

# Q1 2025 Earnings Call

## Company Participants

Burkhardt Frick, Chief Executive Officer

Cornelia Ballwiesser, Chief Financial Officer

Sven Kopsel, Vice President Investor Relations & Communications

Unidentified Speaker

## Other Participants

Abed Jarad, mwb research

Janardan Menon, Jefferies

Malte Schaumann, Warburg Research

Michael Kuhn, Deutsche Bank

Nicole Winkler, Berenberg

Veysel Taze, Metzler

## Operator

Good day, ladies and gentlemen, and a warm welcome to today's Earnings Call of the SUSS MicroTec SE on the occasion of the publication of the figures for the Q1 of 2025.

I am delighted to welcome the CEO, Burkhardt Frick; CFO, Dr. Cornelia Ballwiesser; and the COO, Dr. Thomas Rohe, as well as the Vice President, Investor Relations, Sven Kopsel.

The management Board will speak in a moment and guide us through the presentation. After the presentation, we will move on to a Q&A session in which you will be allowed to place your questions directly to the management. We are looking forward to the results.

And having said this, I hand over to Mr. Kopsel. Please, the stage is yours.

## Sven Kopsel

Thank you and welcome to our conference call today after publishing our Q1 2025 results earlier this morning.

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And now, I hand over to our CEO, Burkhardt, please.

## Burkhardt Frick

Thank you, Sven, and also one welcome from my end.

We had a strong and very solid start into the year with an order intake of EUR88.1 million, especially after the exceptionally strong Q4 2024, where we have already received orders we had actually expected for the next quarter. As indicated in the full year 2024 call, order intake is above the level of Q3 2024. Sales at EUR123.2 million continued the growth trend with 31.8% year-on-year. Both segments contributed to this development, as you will see later.

At the same time, improvement of EBIT margin shows that we can keep the new level of earnings quality. Gross profit margin came in slightly lower at 37.9%, mainly due to product and customer mix shifts in the Advanced Backend Solution segment and the preparation of additional manufacturing capability and capacity in Taiwan for our UV projection scanners.

First, let's talk about the order intake of EUR88.1 million, which was anticipated after the record figure of EUR147.5 million in Q4 2024. Sales of EUR123.2 million is the second best result in our company's history. Here, too, only Q4 last year was better. Accordingly, the book-to-bill ratio was only 0.72, which we need to improve, of course, in the future.

Secondly, I'd like to address the current tariff and trade situation. The announcements of widening tariffs by the U.S. government and countermeasures, particularly by China, are causing a high level of uncertainty. I would, therefore, like to provide a little bit more clarity from our end. Our direct U.S. exposure is limited, as our order book only includes orders worth about EUR42 million that we are yet to deliver in our U.S. customer base. When it comes to the bigger-picture, we certainly share the concerns of a negative impact in the global economy and the potential implications for semiconductors also affecting demand for our solutions. But so far, we have not seen any substantial project postponements or even cancellations. In general, we prepare ourselves to adapt quickly and improve flexibility to changing circumstances.

Let us now look at the developments in our two segments. First, Advanced Backend Solutions. Order intake in this segment was down in the first quarter of 2024, although demand for our UV projection scanner, which is used in the well-known CoWoS process, was particularly high. Our production capacities, which are scaling up for the solution, are now fully utilized until the end of 2025. Demand for temporarily bonders and debonders in connection with AI was not significantly high in the first quarter. However, I can confirm that we again received sizable followup orders from a memory customer in April.

Sales trend was strong at plus 47% year-on-year in the first quarter of 2025. The growth came from the bonding systems product line, where we executed numerous AI-related orders and delivered them to our customers. Imaging and coating systems sales were roughly flat compared to last year Q1 2024. Meanwhile, the gross profit margin did not match the previous year's figure of 44.5%. We've seen certain shifts in the product and customer mix. In addition, we are preparing to manufacture significantly more UV projection scanners at our site in Taiwan. This resulted in additional costs, mainly for supply chain and for training.

