

Dutch hi-tech group ASML profits dip despite record sales

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Dutch computer chip maker and global high-tech bellwether ASML on Wednesday posted a drop in profit for 2013, despite record sales in the fourth quarter.

Net profit for the year dipped to 1.01 billion euros (\$1.37bn), down 11.4 percent from 1.14 billion euros in 2012, but the southern Dutch tech trendsetter predicted a strong showing as the demand for smartphones and tablets continued to boom.

ASML bought the San Diego-based tech company Cymer in May for \$1.95 billion and ASML chief executive Peter Wennink said the deal pushed down 2013 full-year profit by 139 million euros.

ASML is one of the world's leading makers of lithography systems used by the semiconductor industry to make integrated circuits and microchips, while Cymer makes the light sources used in the lithography systems.

Based just outside the Dutch tech-hub of Eindhoven, ASML however said it has achieved its turnover objectives in 2013, boosted by record sales in the [fourth quarter](#).

ASML posted 5.24 billion euros in turnover, up 10.8 percent from 4.73 billion euros in 2012, with 1.84 billion euros in net sales achieved in the fourth quarter alone.

"The fourth quarter showed our operational capability to respond to strong demand," said Wennink.

Wennink said strong results were expected in 2014, driven by the smartphone market, expecting [net sales](#) of around 3.0 billion euros in the first half of 2014.

ASML said it will increase the dividend by 15 percent compared to last year.

The markets on Wednesday reacted favourably to ASML's results, with its shares jumping 5.94 percent to 66.85 euros in mid-morning trade on the Amsterdam stock exchange's AEX index, which itself climbed by 0.47 percent.

ASML operates in 16 countries and is considered a good indicator of conditions in the microprocessing industry.

It employs over 13,000 people and counts world hi-tech leaders such as Samsung and Intel among its customers.

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