

Japan's Nikon sues ASML, Zeiss over chip-making technology

April 24 2017

Nikon Corp. said Monday it has taken legal action in the Netherlands, Germany and Japan over the use of semiconductor lithography technology in products made by Dutch and German companies.

Nikon said it is seeking to stop Dutch company ASML Holding N.V. and its supplier Carl Zeiss SMT GmbH from using patented technology without its permission.

The move followed a failure of mediation to settle a disagreement over the right to use the technology in making computer chips.

ASML expressed disappointment over Nikon's action and denied it had infringed on any of Nikon's patents.

"ASML believes that Nikon's claim is without merit. We will defend ourselves vigorously against the allegations and we will consider all means at our disposal," ASML said in a statement.

Nikon said it had filed 11 patent infringement cases against ASML in the District Court of The Hague in the Netherlands. It said it also is filing patent infringement cases against ASML in Tokyo and against Zeiss in Mannheim, Germany.

"The continued unauthorized use of Nikon's patented technology by ASML and Zeiss has given Nikon no alternative but to enforce its legal rights in the courts of law," the Tokyo-based company said in a

statement.

Nikon pioneered the immersion lithography technology used to make semiconductors for smartphones, memory chips and other products. It said ASML is the only other company selling immersion technology systems. Zeiss makes the optical components used in ASML's lithography systems.

The Japanese company said it is seeking court injunctions to stop ASML and Zeiss from selling those systems and also is seeking an undisclosed amount of damages.

Disagreements over use of Nikon's lithography systems date back to the 1990s. The companies reached a settlement in 2004 that involved licensing some patents permanently and others until the end of 2009. The companies agreed not to sue each other between 2010 and 2014.

Nikon is alleging that ASML and Zeiss have been using its technology without permission during that grace period.

Nikon makes digital cameras and other camera-related products, binoculars and industrial precision equipment, among other devices.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Japan's Nikon sues ASML, Zeiss over chip-making technology (2017, April 24) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-04-japan-nikon-sues-asml-zeiss.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.