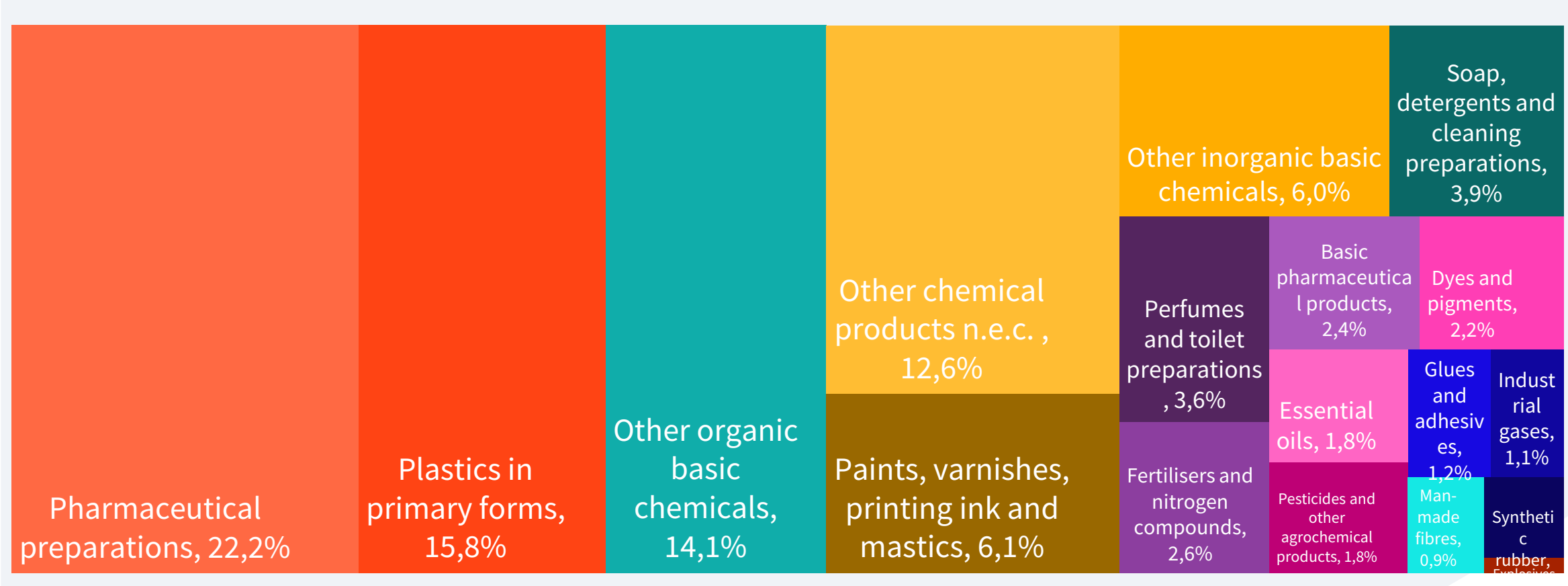
Small and medium-sized enterprises process basic chemicals into application-specific fine and speciality chemicals, polymers and consumer chemicals

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WIDE PRODUCT RANGE

Product range

Share of each sector in the industry's production value, 2025



Sources: Federal Statistical Office, VCI

CHEMICALS & PHARMACEUTICALS CONNECT GERMANY'S VALUE CHAINS WITH THE WORLD

INTERNATIONALLY CONNECTED

50 % Overseas sales



24 % Imported intermediate inputs



Global sourcing and sales connect the German chemical and pharmaceutical industry with the world.

HIGH LEVEL OF IN-HOUSE MANUFACTURING

52%

of domestic intermediate inputs come from the chemical and pharmaceutical sectors

>50 per cent of domestic sales go to the chemical and pharmaceutical sectors

AN INDISPENSABLE SUPPLIER to industry and society

CHEMICALS & PHARMACEUTICALS

Plastics processing

Construction

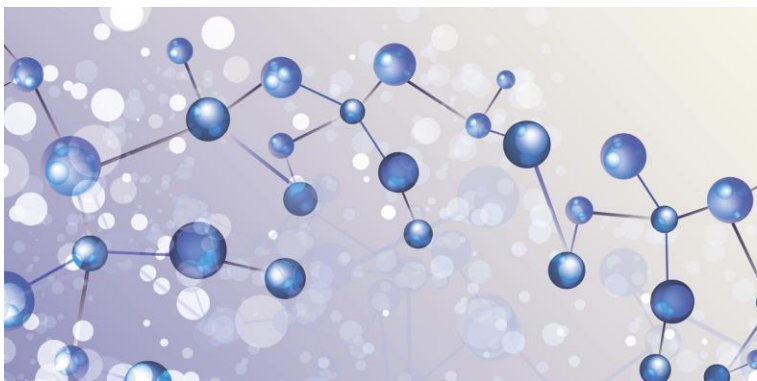
Automotive

Healthcare...

