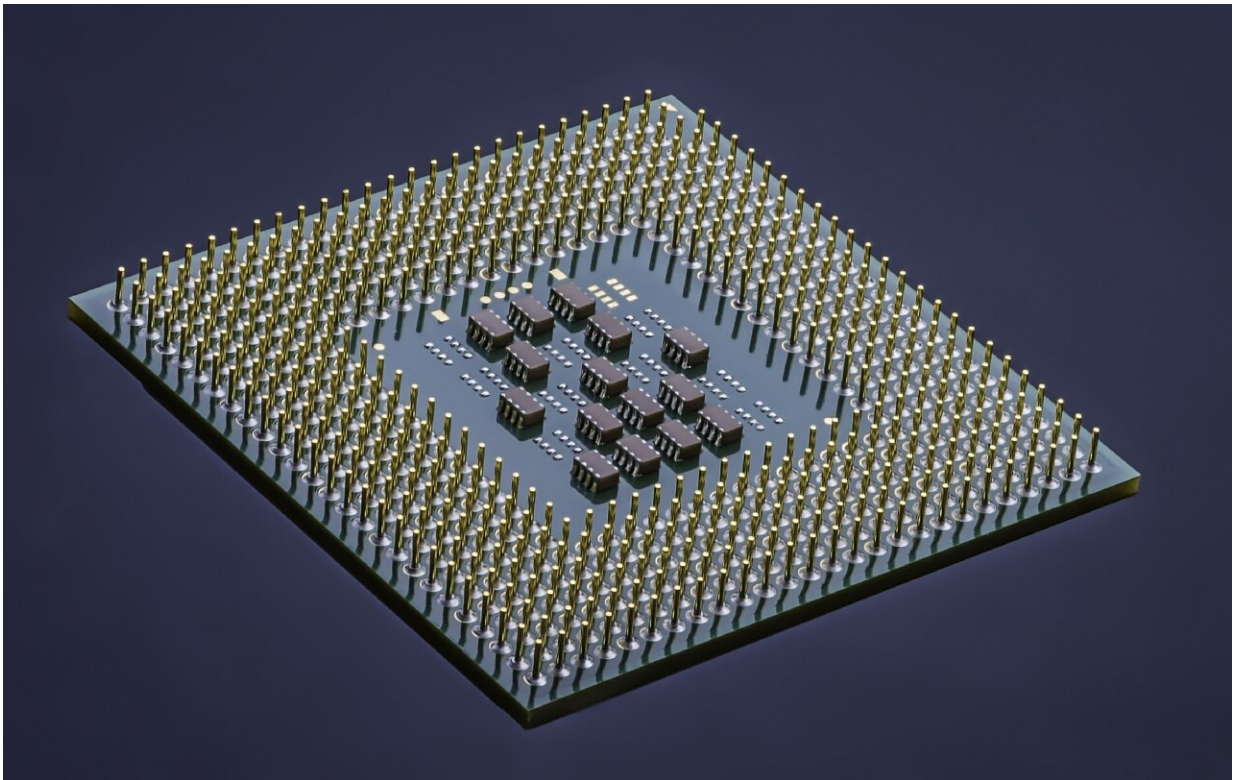


With eye on China, Dutch and Koreans vow stronger chip ties

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The leaders of South Korea and the Netherlands vowed Wednesday to bolster co-operation in the critical semiconductor sector, amid growing tensions between China and the West over the technology.

The two countries, which host some of the world's top tech companies, such as ASML and Samsung, pledged to forge a "semiconductor alliance" involving businesses, researchers and universities.

Semiconductor chips are the linchpin of the global economy, powering everything from the smartphone in your pocket to your car, but they have also emerged as a geopolitical battleground.

Several Western powers have imposed restrictions on exporting advanced chip-making equipment to China, fearing its use to develop high-tech weaponry.

Beijing has described this as "technological terrorism".

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte told reporters: "We both have thriving technology sectors that are well matched."

"ASML... makes machines for the microchips produced in South Korea. Our countries are now going to step up co-operation in this field," he said.

Rutte also mentioned the "security risks" involved in the sector and stressed: "We must help each other protect the value chain."

For his part, Yoon said the two countries wanted to "combine each other's strengths" in the semiconductor field but also emphasised the security aspect.

"Semiconductors are a very important part not only of the economic industry but also of security and the military," he said.

On Tuesday, Yoon became the first foreign leader to tour the inner sanctum of ASML's headquarters, the so-called "cleanroom" where the

systems are assembled.

ASML and Samsung later signed a deal pledging to invest around 700 million euros together in a research plant to develop "cutting-edge semiconductor processing technology."

Both firms do a lot a business with China. ASML sells its DUV (deep ultraviolet) systems that print the tiny elements that make up a microchip.

Samsung and SK Hynix have based a large portion of their production, especially of advanced DRAM and flash memory chips, in China.

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.

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