

# ASML, Samsung ink 700mn chip plant deal as S.Korea president visits

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Yoon Suk Yeol has described chips as his 'top priority' during his visit to the Netherlands.

Dutch tech giant ASML and Samsung Tuesday signed a deal worth around 700 million euros to build a semiconductor research plant in

South Korea, as President Yoon Suk Yeol wrapped up day one of a technology-focused visit.

Yoon was the first foreign leader to visit ASML's highly secure "cleanroom", on a trip to the Netherlands aimed at forging a "chip alliance" between the two global [semiconductor](#) powerhouses.

He toured the city-sized facilities of ASML, which makes cutting-edge machines to manufacture the semiconductor chips that power everything from your smartphone to your car.

ASML and Samsung later agreed to "jointly in the future" invest in the facility that would "develop cutting-edge semiconductor processing technology using next-generation EUV (extreme ultraviolet) equipment".

Semiconductors are the "linchpin" of ties between Korea and the Netherlands, Yoon told AFP in an exclusive written interview before becoming the first Korean leader to visit since ties were established in 1961.

But they have also emerged as a battleground between China and the West.

Washington and the Netherlands are among the powers that have imposed restrictions on exporting advanced chip-making equipment to China, fearing Beijing could use it to make cutting-edge weapons.

Beijing has described this as "technological terrorism".

Yoon said his host ASML's innovation in the sector had "been a major driver of an industrial revolution pushing the boundaries in areas like AI (artificial intelligence) and 5G communication".

As competition with China hots up, the [semiconductor industry](#) is "strategically more important than ever before, which makes this visit to the Netherlands especially meaningful", added Yoon in his AFP interview.

Yoon was joined on his visit to ASML by the heads of major chip makers Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix.

The two Korean firms are affected by the export curbs to China since they have based a large portion of their production, especially of advanced DRAM and flash memory chips, in China.

ASML too enjoys healthy sales to China, especially of DUV (deep ultraviolet) systems that print the tiny elements that make up a microchip.

Yoon told AFP his visit to ASML would mark a "crucial turning point" for ties between the two countries, with discussion on chip co-operation his "top priority" during the visit.

## **'Chip alliance'**

His office has said the two nations want to forge a "chip alliance" that would involve governments, businesses and research universities.

The two countries are expected to sign several agreements after a meeting between Yoon and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte on Wednesday.

The Netherlands and Korea already enjoy strong trade ties.

Korea is the third-largest trade partner for the Dutch in Asia, while the Netherlands is the second-top partner for Korea in the European Union,

according to the Dutch government.

During a summit between Yoon and Rutte in November 2022, the two countries signed a "[strategic partnership](#)" including a pledge to boost semiconductor ties.

The visit kicked off with a welcome ceremony from Dutch King Willem-Alexander, before the trip to ASML in Veldhoven, southern Netherlands.

In the ceremony on Amsterdam's historic Dam central square, Yoon and Willem-Alexander inspected a military guard of honour and chatted to children waving Korean and Dutch flags.

Yoon will head to The Hague for the meeting with Rutte Wednesday, following which the two men will hold a news conference.

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