Now let's come to Photomask Solutions. Order intake was exactly on par with the previous year. Orders from Chinese customers were again lower than in the same period of the previous year. Other markets were able to compensate for this. The order book of around EUR150 million continues to provide solid capacity utilization for these products, and thus visibility for the expected sales development in 2025. Also, first orders with scheduled delivery dates in 2026 are now also included in our order book.

Photomask Solutions segment also contributed to our sales growth. Sales of EUR40.3 million represents growth of 8.6% year-on-year. This means that our Photomask production in Germany was fully utilized. The higher sales volume and associated scaling effects, as well as a better product and customer mix, have led to a significant improvement in the margins compared to the same period in the previous year. With an EBIT margin of 32.8%, the segment achieved a remarkable quarterly figure.

As I did six weeks ago in our full year call, I would like to give you a brief update on our new production site in Taiwan. The landlord officially handed over the building to us as of April 1, 2025. And our logo has also recently been installed on the building, as you can see on the left side picture. We would like to use today's call once again to highlight the advantages of this new location.

Today in Taiwan, we utilize our production site in Hsinchu. And because the site has been used beyond its actual capacity limit, we have various additional small satellite sites in the surrounding area. Obviously, the setup is not very efficient. The new location will consolidate most teams and sites into one single location. Our internal flows will certainly improve significantly as a result. For both sites, the pure rental costs will be at a comparable level, namely in the low to mid-single digit million euro range.

And while our existing site can produce systems worth a maximum of EUR100 million to EUR150 million per year, the new site has the potential to roughly double capacity at full built out and utilization. This will give us the flexibility we need to continue growth in the future. We had lost this headroom in Hsinchu, but soon we'll have it back.

And with that, I now hand over to Cornelia to present more financial results.

## **Cornelia Ballwiesser**

Thank you, Burkhardt, and welcome also from my side.

We already heard from the development in the segments. I will now provide an overview for the group. The order intake developed is anticipated and amounted to EUR88.1 million. The order book, in turn, also declined. But at EUR392.7 million, it still offers good visibility for the next two to three years. Sales developed very strongly in the first quarter, as Burkhard already outlined. Both segments distributed, but the Advanced Backend Solutions segment was the stronger driver with a sales growth of 47%.

On the gross profit margin, we experienced some headwinds, which we already talked about. On the other hand, EBIT increased by 0.7 percentage points, thanks to higher gross profit and disproportionately low OpEx increase. Free cash flow improved notably in the first quarter. Mostly, it was the inventory build-up, which slowed down compared to the first quarter 2024. Inventories only increased by 1.5% compared to the end of the last year.

At EUR1.7 million, the CapEx volume was still at a moderate level in the first quarter of 2025. This will change significantly in the coming quarters as we make progress with equipping our new production site in Taiwan.

This page shows the development of the four key indicators for SUSS over the last five quarters. Overall, the first quarter was a strong quarter, the second best in the company's history in terms of sales. Gross profit margin was outside the corridor that we have achieved in recent quarters. I have already reported on the reasons for this, and you will see later in the outlook that we currently expect to be able to achieve the full year target for the gross profit margin of 39% to 41%.

We have again included the overview of the quarterly development of our four key performance indicators for the segments. The most important news here is Advanced Backend Solutions. The sales trend is very positive. Profitability, however, was lower than in the first quarter of 2025 due to customer and product mix effects. And the before mentioned preparation for our Taiwan site for the production of an increased amount of UV projection scanners, we are confident that the margin will improve over the next quarters.

Profitability in Photomask Solutions was exceptionally high in the first quarter with gross profit margin of 40.2% and EBIT margin of 32.8%. These results illustrate the quality of earnings we can achieve in this segment. However, as the profit in the segment depends on relatively few systems in a quarter, even one or two projects can cause significant swings in the profitability. But our target is to stabilize margins on a higher level in the mid-term.

