

## Press release

Paris, May 20, 2026

# Ardian, Artefact, Bull, EDF, Capgemini, the iliad Group, Orange and Scaleway combine their expertise to run as a candidate for a European AI Gigafactory in France



**Ardian, Artefact, Bull, Capgemini, the EDF group, the iliad Group, Orange and Scaleway have teamed up within the AION consortium to launch an ambitious bid for France under the European Union’s AI Gigafactories initiative.**

In the coming years, the competitiveness of EU economies will directly depend on their ability to access massive computing power that is available, affordable and sovereign. The challenge is industrial, financial and strategic: enabling European companies to train, deploy and operate their AI models under controlled conditions in terms of performance, cost and sovereignty.

This is precisely the aim of the project put forward by the AION consortium.

## **Mobilizing French excellence to build world-leading AI infrastructure**

In response to the rapid adoption of AI and the explosion in demand for computing power, AION brings together all of the critical skills required for creating new-generation European infrastructure.

The consortium leverages the complementary strengths of a wide spectrum of benchmark players covering the entire value chain: supercomputers, microprocessors, quantum computing solutions and critical infrastructure, expertise in energy, cloud platforms, sovereign AI and the development and operation of datacenter infrastructure, as well as AI deployment capabilities, investment capacity and industrial know-how.

AION will also be able to draw on a broad ecosystem made up of technological, academic and industrial partners, as well as user companies such as Le Crédit Agricole, Equans, Future4Care, GENCI, Hugging Face, INRIA, Kyutai, LightOn, Multiverse Computing, Nokia, Opcore, Quandela, PariSanté Campus, Schneider Electric, SiPearl, Sopra Steria, Verne, VSORA and ZML.

## **France – a strategic choice for hosting a European AI Gigafactory**

France has unique strengths for hosting infrastructure of this magnitude. It has abundant, affordable, sovereign and low-carbon electricity thanks to its energy mix that is mainly made up of nuclear and hydraulic power, as well as robust digital infrastructure and recognized expertise across the whole value chain, particularly in data centers, cloud services and high-performance computing.

France has also established itself as one of the most dynamic AI ecosystems in Europe thanks to the quality of its research, the emergence of world-class tech players, and a dense pool of scientific and industrial talent. From research labs to start-ups, through to major end-user companies, it brings together the full range of skills needed to build a competitive AI industry on a European scale.

Hosting an AI Gigafactory would enable France to offer all the conditions for strengthening European tech sovereignty, accelerating AI adoption by private companies and public-sector players, and driving competitiveness and innovation.

## **An ambition built on four pillars**

The AION consortium is based on four fundamental pillars:

- **Performance:** deploying world-class AI infrastructure to serve the European economy.
- **Trust:** reinforcing Europe's strategic autonomy via complete control over the AI value chain – from hardware to open source software – thanks to the support of sovereign players.

- **Openness:** promoting the use of open source technologies, as well as partnerships to strengthen the European ecosystem.
- **Responsibility:** developing AI for the benefit of European research, businesses and citizens with a particular focus on containing its environmental footprint.

## **An open consortium to bring together the European ecosystem**

The alliance announced today marks the starting point of a project aimed at bringing together all French and European players who are ready and willing to contribute to this shared industrial ambition.

**Vincent Luciani, Executive President of Artefact:** *“As an independent European player in data and AI, Artefact is uniquely positioned to observe the rapid growth in demand for computing power, as well as the lack of sufficient sovereign solutions. We’re technology-agnostic and our priority is to provide our customers with truly resilient solutions based on three dimensions of sovereignty: technology, operations and data. There’s no time for companies to wait – the infrastructure of the future needs to be built today. By joining the AION consortium, Artefact will be able to deploy the most ambitious AI use cases for its customers, within a fully sovereign framework, ensuring freedom, security and resilience.”*

**Benoît Gaillochet, Head of Infrastructure Europe at Ardian:** *“It’s time to build a European AI ecosystem together, based on world-class European infrastructure and underpinned by France’s outstanding low-carbon energy capabilities. United by this ambition, we’re delighted to be teaming up with our friends at the Iliad Group and the Orange Group to join and steer the AION consortium, which will also be supported by other major industrial and tech players. Alongside our partners, we’re proud to be putting our industrial and financial expertise to the service of developing sustainable and resilient AI computing capacity on a large scale.”*

**Emmanuel Le Roux, CEO of Bull:** *“This initiative is particularly important for Bull in its capacity as the only player capable of guaranteeing a mostly European supply chain for AI, cloud and supercomputer infrastructure. We see AION as a natural extension of our strategic pathway, bringing additional computing capabilities dedicated to simulation and AI, developing new AI-optimized hardware technologies, and deploying our software platform and data science services to enable the production of industrial AI use cases. Through AION, we’re reaffirming our commitment to strengthening Europe’s ability to develop and operate next-generation AI and cloud infrastructure, while laying the foundations for a more resilient, competitive and independent technology ecosystem.”*

