

ASML announces 151 mln euro net loss for 2009

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Dutch company ASML, a key supplier of computer chip-making systems, reported a 151-million-euro (214-million-dollar) net loss for 2009 despite making a 50-million-euro fourth quarter net profit.

"We closed the year as planned with improved sales and strong bookings as the semiconductor business recovers," company chief executive officer Eric Meurice said in a statement.

The 2009 [net loss](#) compared to a [net profit](#) of 322 million euros in 2008, while the fourth quarter figure represented an improvement on an 88-million-euro net loss recorded in the same period a year earlier.

ASML said net sales for the year were 46 percent lower at 1.6 billion euros than 2008 sales of 2.9 billion euros. For the quarter, sales grew to 581 million euros from 555 million euros in the previous quarter and 494 million euros in the fourth quarter of 2008.

The company received orders for 40 of its systems to the value of 956 million euros in the fourth quarter, and "expects bookings of the same order of magnitude for the first quarter of 2010, confirming an upturn of the [semiconductor industry](#)," said Meurice.

ASML expected net sales of about 700 million euros for the first quarter of 2010 and about 950 million in the next.

"[ASML](#) will submit a proposal to the 2010 general meeting of

shareholders to declare an unchanged dividend paid in respect of 2009 of 20 euro cents per ordinary share -- approximately 87 million euros," the statement said.

The company has about 6,500 employees in 15 countries. It claims to be the world's leading provider of lithography systems for the semiconductor industry, manufacturing machines for the production of [integrated circuits](#) or chips.

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