Here you see our order intake. It was slightly higher than in the third quarter of '24, but lower than in the fourth quarter. A slower first quarter 2025 was anticipated as we received some orders at the end of '24 that we had expected for the first quarter. For us, EUR88.1 million is a solid number here.

In terms of regional distribution, Asia-Pacific continues to be the strongest contributor to group order intake with a share of almost 79%. The changes in our balance sheet were relatively small in the first quarter of 2025. Total assets increased by EUR12.5 million. At the non-current assets, we added EUR1.5 million for property, plant and equipment. Current assets increased by EUR11.2 million compared to year-end. Inventories were up by EUR3.2 million or 1.5% to EUR217.1 million. A positive driver was the increase of cash and cash equivalents, which rose by EUR7.5 million to EUR143.7 million.

There is also not much change on the liabilities and equity side in the first quarter. Our equity position grew through the net profit. Consequently, our equity ratio improved again and is now at 57.1%, up 1.2 percentage points since year-end 2024. The change in the non-current liabilities is mostly driven by tax liabilities. The deferred tax liabilities increased to EUR24.9 million up from EUR20.8 million at the beginning of the year. The current liabilities also only slightly changed during the first quarter. Tax liabilities were EUR8.2 million lower than in the end of 2024. Other financial liabilities decreased by EUR3.8 million and trade payables increased by EUR2.4 million.

As we have taken over the new building in Zhubei on 1 April, we will see the effect as of our halfyear report. We expect the balance sheet, respectively the total assets, to increase by around EUR43 million, while intangible assets will increase on the asset side and financial debt from lease obligations will be affected the liability side.

And now, it's Burkhardt again to conclude our presentation with our outlook.

## **Burkhardt Frick**

Many thanks, Cornelia. Now let's have first a look at the current situation in context of expected sales for the full year of 2025. In the first quarter, we achieved sales of EUR123.2 million and we started the second quarter with an order book level of EUR392.7 million. As said, we are not yet facing any significant project delays or cancellations. If you now sum up these figures, you get to a number of around EUR515 million. However, there are already a number of orders in the Photomask Solutions segment especially that we are expecting to deliver in the first half of '26. Taking it all into account, and if the economic situation and circumstances don't get any worse, there's sufficient visibility to be confident about our guidance.

From this perspective, we continue to confirm our guidance for all key figures. However, the

macroeconomic risk have increased significantly in recent weeks after the first communicating our guidance in late March. Factors like a full enforcement of tariffs after the 90-day freeze or even a further escalation have not been taken in. The same accounts for additional substantial currency changes. This can have a negative impact on the global economy and could delay our customers' CapEx spend and postpone projects. We increase our ability to react quickly and increase our flexibility to deal with a changing political and economic environment.

Personally, I remain positive and firmly believe in the underlying mid and long-term growth potential for both the entire industry and SUSS. AI evolution and the digital age has a long way to go.

And with that, I'm looking forward to your questions.

## **Questions And Answers**

### **Operator** (Question And Answer)

Well, thank you very much for the presentation and we will now move on to the Q&A session. And we have some participants raising their hands and we'll start with someone with his first name Jan. Jan, you should be able to speak now.

### **Q - Janardan Menon**

Yes. Hi. It's Janardan Menon from Jefferies. Sorry, I had to dial in on another line. Yes, my question is really on the two things. One is, you talked about an April improvement in the temporary bonder orders. How do you see that coming through? Do you get a feeling that that is a one-off or do you think that after a sort of a lull for some digestion phase, the orders from the HBM side are sort of restarting all over again? I mean, how would you characterize it?

