

ASML, Zeiss and Canon Cross-license Lithography Equipment Patent Portfolios

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ASML Holding NV and Carl Zeiss SMT today announce that each has signed an agreement with Canon for the global cross-license of patents in their respective fields of semiconductor lithography and optical components, used to manufacture integrated circuits, or chips.

ASML and Zeiss with their large current research and development efforts and resulting know how, welcome this agreement with Canon, with its substantial patent portfolio. There will be no transfer of technology, which means ASML and Zeiss will continue to compete with all players in the market on the basis of their capability to bring leading technologies to market.

The cross-license helps the three companies to compete more freely in the area relevant to their customers, which is technology expertise and implementation, rather than on intellectual property (IP) rights. ASML and Zeiss are strongly committed to investing in research and development and will continue their build-up of know how and IP.

The agreement means that the companies can market products based on technology covered by the other party's lithography equipment-related patents.

Semiconductor lithography is the process in which a substrate on a silicon wafer is exposed through a mask through optical or particle projection. ASML machines use this photographic process to image electronic circuit patterns onto silicon wafers, much like a camera prints

an image on film. Lithography machines are critical to the production of integrated circuits or chips, and the main driver of the continuing miniaturization of electronic features on semiconductors.

Source: ASML

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