

Dutch hi-tech group ASML posts 'record' year in 2015

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Leading Dutch manufacturer of computer chip making systems ASML Wednesday declared 2015 a "record" year for sales which rose to 6.3 billion euros (\$6.9 billion), with net profits leaping by 15 percent.

The [company](#), seen as a global hi-tech bellwether for the microprocessing [industry](#), said profits had reached 1.39 billion euros, compared with 1.2 billion in 2014.

"Our full-year 2015 [net sales](#) marked a new record," said chief executive Peter Wennik in a statement.

Based in Veldhoven, southern Netherlands, the company supplies global hi-tech giants such as Samsung and Intel.

It makes systems for manufacturing processor chips as well as [memory chips](#) such as DRAM and SRAM, essential for mobile phones and tablets.

ASML also announced a buy-back programme of one billion dollars of shares, which Bloomberg financial news agency attributed to the fact that share values had dropped by 10% since the beginning of 2015.

The remainder of an earlier buy-back scheme—about 500 million euros worth—will be added to the programme in 2016 and 2017.

ASML also proposed a 50-percent rise in share dividends for the year,

which translates into a value of 1.05 euro per share.

The company is seen as a good indicator of the health of the hi-tech industry and is one of the world's leading makers of lithography systems used by the semiconductor industry to make integrated circuits and microchips.

It employs more than 14,000 people and operates in 16 countries.

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