### **A - Burkhardt Frick**

Yes. Thanks. I think that's a good question. Now, I think I said it on several calls already, we don't expect the huge waves of orders we saw in the initial ramp. And yes, there was some absorption because we had to install dozens of lines at multiple locations. What we do see now is a kind of smaller orders which come spaced out and as the capacity is required in the foreseeable future. So not huge bulk orders, but orders for two, three, four lines in one go. And we expect them to come along also in the foreseeable future, but not as concentrated as we saw it in the late half of '23 and also in the first half of '24,.

### **Q - Janardan Menon**

Understood. And your commentary on the tariffs and the uncertainty is sounding a bit more cautious than some of your peers in the equipment industry. Most companies have sort of said, they're not seeing much effect, which you have also done, but your sort of overall comments are maybe a little bit more saying that you have a more cautious view on the equipment market for this year. Anything specific in any conversation with customers or anything that is leading you to that caution or is this entirely a sort of a general caution that the global economy could weaken in the second half of the year and that could lead you to see some weakness?

### **A - Burkhardt Frick**

I think we share the same sentiment as our industry peers in this one. So we don't see anything different here. I think we were just trying to express a bit more nuance that there's of course a direct U.S. exposure, which is very little, but if the global economy is being affected, of course it affects all of us. And there's not only a tariff factor, there's also a currency factor. But I think that's

exactly the same situation for all players in the industry. So we haven't seen negative customer reactions. As I said, we don't have any postponements. Now, of course, you have this 90 day window where even we see the opposite effect. We see customers asking us to ship faster, which of course we are trying to do where we can, but we share exactly the same sentiment as all players in the industry.

### **Q - Janardan Menon**

And one last brief question before I squeeze it in. Can you give an update on the high NA Photomask Solutions sort of co-development, what the timescale there is?

### **A - Burkhardt Frick**

I think you're referring to our MaskTrackSmart platform, which is under development. It's on time. The MaskTrackSmart is scheduled to launch at the end of this year and volume next year. So this is progressing well. The MaskTrack Smart BD development, we already received the first orders, so we're kind of entering now the phase where we also start close evaluations with customers for the next platform.

### **Q - Janardan Menon**

Understood. Thank you so much.

### **Operator**

Well, thanks for the questions. And we move on to the next participant. Mr. Jarad, you should be able to speak now.

### **Q - Abed Jarad**

Hi. Good afternoon, everyone. I was just wondering if you can help us quantify the effect of the startup costs and the mix in product and customer on the gross margin in Advanced Backend Solutions, like by how much percentage point each one contributed to the effect?

### **A - Burkhardt Frick**

Yes. We can. I mean, as you probably know, product and customer mix effects we always have, and it's different across the customer base and the product base. That is an effect we always face. What overlapped in this quarter was mainly those investments we have to make into the supply chain for really significantly scaling up our UV scanner capacity in Taiwan, and that is affecting the supply chain and also a lot of training and resource costs. But maybe there's something more to add from a finance side.

### **A - Cornelia Ballwiesser**

Regarding the mix or the change compared to the fourth quarter, I can say all projects have individual margins, and it's a variation, and it's normal -- Photomask positive development is continuing. And Advanced Backend Solutions, yes, there is a negative impact as we prepare to produce by far more UV scanners. Yes, that's it, what I can say regarding the mix.

### **Q - Abed Jarad**

So this is expected to continue going into Q2, Q3?

**A - Cornelia Ballwiesser**

Not really.

**Q - Abed Jarad**

Okay. So regarding order intake maybe, do you expect an acceleration going forward or is it still muted?

**A - Burkhardt Frick**

No, I think the entire industry is cautious right now. So I think it would be foolish to anticipate an acceleration. But we have an order intake, which for the quarter is on a high level, especially since it was depleted by the previous quarter -- by the last quarter of Q4. And we have to see how the whole industry behaves. I mean, so far, we have lots of leads and projects, and of course, we can only account and book the orders when we receive them. So it's very difficult to predict that. It depends on the overall industry segment.

