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Orasio: the co-founder of Payfit launches a new defence project

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Orasio: PayFit co-founder launches a new defence venture

EXCLUSIVE — Florian Fournier, one of the founders of PayFit—specialist in payroll management and HR processes—is launching a new defence startup called Orasio. He reveals its scope exclusively and announces a €16 million fundraising round.

War in Ukraine, the U.S. threatening to leave NATO, a return to protectionism, and more: the world is changing, and countries are realizing that building military and defence sovereignty in case of conflict is crucial. This climate could benefit French defence startups, long overlooked by investment funds—making it a timely moment to launch a young company in the sector.

That's exactly what Florian Fournier understood. A co-founder of PayFit, the payroll and HR-process specialist, he stepped away from his operational role in January 2024. Alongside Arnaud Delaunay—also a former École Polytechnique student—and Fabio Gennari, a former HEC and ENA graduate, whom he met in the French "classes préparatoires," they founded a new startup named Orasio, a reference to the term "orasi," meaning "vision" in Greek. "This launch is the result of 12 months of preparation. After nine years spent building PayFit, I wanted to commit again to an entrepreneurial adventure—starting from scratch—on a topic that is deeply structuring for society: security and defence," says Florian Fournier, now CEO of Orasio. "I've always had a strong sensitivity to defence issues, reinforced during my time at a military academy," he adds.

Becoming a European alternative to American and Israeli players

Founded in early 2025, Orasio develops artificial intelligence solutions that analyse and detect critical situations in real time within video streams. The startup will help the military, local authorities, and large companies automatically analyse their video footage to alert and assist them in the event of abnormal incidents. More specifically, it will work with organisations operating stadiums, ports, airports, or train stations, as well as police and gendarmerie services—and, of course, local authorities such as cities and regions. "Today, 95% of large cities in France are equipped with a video protection system, showing how central this technology has become in our security policies," notes Florian Fournier.

In practical terms, Orasio will make it easier to spot the outbreak of a fire, a person falling, crowd movements, or the carrying of weapons—using AI and clients' video feeds—and to raise the alert quickly when there's a problem. "We started from two observations: AI applied to video will expand considerably over the next ten years; and today, the most advanced solutions in this field are mainly American, Israeli, or Chinese. This creates a real challenge for Europe in terms of technological sovereignty. Our ambition is clear: to design a 100% European solution capable of competing technologically with the best global players, while respecting European ethical and legal standards," says Florian Fournier. In his view, there is a real opportunity to seize in Europe. "At this stage, we have to acknowledge that European solutions are not in a position to compete with global leaders, both technologically and in terms of deployment," he says.

€16 million fundraising round

To get the startup on track, the executive announces a €16 million fundraising round. The round was led by the French fund Frst, a seed-stage specialist. Over the past ten years, it has deployed €150 million across more than fifty startups. It has invested early in companies such as Pigment, Electra, Doctrine—and PayFit itself.

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For this new startup, Frst is contributing just over one third of the capital raised. Other investors include Germany's Global Founders Capital and Poland's Expeditions Fund. Based in Warsaw, London, and Geneva, the latter is also a seed-stage specialist, investing notably in defence and cybersecurity. "We chose to anchor our project in a European dynamic from the start, surrounding ourselves exclusively with European investors for this first fundraising round," says Florian Fournier.

The funds will enable Orasio to further its technological development and build products "as competitive as the best solutions worldwide," in the CEO's words. The company, which already has eight employees, is also recruiting—especially within technical teams—with senior profiles specialised in computer vision. Finally, it plans to use the funds to commercialise its products at a European scale, with availability starting this summer. The first step is to win the domestic market. Then, very quickly, the startup aims to expand into Germany, Spain, and Poland. And "clearly, it won't stop there," says its CEO.