

Nexperia

Nexperia's China unit says staff can ignore orders from Dutch headquarters

Tensions escalate between Beijing and The Hague over control of Chinese-owned, Netherlands-based chipmaker



The directive signals a potential split of the Chinese-owned, Netherlands-based group's operations © Fabian Bimmer/Reuters

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Nexperia's China unit has told local employees they can disregard instructions from the chipmaker's Dutch headquarters as tensions escalate between Beijing and The Hague over control of the Chinese-owned group.

In an internal memo posted publicly on Sunday, Nexperia China told employees to follow the instructions of the domestic management team, which it said would "operate and make decisions independently as a Chinese enterprise".

"For any other external instructions . . . even if delivered via Outlook or Teams . . . everyone has the right to refuse execution," the notice said, advising staff to contact human resources if they received communication from "external parties" or experienced "outside pressure".

The directive signals a potential split of the Chinese-owned, Netherlands-based company's operations after the Dutch government this month [took management control of the chipmaker](#).

The seizure came after Washington warned that [Nexperia](#) would not be removed from its export control list if its Chinese chief executive remained in charge. In response, Beijing blocked most of the chipmaker's final products from leaving China.

The China unit said it had sent the memo to employees to clarify a "confusing" email sent the previous day from Nexperia's Dutch headquarters. It also told staff that operations were "completely normal" and that they would continue to be paid.

Nexperia in the Netherlands condemned the memo for "falsely claiming that Nexperia and the Dutch government have abandoned the Chinese market and that the factory is now operating independently under a new entity".

"We regret that certain individuals . . . see the need to spread these falsehoods, and remain hopeful to come to a solution that allows Nexperia to continue serving its customers and partners, and one that brings stability for its employees," the company said.

A Nexperia employee in China, who declined to give her name, said: "We are in great internal disorder right now and the situation is very unclear."

The Dutch company makes basic chips that are widely used in electronic systems in cars and control everything from lighting and airbag systems to locks and windows. It was sold to a Chinese consortium in 2017 before being bought by Chinese group Wingtech.

While Nexperia produces semiconductor wafers in Germany and the UK, 80 per cent of its final products are processed in China.

Corporate filings show Wingtech owns the Netherlands-based Nexperia entity, which in turn controls its Chinese subsidiaries.

The Chinese commerce ministry's move to curb Nexperia's outbound shipments has begun to ripple across the automotive supply chain, prompting some European carmakers to dust off their "Covid playbook" as they face a looming automotive chip shortage.

Vincent Karremans, the Dutch economy minister, is expected to meet his Chinese counterpart Wang Wentao in the coming days to resolve the issue, the Dutch ministry said on Monday.

Additional contributions by Tina Hu in Beijing

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