The significance extends far beyond direct supply relationships.

One in every two euros generated by the chemical industry is exported. The other half forms the foundation of value creation and public health in Germany.

CHEMISTRY MAKES THE FUTURE POSSIBLE



GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS

Chemistry:

A driver of growth and innovation
At the start of global value chains
Products are used in almost every sector



CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Chemistry:

Enabler of the circular economy
Efficient and climate-friendly production
An essential part of global value cycles



DIGITALISATION AND CONNECTIVITY

Chemicals:

capitalises on the opportunities offered by digitalisation
develops new business models
new division of roles in global value creation networks

STRONG IN RESEARCH

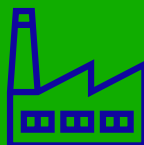
€16 billion

Expenditure on research and development (R&D) in 2025



74 %

Proportion of research-performing companies in 2024



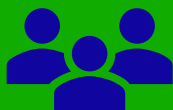
7.3

R&D intensity in 2025 (as a proportion of turnover)



47,100

R&D employees in 2024



15.3

R&D share of the manufacturing sector in 2024



No. 5

of the world's innovation hubs in 2025

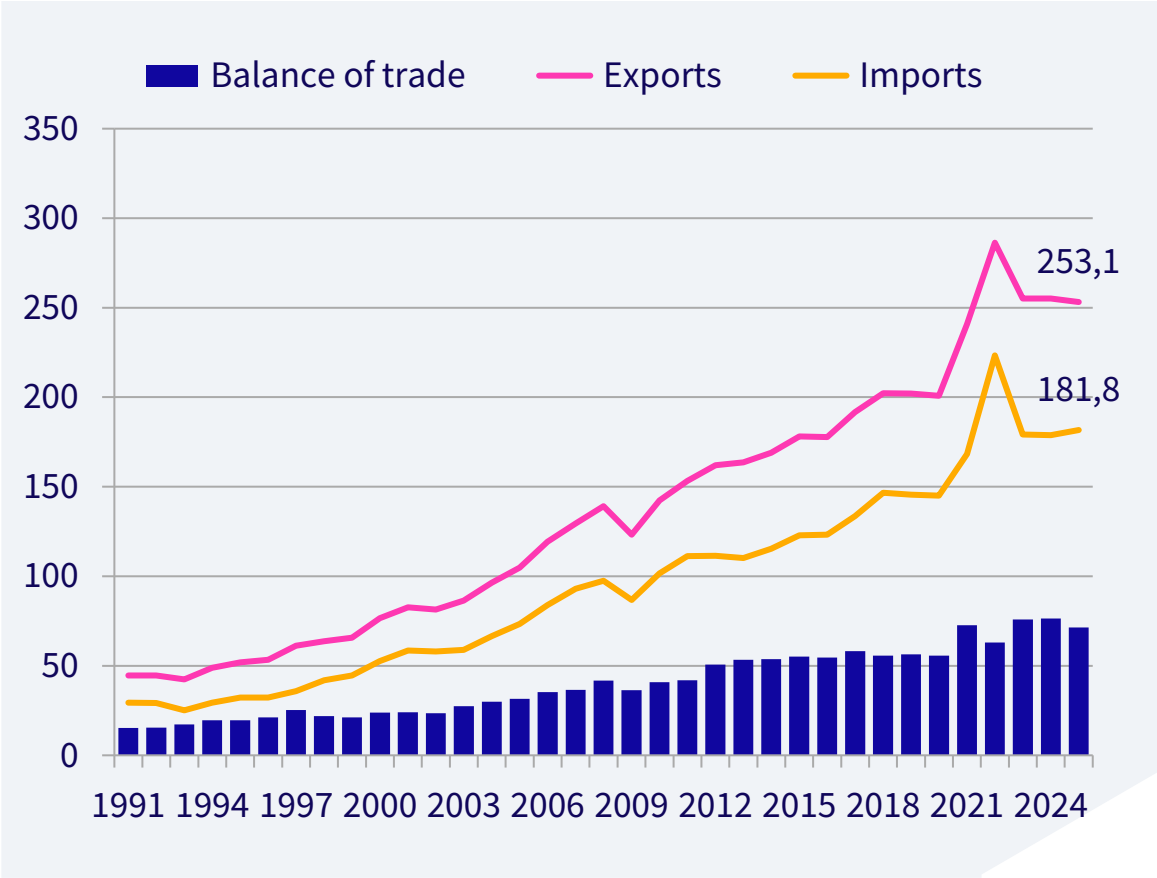


Source: Stifterverband, ZEW, VCI

GLOBALISED

Foreign trade in chemical and pharma products

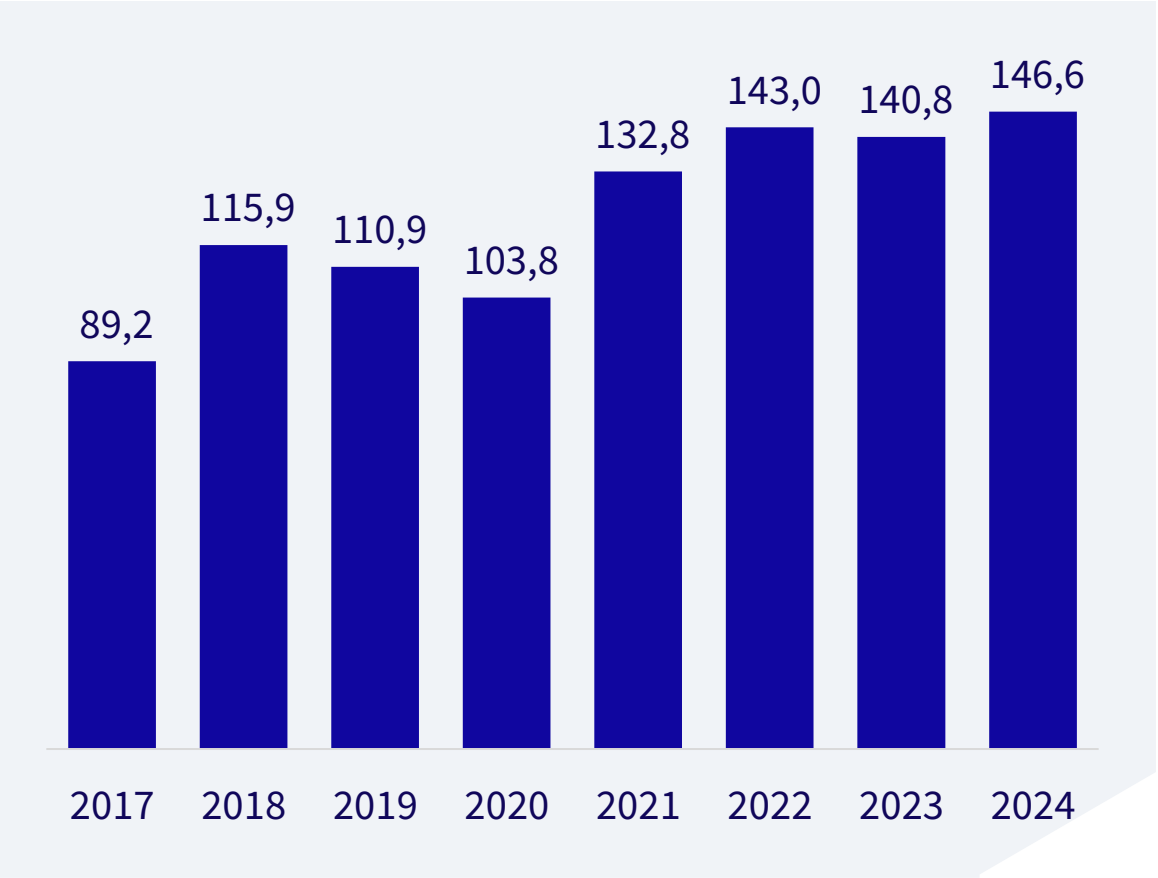
Exports, imports and foreign trade balance in billions of euros