**Etienne Grass, Chief AI Officer at Capgemini Invent:** *“Europe has everything it takes to write one of the most inspiring chapters of the AI revolution: excellence in research, industrial champions, low-carbon energy and values based on the trust and sovereignty of the European system. What was missing was the ability to bring together these strengths based on a shared project that can rise to the challenges at stake. With AION, this goal is achievable. It’s a French venture, led collectively, for the benefit of the whole of Europe. By joining this consortium, Capgemini is committing to put all of its experience and its global network to the service of a*

*cause that is bigger than us all individually: building sovereign and sustainable AI infrastructure that is open to the entire European ecosystem.*

*As a global leader in data and AI-powered business transformation, Capgemini has a specific responsibility in this project. Creating European AI gigafactories means offering our clients the possibility of using sovereign solutions by integrating the latest technological advances with no trade-off between performance and control. Technological sovereignty cannot be decreed – it has to be constructed, brick by brick, with the right partners. We are proud to be a part of this adventure."*

**Beatrice Bigois, Group Senior Executive Vice-President, Customers & Energy Services, at EDF:** *"France has major strengths to lead the way in the development of AI infrastructure, including competitively-priced, sovereign and low-carbon electricity. With this consortium, we're embracing a shared ambition to build a world-class European AI gigafactory based in France, and EDF intends to fully contribute to this strategic momentum for Europe."*

**Thomas Reynaud, Chief Executive Officer of the Iliad Group:** *"In a world where computing capacity is becoming a lever of power, Europe cannot allow itself to depend on infrastructure designed, financed and operated elsewhere. With AION, our aim is to unite a range of leading players to build world-class European AI infrastructure based in France. AION has unprecedented technological clout, bringing together the very best of French and European digital, industrial and energy expertise, and the Iliad Group intends to contribute fully to the project."*

**Christel Heydemann, CEO of the Orange Group:** *"France has unique assets to shape the next chapter of European AI – front-ranking digital infrastructure, low-carbon energy, and one of the most dynamic research and innovation ecosystems in Europe. For Orange, joining the AION consortium reflects our strong conviction that Europe needs collective action to create a powerful, open and inclusive European AI to drive the continent's competitiveness. With its sovereign cloud and trusted AI capabilities, Orange brings to this project what lies at the core of its identity: a trusted player that connects, secures and delivers sovereign digital services for companies, small businesses and individuals."*

**Damien Lucas, CEO of Scaleway:** *"I'm delighted that the AION initiative launched last year is continuing to gain traction and attract broad support. Within this richly diverse industrial alliance, Scaleway will focus on its core expertise of providing an open and interoperable sovereign cloud and AI platform serving businesses, researchers and public-sector players. I'm convinced that this project, which includes leaders across the entire value chain, will help consolidate the foundations of a European AI sector built on openness, control and trust."*

## **About Ardian**

In a world of constant evolution, Ardian stands out for its ability to anticipate, adapt, and turn challenges into opportunities. As a global, diversified private markets firm with 22 offices and more than 350 investment professionals worldwide, we provide investment and customized solutions that reflect new economic dynamics and help our clients remain resilient in a changing world.

We deliver multi-local expertise and long-term performance for our investors and partners as well as shared value for the broader society. Since Ardian's inception in 1996, our pioneering approach to

diversification and our ability to offer tailor-made solutions at scale have remained the heart of our strategy.

With long-standing European roots, Ardian is a leading player in strategic sectors that are at the center of sovereignty issues, including critical infrastructure – both digital and energy – and essential technologies such as semi-conductors, all of which are key pillars of technological independence for nations.

Through commitment, knowledge and technology, we bring lasting value to our companies and contribute positively to the whole industry. Ardian currently manages or advises \$200bn for more than 1,920 clients worldwide across Private Equity, Real Assets, and Credit.

Ardian. Mastering change for lasting value.

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### **About Artefact**

Artefact is a global data services and AI consulting firm based in Paris, with 10 years' expertise in designing and deploying AI technologies and data-driven solutions. The firm's mission is to accelerate data and AI adoption to positively impact people and organizations.

As a pioneer in our field, leveraging data and advanced AI technologies, our teams of consultants and engineers work together to develop solutions that create a real business impact and improve productivity across the entire corporate value chain, while ensuring the ethical and responsible use of data.

Combining best-in-class technological expertise with operational excellence, Artefact partners more than 1,000 companies worldwide in accelerating their business transformation, including over 300 international enterprises. Our 2,000 experts, based in 36 offices across the globe, cover all key sectors of the economy, including industry, retail, luxury, consumer goods, healthcare and finance.