**Q - Abed Jarad**

Okay. Thank you. My last question, maybe can you help us quantify the effect of that currency, like based on an increase of \$0.01 to euro, how much does it impact your revenue and profitability? Can you quantify that?

**A - Cornelia Ballwiesser**

Yes. Let's put it this way, we have calculated a scenario if our planned or our assumed currency rate for the U.S. dollar will go up to \$1.15, then we have, as you can see in our presentation, around EUR42 million in the U.S. dollar in the order intake, it's just EUR2.5 million, I would say. If you look only to this order intake or order book, we have EUR42 million.

**Q - Abed Jarad**

Okay. But correct me if I'm wrong, isn't all your orders in China is in U.S. dollar, so they're also exposed?

**A - Cornelia Ballwiesser**

No, no.

**Q - Abed Jarad**

Ah, okay.

**A - Burkhardt Frick**

I think the majority is in euro, of course U.S. projects, the majority is in U.S. dollar, but that is roughly a 10% portion of our total order book. So the pure dollar exposure is limited, just as the direct related U.S. tariff exposure. So therefore I think it's not as severe as for many other companies.

**Q - Abed Jarad**

Okay. Perfect. Thank you so much.

## **Operator**

Thank you. Okay. We move on to the next participant. Mr.Kuhn, you should be able to place your question.

## **Q - Michael Kuhn**

Yes. Good afternoon, Thanks for taking the question. Firstly on the product categories and let's say your delivery windows, my understanding is in Photomask, you're essentially sold out for this year. Maybe you could provide us a quick overview on the other product category, then also where would you expect to maybe collect additional orders every year and also with delivery this year and what that would mean in terms of, say, general scenario analysis?

## **A - Burkhardt Frick**

You're very hard to understand, sorry, there was quite a bad line, but I think I got the gist of it. So you're right. In Photomask, we have long early times. So orders we are collecting now, they are definitely for next year delivery, so orders we collect from now onwards. With a big order book of -- we are sold out till towards the end of the year. I think towards the end of the year, I think we can have slots, but then, of course, are for next year's deliveries. So there we are close to be maxed out.

For the backend business, depending on what machines you're talking, lead times are between four and nine months, depending on what type of equipment we are looking at and how many special options are included. Therefore, we would still have slots available if we can collect orders, I would say, until summer time frame. The orders we have on hand, and I think that's what I also showed by this example calculation, are sufficient to support our guidance. I think that's I think what's important and everything else, of course, would be important for 2026. But this is not what we are talking about now.

## **Operator**

Okay. I think, unfortunately, we lost Mr.Kuhn in the call, but maybe he'll dial in later or can watch the recording of this. We move on to the next participant. Mrs.Winkler, you should be able to place your question.

## **Q - Nicole Winkler**

Yes. Thank you for taking my question. So the first one would be regarding order intake dynamics. If you can give us more color indication, how order intake dynamics are in Advanced Backend segment, especially when it comes to UV scanners and bonders and also Photomask segment related to geographies. (Technical Difficulty). What's the delta you actually expected for beginning of this year and whether they are geared towards UV scanners, bonders or Photomask Solutions?

## **A - Burkhardt Frick**

Nicole, let's start with the second question first. So I cannot out of my head now quantify this exactly. But there in the double-digit million range, what we expected in Q1, which were already placed in Q4 last year. They were distributed across both business units. So there was no preferred unit where we saw a concentration in. Now, they of course -- yes, of course, we are glad we got the orders, but of course, if they would have not come in Q4, Q1 order intake would have been higher and this would have made it even more a record intake. The first question was about the -- was about the mask?

## **A - Unidentified Speaker**



The order momentum in our different segments, especially bonders and UV scanners, and also follow mask tools.