Sources: Destatis, VCI

FDI in the chemical and pharmaceutical sector

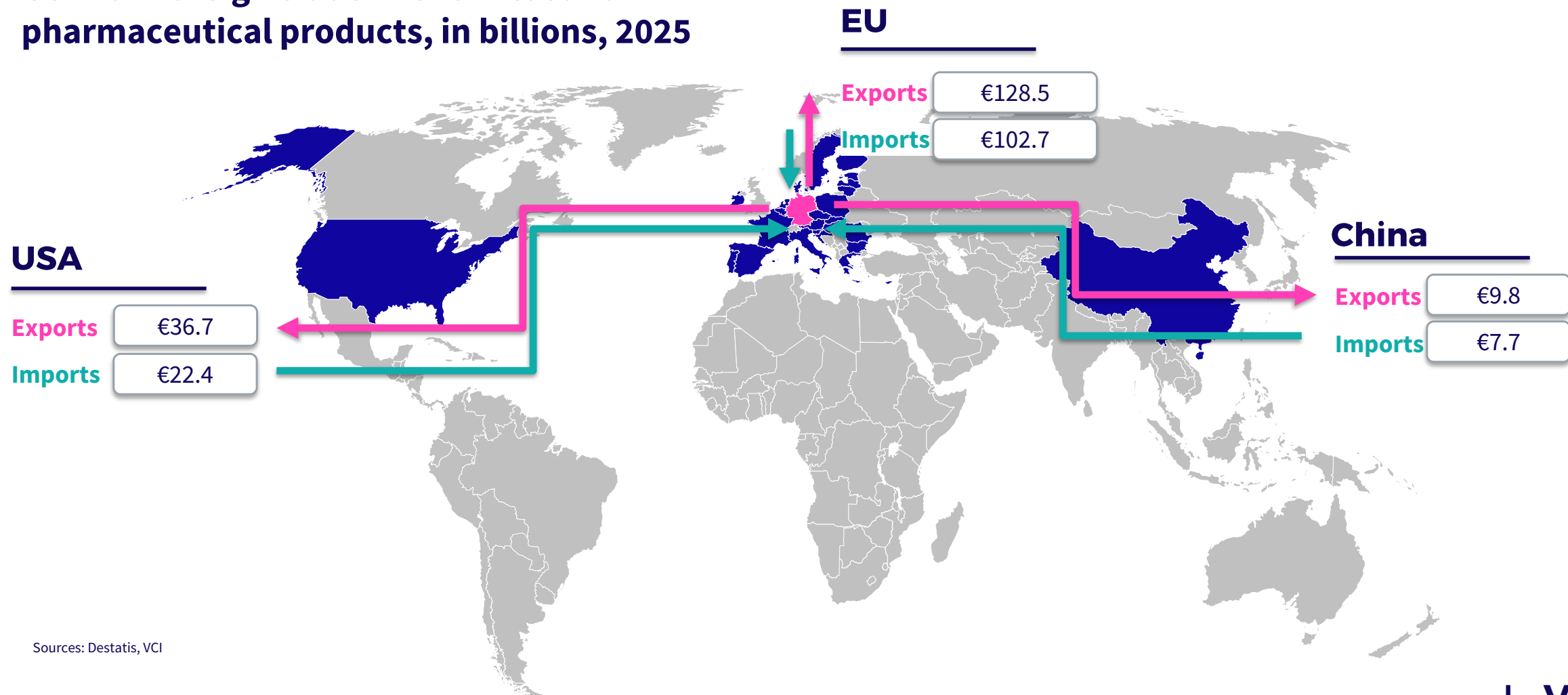
Holdings in billions of euros



Source: Deutsche Bundesbank, VCI

STRONG IN EXPORTS

German foreign trade in chemical and pharmaceutical products, in billions, 2025



Sources: Destatis, VCI

A KEY SECTOR FOR THE TRANSFORMATION

**Chemistry
becomes a
catalyst for
transformation
when innovation,
infrastructure
and alternative
raw materials
work in tandem.**

01

Towards climate neutrality

Low-carbon processes, efficiency, electrification and green hydrogen.

02

Towards the energy transition

Materials for batteries, wind/solar, grids and H₂ infrastructure.

03

Towards the circular economy

Circular product design, recycling and closed material cycles.

04

Towards the bioeconomy

Bio-based raw materials and industrial biotechnology as renewable carbon sources.

05

Towards a raw materials transition

Recycled materials, biomass and CO₂ utilisation broaden the raw materials base.

AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

ENSURING COMPETITIVENESS:

Energy prices, red tape, regulation, location costs

Business conditions must make investment in Germany attractive again

ENABLING TRANSFORMATION:

Climate-neutral processes, electrification, hydrogen, infrastructure

Climate neutrality requires affordable energy, grids, predictability and substantial investment

GERMANY AS A SUSTAINABLE HUB FOR THE CHEMICAL AND PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRIES

DRIVING FORWARD THE RAW MATERIALS TRANSITION:

Recycled materials, biomass, CO₂ utilisation, sustainable carbon

The sector needs access to alternative carbon sources and functioning circular economies

ACCELERATING INNOVATION:

R&D, digitalisation, new business models

Innovation will determine future value creation and international competitiveness

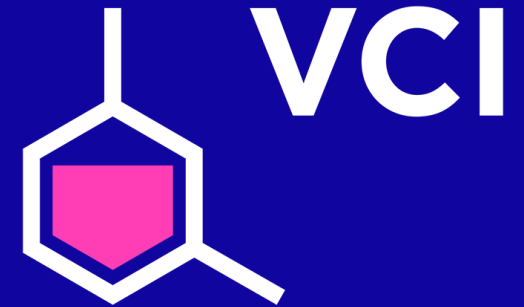
FURTHER INFORMATION

- › Facts and figures on investment in the sector: **Focus on investment**
- › Facts and figures on research and development: **Germany as a hub for innovation**
- › Facts and figures on energy and raw materials: **Energy, raw materials, prices**
- › Facts and figures on global chemical markets: **Chemical markets worldwide**
- › Facts and figures on small and medium-sized enterprises: **SMEs in the chemical sector**
- › Statistical compendium: The chemical industry in figures (CHIZ) **The chemical industry in figures**



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