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The humanoid robot race has a new contender: Swiss startup Embodied AI unveils AIR, a humanoid built to work next to factory workers

Embodied AI, born at Swiss technical university EPFL and backed by investors including Faber VC and Czech AI fund Look AI Ventures, unveils its first humanoid at Humanoid Europe 2026 in Munich.

Munich, 6 November 2026 – Tesla and Figure AI have poured billions into humanoid robots, machines shaped roughly like people. Now a 25-person Swiss startup has built one designed to work right next to factory workers. Embodied AI today **unveils its robot AIR**, which CEO Francesco Stella will present at Humanoid Europe 2026 in Munich. AIR has a body and two arms on a wheeled base and is built to work beside people without a safety cage. Embodied AI will open orders for AIR after the unveiling.

Factories across Europe still do many manual, high-variation tasks by hand because conventional robots can't automate them, and they are increasingly short of workers to do them. While most humanoid robots so far are seen mainly in demo videos, AIR runs on the same AI stack that is already doing paid work on a customer's production line in Embodied AI's two-arm robot cell.

In paid pilots with large manufacturers, including a leading consumer electronics manufacturer and a global automotive and industrial technology supplier, Embodied AI's robots reach an **average success rate of 95%**.

A different bet in the humanoid race

Many of the best-funded companies are betting on one giant general-purpose robot brain. Embodied AI takes the pragmatic route: put a safe robot on the production line now, make it useful from day one, and let it learn the job as it works directly on the line.

- **Safety built in, not added on**: The heavy parts sit in the torso, and the soft, light arms give way on contact, so AIR can work beside people without a cage. CE marking is planned for 2027, as the EU's new machinery rules take effect.
- **Useful from the first shift**: At first a remote operator runs the robot, so the factory gets value immediately.
- **Learning on paid work, not in the lab**: Every shift becomes training data, and within a month the robot takes the task over on its own. Each deployment makes the next one faster and cheaper.
- **Built for real workloads**: Depending on the task, one AIR can handle the workload of up to three people per shift, helping factories automate the work they still can't automate today.

"If an AI system recommends the wrong product to you, nobody gets hurt. But if a robot makes a mistake and hits someone, obviously you don't want that," said **Francesco Stella, Co-Founder and CEO of Embodied AI**. "That's why we developed robots that are physically safe, useful from day one thanks to teleoperation, and autonomous within a month thanks to our own AI stack."

A young, world-class team that chose Europe

Embodied AI is led by 28-year-old CEO Francesco Stella, who earned his PhD in robotics at EPFL, did research at MIT, and was featured in Forbes Italia's Under 30. His co-founders are CTO Kai Junge, who trained at Cambridge and EPFL, and COO Max Polzin, previously a tech lead at Seervision, a startup later acquired by Q-SYS.

The company is headquartered in Lausanne and backed by an international group of investors including Faber VC, Look AI Ventures, Techshop Capital, Vento, Plug and Play, Kickfund, and Excellis.

"Physical AI has a safety problem. Most robots built for factories are too heavy and too rigid to share a line with people, so they end up behind fences (and that's a big problem). Embodied AI took the opposite route: a 2 kg tendon-driven arm that lifts 5 kg, deployed in one week and reaching an average 95% task success rate within a month. Safety by design, not by distance. That's why we backed the team at Embodied AI," said **Angelo Burgarello, Partner at Look AI Ventures**.

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Photos of AIR, the Embodied AI team, and a video teaser: https://we.tl/t-m4OVa3tvCtMjY2bZ

About Embodied AI
Embodied AI builds physically safe robots that work alongside people in factories, are productive from the first shift, and learn tasks on real production lines. Founded as a spin-out of EPFL, one of Europe's leading technical universities, the company is based in Lausanne, Switzerland, with an office in Rome. More at www.embodiedai.ch.

About Look AI Ventures
Look AI Ventures is the first AI-focused venture fund in the Czech Republic. Founded in 2022 by a team of managers, entrepreneurs, and technology and AI experts, it invests in early-stage AI startups worldwide and backs founders with hands-on business and technical support.

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