### **A - Burkhardt Frick**

Yes. Now, and of course you know this, when we get big orders for big tools, they can make a big difference. So in Q1, we delivered and installed a lot of AI products, but we didn't get many orders there. This quarter started with AI orders in return, so it really mixes there. There's no -- we can't see yet a pattern or something. It's just it happens, and it can easily shift from one quarter to the other. So there's no strong rush there.

On the UV side, the scanner side, we collected a large amount of orders late last year, and we collected more orders in the first quarter, which led to a situation that we are sold out for the entire year, while we are scaling up our capacity significantly. So the not-yet-available capacity we are working on now is basically already booked.

### **A - Unidentified Speaker**

And, Nicole, you were also asking about the regional split in terms of order intake, and here we just can say that order intake also from Chinese customers was quite strong in Q1, representing roughly one-third of total order intake. So still a bigger number as some other companies predicted for semi-cap companies. ASML, for example, was talking about roughly 20% future share from Chinese business, but so far, we are still at roughly one-third.

### **Q - Nicole Winkler**

All right. Understood. Thank you. And a second one would be regarding first profit margins. So you're keeping the guidance and expecting an improvement from Q2 onwards. The only thing I just wanted to understand is, isn't it fair to assume increasing costs in the course of the remainder of this year related to the ramp-up in Taiwan, as we've already seen this kind of effects in Q1 as mentioned?

### **A - Burkhardt Frick**

I think Q1 were one-off effects which we don't expect because they were kind of set up costs for increasing scaling up the UV scanner production. A higher load on the rental part comes from the second half of the year, but Cornelia, you can probably comment on this more.

### **A - Cornelia Ballwiesser**

Yes. We expect in the second half of the year around a lower single-digit amount for the rent or leasing fees. And yes, some moving costs, that's the one-off, but with the drainings to scale up the UV scanner, we expect that this goes down.

### **Q - Nicole Winkler**

Okay. Great. Thank you.

### **Operator**

Thank you very much. And we try to get back to Mr.Kuhn. Mr.Kuhn, you should be able to place your question.

### **Q - Michael Kuhn**

Yes. Sorry, next try. I hope you can hear me better now.

**A - Burkhardt Frick**

Yes, we can. Thanks.

**Q - Michael Kuhn**

Wonderful. So one follow-up on my previous question would be in the current order book, let's say, what amount of orders is definitely for next year delivery? That would be the first question.

**A - Burkhardt Frick**

Yes. I think it's -- I give you a range, not to be completely wrong, but it's between EUR20 million and EUR25 million.

**Q - Michael Kuhn**

Right. That's, I think, pretty precise already. And then one question, I think one concern I've heard a few times as of late was that we might lose market share at Samsung from the temporary Bonder side. That conclusion was drawn based on, let's say, some statements from a competitor. Maybe you could comment on the situation there and how you see your customer behaving and whether you see any changes in equipment market share there.

**A - Burkhardt Frick**

I think that memory supplier or maker you're referring to is yet in a phase to ramp and is working on the qualification with the big AI chipmaker. We have multiple lines installed there and they are also ready to ramp. But of course, they're not moving with more lines until that capacity they have installed is being fully utilized. I think once that happens, I would also expect that we will see more orders from that end. Currently, we don't see any competitive activity there, at least not that I know of.

**Q - Michael Kuhn**

That's clear. And then lastly, I think there has been more positivity around temporary bonding as of late, with more orders coming in at competitors. Obviously, you're in a little earlier stage in that context still. What are you seeing? How are your -- let's say, qualification processes making progress? And maybe you can give us a general update on that project and on the timeline you're currently envisaging.

**A - Burkhardt Frick**

But you're referring to temporary bonding because there was a glitch again?

**Q - Michael Kuhn**

No, no, sorry. If I said temporary, I was referring to hybrid bonding, sorry.

