

Wireless expert Parrot seeks acquisitions

French wireless devices specialist Parrot (PARRO.PA) is looking for acquisitions and has up to 40 million euros available to spend, its finance director told Reuters on Tuesday.

Parrot is looking at strengthening its technology portfolio or adding a new product but is not chasing large transactions as it is "not a debt-oriented group", Gilles Labossiere said in an interview.

"We needed a strong cash base to address risks, but we can say that we have achieved this and, like everyone else, we are looking for acquisition opportunities, we are curious," Labossiere said.

At the end of 2010, Parrot had almost 91 million euros (\$126.6 million) in cash, of which 30 million to 40 million could be used for external growth, Labossiere said.

Parrot, founded in 1994, designs hands-free phone kits and car stereo devices allowing internet navigation, with clients such as Renault-Nissan (RENA.PA) (7201.T), Ford (F.N), Volkswagen (VOWG.DE) and BMW (BMWG.DE).

The company branched out last year to launch a helicopter drone controlled via iPhone (AAPL.O). It is aiming to sell between 500,000 and a million of the so-called quadricopter AR.Drones in total after selling 120,000 last year.

Parrot, which makes a third of its sales with car manufacturers, expects its market share in the automotive business to grow this year thanks to new contracts with carmakers from Japan and the United States, Labossiere said.

The CFO added that research and development spending, which reached 28.7 million euros last year, would rise by 4 to 5 million this year.

Shares of Parrot closed up 0.6 percent at 25.22 euros on Tuesday, giving the company a market value of around 319 million euros. The stock is up 4.6 percent so far this year.

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