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### **About Bull**

Leveraging nearly a century of innovations, Bull is a global leader for High-Performance Computing, Artificial Intelligence and Quantum technologies with around €720m in revenue and 3,000 professionals operating in 32 countries. Built on an open, end-to-end and trusted approach, Bull designs, deploys and operates hardware, software and strategic services that unlock enterprise value, accelerate scientific research and advance society. Driven by world-class R&D, backed by 1,600 patents, manufacturing excellence and data sciences expertise, Bull enables nations and industries to fully control their AI and data and to drive progress for the benefit of the planet.

For more information, please visit our [website](#) and follow us on [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), and [Youtube](#).

## About Capgemini

Capgemini is an AI-powered global business and technology transformation partner, delivering tangible business value. We imagine the future of organizations and make it real with AI, technology and people. With our strong heritage of nearly 60 years, we are a responsible and diverse group of over 420,000 team members in more than 50 countries. We deliver end-to-end services and solutions with our deep industry expertise and strong partner ecosystem, leveraging our capabilities across strategy, technology, design, engineering and business operations. The Group reported 2025 global revenues of €22.5 billion. Make it real | [www.capgemini.com](http://www.capgemini.com)

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## About EDF

A major player in the energy transition, the EDF Group is an integrated energy company operating across the entire value chain: generation, distribution, trading, energy sales and energy services. As the world's leading low-carbon electricity producer, with 515 TWh of low-carbon generation, 95% decarbonized, and a carbon intensity of 26.5 gCO<sub>2</sub>/kWh in 2025, the Group has developed a diversified generation mix primarily based on nuclear and renewable energies (including hydropower), and is investing in new technologies to support the energy transition. EDF's purpose is to build a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral energy future, reconciling environmental preservation, well-being and development, through electricity and innovative solutions and services. The Group supplies energy and services to around 41 million customers (1) and reported revenues of €113.3 billion in 2025.

(1) The customer portfolio comprises electricity, gas and recurring services contracts.

## About the Iliad Group

Created in the early 1990s, the Iliad Group is the inventor of the world's first triple-play box and is a major European telecoms player, standing out for its innovative, straightforward and attractive offerings. The Group is the parent of Free in France, Iliad in Italy and Play in Poland, has over 17,700 employees serving 52 million subscribers, and generated €10.3 billion in revenues in 2025. In France, the Group is an integrated Fixed and Mobile Ultra-Fast Broadband operator and had 23.3 million subscribers at end-2025. In Italy, where the Group launched its business in 2018 under the Iliad brand, it is the country's fourth-largest mobile operator and had over 13.0 million subscribers at end-2025. In Poland, the Group is an integrated convergent operator, and at end-2025 had 15.6 million subscribers. The Iliad Group is Europe's fifth-largest operator by number of retail Mobile subscribers (excluding M2M) and the fifth-largest Fixed Broadband operator.

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## About Orange

Orange is one of the world's leading telecommunications operators. The Group aims to be the trusted partner for everyday digital life by providing individuals, businesses and communities with reliable connectivity and innovative services. As of the end of 2025, Orange connects 340 million customers (including MasOrange) across 26 countries and generated €40.4 billion in revenues. As a trusted player, Orange leverages the excellence of its very high-speed broadband networks to deploy digital infrastructure in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. The Group is a European leader in fiber, with

100 million connectable households, and convergent offers. In France, Orange connects 34 million customers and was ranked No. 1 by the regulator Arcep for the quality of its mobile network for the 15th consecutive year. In Africa and the Middle East, the Group's growth engine, Orange serves nearly 180 million customers and promotes digital and financial inclusion through its connected solutions. Under the Orange Business brand, the Group supports companies in transforming their networks as well as in AI, trusted cloud and cybersecurity. Orange is also a major player in the wholesale market, where it has a leading global telecom infrastructure and significant capabilities for deploying and operating submarine cables. A committed innovator, Orange relies on 700 researchers and holds a portfolio of 11,000 patents. Orange is listed on Euronext Paris (symbol ORA). More information: [www.orange.com](http://www.orange.com). Orange and any other Orange product or service names mentioned in this material are trademarks of Orange or Orange Brand Services Limited.

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**About Scaleway**

Scaleway is Europe's sovereign cloud and AI provider, delivering a secure, transparent, and sustainable platform. We empower organizations of all sizes with open, independent technologies and continuous innovation to build and scale on their own terms.

A subsidiary of the Iliad Group, Scaleway combines decades of infrastructure expertise with the agility of a state-of-the-art tech company. With a rapidly expanding network of data centers across Europe, Scaleway offers a comprehensive portfolio of high-performance cloud services, from virtual machines and advanced data management solutions to cloud-native infrastructure and AI-optimized supercomputers. Championing open standards and operating within a fully European framework, Scaleway provides a secure and transparent cloud environment that meets the needs of organizations with the highest digital sovereignty requirements.

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