**A - Burkhardt Frick**

Okay. Yes. That's, I think, what everybody is waiting for. So I think that there were some relaxations, which might push the introduction of hybrid bonding back. But we have yet to see that. That of course will, in return, continue with the qualified records and will extend the lifetime of TCB bonding. And we are not involved in TCB bonding from our end. So I think we are monitoring this very closely. And since we are launching new versions of our diatom wafer bonder very shortly, I think the time is in our favor in that sense.

**Q - Michael Kuhn**

Maybe in context, one last follow-up. How many potential hybrid bonding clients are you currently in contact with, roughly?

**A - Burkhardt Frick**

Oh, that's a good question. We talked to many, because they also like to have alternatives to the other dominating party. I mean, it's a number larger than 5 and smaller than 10, I would say.

**Q - Michael Kuhn**

Perfect. Thank you.

**Operator**

Thank you very much. And we move on to the next participant. Mr. Schaumann, you are able to speak now and place your question.

**Q - Malte Schaumann**

Good afternoon. Two questions also on bonding, a quick follow-up on hybrid bonding. Do you expect one of these potential customers to enter an evaluation process before the end of this year, or is that something, given that customers are not really rushing to adopt the technology, you would expect for next year?

**A - Burkhardt Frick**

Yes. We are actually shipping a system this year, but that's not to a customer, that's to the evaluation site we have in the U.S. I think we also went public about that. That thing is being set up as we speak and we will ship this in Q3. A volume customer, we are working with volume customers also, but they are a bit -- yes, they're not in a rush in that sense. (Technical Difficulty). We can claim a victory here.

**Q - Malte Schaumann**

Okay. Thanks. Do you expect that to change? Is that something -- what would be required, maybe from your side, anything required from your side to change that, to get a bigger breakthrough, or is that more related to customer decisions?

**A - Burkhardt Frick**

Yes. It's related to customer decisions. As we also discussed earlier, to change a tool of record, unless you have something which is significantly better in cost of ownership, or has features the others don't have, it's very difficult to break in. But that's a declared target that we want to get a bigger share, also in the permanent bonding side.

**Q - Malte Schaumann**

Okay. So quite happy with the setup you have or with the product you have and need to have new customers with new product lines where you get a better chance to be qualified for production -- commercial production.

**A - Burkhardt Frick**

Yes, you can say that.

**Q - Malte Schaumann**

Okay. Thanks.

**Operator**

Thank you. And we move on to the next participant. Veysel Taze, you should be able to speak now.

**Q - Veysel Taze**

Can you hear me?

**Operator**

Yes, we can now hear you.

**Q - Veysel Taze**

Great. On the scanner business, I mean, it looks like compared to the last time you reported that demand seems to have accelerated again. And I was wondering where this is coming from. I mean, if you look at CoWoS capacities for AI chips, then, yes, the commentary was rather, yes, it is improving, but it was not really a huge acceleration. Is there anything else beyond the scanner business, beyond AI? I mean, all this 3D packaging topics, et cetera, is something coming from this part. So what is really behind this re-acceleration of demand or further accelerations?

**A - Burkhardt Frick**

Yes. It goes primarily into the CoWoS ramp. And then, of course, in the market mixed messages about this, but we see a demand which is factors bigger than in the past. And it can have two reasons, either there are more lines being built or we gain market share. So you can pick either one.

**Q - Veysel Taze**

And which one would you pick?

**A - Burkhardt Frick**

Honestly, I don't care because -- no, but seriously, I mean, we have a competitor there, but we have a system which is really leading in throughput and therefore cost of ownership because our scanner is a full field scanner. The other solution is a stepper where you have to do stitching. And our system is actually providing a much better economics.

**Q - Veysel Taze**

Got it. So potentially share gains. And then on the order entry, you mentioned that, yes, there was a queue for some orders being put forward. So you said euro double-digits. So let's say, if it's EUR10 million now, in another comment, you said you don't, yes, it would be probably foolish to assume orders accelerating from here, given the macro picture or headwinds. So what is the clean run rate where you would say the orders would stay, let's say for one quarter or two flat? Is it EUR88 million or would it be around the EUR98 million or EUR100 million?

