

Bayer confident after 'successful' 2014

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German chemicals and pharmaceuticals giant Bayer said Thursday it was "optimistic" for business this year after a "very successful" 2014.

"Bayer had a very successful year in 2014, both operationally and strategically," setting "new records" for sales and underlying profits, said chief executive Marijn Dekkers.

"We remain optimistic about the future."

Last year Bayer—which makes the painkiller Aspirin—saw its net profit rise by 7.4 percent to 3.426 billion euros (\$3.9 billion).

Underlying or [operating profit](#) increased by 7.8 percent to 8.442 billion euros on a 5.2-percent rise in sales to 42.239 billion euros.

Dekkers said the group's so-called life sciences businesses—of healthcare and crop sciences—were the main drivers of growth.

The material sciences division, which is to be floated on the stock market as a separate company by mid-2016 at the latest, "also registered encouraging gains in sales and earnings," Bayer said.

Looking ahead to this year, Bayer said it was planning sales "in the region of 46 billion for 2015," benefitting from the weak euro and other currency effects.

Operating profit would show growth of a "low- to mid-teens

percentage"—or between 10 and 15 percent, the group predicted.

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