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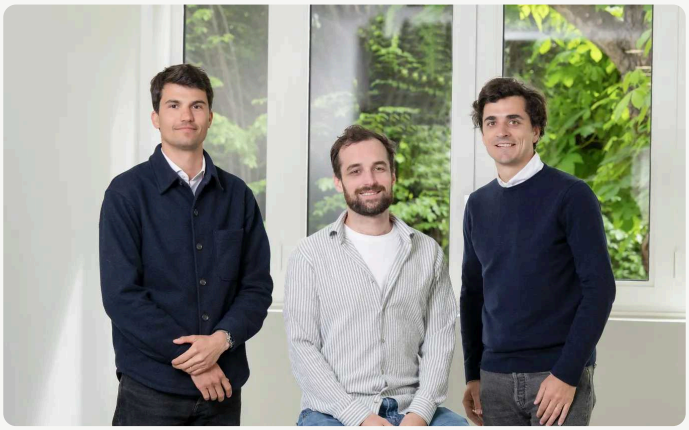

# Europeans can still get on board the AI video train

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# Europeans can still get on board the video-AI train

OP-ED — For Florian Fournier, there’s no doubt: the market for video-related AI is set to explode. With Orasio—software designed to interpret images—he is targeting European leadership, ready to take on Chinese, American, and Israeli heavyweights.

Each week, European decision-makers become a little more aware of their dependence on American and Chinese technologies. And that dependence is accelerating rapidly as artificial intelligence spreads into every part of political and economic life. Florian Fournier had this sobering reality in mind when he embarked, at 32, on a new entrepreneurial venture. In early 2024, he stepped back from managing PayFit, a French fintech gem founded nine years earlier that built payroll and HR software.

The École Polytechnique graduate wanted to commit to a project at the intersection of security, sovereignty, and defence. For a year, he reflected and met with many people—around 150 experts in these fields. Orasio was born from those extensive consultations in January. The premise: the market for video AI will explode over the next decade. Demand is colossal for software capable of interpreting images—after the fact or in real time—detecting threats, and supporting decision-making.

The problem is that the market is currently dominated by Chinese, American, and Israeli companies. Alongside his two co-founders—Fabio Gennari, formerly with France’s Ministry of the Interior, and Arnaud Delaunay, a specialist in computer vision and deploying AI on embedded devices—he hopes to build the European leader in video AI.

A first product for the French armed forces

To grow in such highly sensitive environments, the trio have done things properly. The talent is French, and the first funding is European: the €16 million seed round came from France’s Frst Capital, Germany’s Global Founders Capital, and Poland’s Expedition Fund. Facing them, the small French team and its dozen engineers must contend with Israeli and American startups—often fuelled by public money—or Chinese giants such as Hikvision, a world leader in surveillance camera manufacturing, suspected of having passed data to Chinese military intelligence services.

It’s a harsh, unforgiving world, where the military dimension is omnipresent. In fact, it’s for the French armed forces that Orasio is currently developing its first product. The team plans to roll out its verticals one after another, because each use case is different: military solutions have nothing in common with those designed for mass retail or private security companies.

In its labs, the startup is also preparing products for local authorities and the private sector by the end of the year. The bet is huge, but the development approach chosen by the three entrepreneurs could become a case study. By starting with end-user needs and securing funding from strong European backers, this new generation of entrepreneurs is showing a rare maturity—one that is still too often missing from the French Tech ecosystem.