**A - Burkhardt Frick**

Yes. I wish I could answer that question. I mean, I think we frequently said, often we have multiple systems ordered at once and then there might be one month or even a quarter where we don't get for that system an order. So it's -- so not in that sense, it's not predictable. The mix in the end

will make it. And of course we want to have an order intake of definitely above EUR90 million or EUR100 million to really keep growing. This is clear.

At the same time, we are shortening lead times. So that means we can deliver faster. So also order to collect in the course of a year, we can deliver the same year. I think that's a major difference compared to past years where we were sold out and we had a huge backlog. So those days are over so we can react faster. So it will be more dynamic. And the further acceleration we only see on, on very short-term, with this 90 day window, but this is not on new orders, it's more on expediting deliveries.

### **Q - Veysel Taze**

Got it. So -- but still is the clean run rate, would you assume is it the, if you would be my place, the EUR88 million or above EUR90 million? So for Q1 and if you would to assume that as a run rate for the upcoming quarters?

### **A - Burkhardt Frick**

It's very difficult to say, to give you a number. I mean, you need to draw your own conclusions. You saw our distribution and that's also why we provide this granularity that you see how different the quarters can look like. We have now shown five quarters in a row where we had order intakes between EUR80 million and I think EUR150 million, roughly. So it is -- it can go up and down. And yes, there might be concentration to Q4 for various reasons. But I think every time the reasons are slightly different. So it's -- there's quite some variance in there.

### **Q - Veysel Taze**

Got it. And then last one on the cleaning equipment, the mid-range and you were talking about during the last quarter, is that something that could help incrementally this year, particularly since it was designed also to bring some Chinese customers back into the equation to have a better tool in terms of yield or in terms of yield and production. Is that something that can help for 2025?

### **A - Burkhardt Frick**

Obviously, this tool is under development. But we see a huge interest in that tool. So we expect orders this year and especially also out of China for that tool, even before it's ready. That will be, of course, only an add to the contribution in '26 and onwards.

### **Q - Veysel Taze**

Okay. But orders could be in this year, but it sounds like rather towards the year end then something?

### **A - Burkhardt Frick**

Definitely.

### **Q - Veysel Taze**

Got it. Thank you very much.

### **Operator**

Well, thank you for the questions. And we get back to Mr. Jarad for a follow-up question. He raised his hand, Mr. Jarad, you should be able to speak again.

**Q - Abed Jarad**

Yes. Hi. Thank you. Another question regarding the Photomask Solutions. I was really impressed by the EBIT margin expansion. I know that you mentioned that it's due partially to the higher volume. And -- but besides this, it was also to the higher margins tools. Do you expect this also going further in 2025 or was this kind of one-off and product mix is expected to change?

**A - Burkhardt Frick**

It is expected to change because it's -- Photomask also very customer dependent. And depending, it's not only the product mix, it's also the customer mix. Because with some customers, we have very close co-developments. And of course, those systems have a different margin than customers who simply place orders, who were not engaged in the co-development.

**Q - Abed Jarad**

Okay. That's clear enough. Thank you.

**Operator**

Thank you. And in the meantime, we have received no further questions. I'll wait for some more moments. If someone is raising their hand, this is not the case. So we therefore come to the end of today's earnings call. And thank you very much for joining your shown interest in SUSS MicroTec SE and this lively conversation. Should further questions arise at a later time, please feel free to contact Investor Relations. A big thank you also to Mr. Frick, Dr. Ballwiesser, Dr. Rohe and Mr. Kopsel. I wish you all the best and a lovely remaining day. With this, I hand over to Mr. Kopsel for some final remarks.

**A - Sven Kopsel**

Yes. Thank you so much. There's not really anything to add. So just get in touch with us if any questions occur, we are there for you. Have a great afternoon. Bye, bye.