

Netherlands brings ASML's 1970i and 1980i DUV tools under Dutch export licences

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Systems

Dutch government takes ASML export measures off Uncle Sam's hands

Photolithography giant assures customers it is under no new restrictions

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ASML has moved to assure customers and investors that it is subject to no new restrictions following an announcement that expands the Netherlands government's own role in export control measures.

The Netherlands' Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, Reinette Klever, said on Friday that "national" export control measures on advanced semiconductor manufacturing equipment will be expanded, making more types of equipment subject to an authorization requirement at country level.

In a statement to The Register, ASML explained that there are no new export restrictions on top of those already in operation. It said the announcement means that control of restrictions is now completely with the Dutch government, whereas the US previously controlled some of the rules.

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"ASML believes this requirement will harmonize the approach for issuing export licenses," the statement says.

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The expanded rules, which come into force from September 7, apply to a very specific technology in the semiconductor manufacturing process, Minister Klever said: deep ultraviolet (DUV) lithography equipment.

"I've made this decision for reasons of security. We see that technological advances have given rise to increased security risks associated with the export of this specific manufacturing equipment, especially in the current geopolitical context," she explained in an official statement.

"The Netherlands has a unique, leading position in this area. This entails certain responsibilities, which we take seriously. We have proceeded in a careful and targeted manner, so as to minimize the disruption to global trade flows and value chains."

"As a result of the updated license requirements, and in line with US Export Administration Regulation 734.4(a)(3), ASML will need to apply for export licenses with the Dutch government rather than the US government for shipments of its TWINSCAN NXT:1970i and 1980i DUV immersion lithography systems."

The Dutch export license requirement is already in place for the TWINSCAN NXT:2000i and subsequent DUV immersion systems, ASML pointed out, plus sales of ASML's extreme ultraviolet lithography (EUV) systems are also subject to license requirements, primarily affecting exports to China.

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"Since this is a technical change, this announcement is not expected to have any impact on our financial outlook for 2024 or for our longer-term scenarios as communicated during our Investor Day in November 2022," ASML concluded.

The Netherlands biz is regarded as Europe's most valuable tech company because it is one of the leading developers of the photolithography machines used in chip manufacturing, and currently the only provider of the most advanced EUV equipment.

ASML has not always been pleased with the export restrictions placed on it as these curtailed its sales to China, the company's largest export market other than Taiwan.

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Following his retirement this year, former CEO Peter Wennink spoke out , claiming the so-called "chip wars" between Washington and Beijing are mainly ideological and "not based on substance and practice."

In its most recent financial results for Q2 of this year, ASML reported sales of €6.2 billion (\$6.7 billion), down from the €6.9 billion (\$7.5 billion) for the same quarter last year, but said that order bookings were up as chip companies invested to make more advanced semiconductors. ®

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