Between autonomy and alliance: Akkodis and POLITICO convene decision-makers for the future of AI made in Europe

Thursday 5 February, 2026

First European Innovation & Tech Summit gathers leading technology experts from politics, industry and research in Brussels, focusing on AI as a bridge between human thinking and machine precision.

Brussels, February 5, 2026 - Europe's debate on AI is shifting from ambition to execution. At the first European Innovation & Tech Summit, hosted by Akkodis in partnership with POLITICO, policymakers, industry leaders and researchers examined one of Europe's most urgent challenges: how to turn world?class AI research and regulation into scalable, trusted real?world deployment.

Akkodis, a Europe based global digital engineering consulting leader – part of The Adecco Group - together with POLITICO, brought senior decisionmakers to Brussels at the invitation-only summit to address a central question shaping Europe's competitiveness: *How can AI bridge human ingenuity and machine precision?*

Discussions highlighted that Europe's future competitiveness will depend on deploying AI at scale across four strategic sectors: healthcare & life sciences, the public sector, autonomous driving & robotics, and defense. These areas combine high societal value, strict regulatory demands and strong deployment potential, making them essential to Europe's AI leadership and sovereignty. As a result, participants focused on concrete implementation strategies, noting that progress in these sectors will determine Europe's ability to turn AI into a driver of competitiveness, resilience and public trust.

Responsible AI as Europe's Competitive Advantage

Across sessions, speakers reaffirmed that responsible AI is no longer an abstract principle but a baseline requirement. Speakers emphasized that trust in AI systems cannot be achieved through principles alone, but will require:

- Clear accountability frameworks
- Transparent and explainable decision?making
- Robust governance structures
- Human-in-the-loop approaches
- Deployable operational models for compliance
- Sovereign and secure data infrastructures

Many argued that Europe's regulatory leadership can become a competitive advantage – *if* paired with practical deployment templates that organizations can adopt quickly.

Autonomy vs Alliance: Europe's strategic crossroads

POLITICO's Spotlight session, *"Between Autonomy and Alliance: Can Europe still shape the rules?"* illustrated the geopolitical dimension of AI. In February, the world's focus converges on two key high-level policy gatherings: The Munich Security Conference will set the tone on defense and the India AI Impact Summit is expected to advance a Global South-led vision for digital development. On the future of AI, Europe finds itself caught in the crossfire of this geopolitical apex. The debate exposed growing tensions in Europe's AI strategy: while calls for technological sovereignty are increasing, European companies and public institutions remain heavily dependent on non-European foundation models and infrastructures. Speakers highlighted the potential of balanced global partnerships to truly unlock innovation at scale.

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"The European Innovation & Tech Summit made one thing very clear: Europe does not lack AI ambition. With strong alliances we will accelerate and innovate for measurable impact," said **Jo Debecker, President & CEO of Akkodis**. *"If Europe wants to lead in trustworthy and human-centric AI, regulation must be matched with scalable solutions, sovereign data infrastructures and AI gigafactories, as well as governance models that organizations can actually use. Akkodis sees its role as bridging research, policy and real-world application."*

Jamil Anderlini, POLITICO Regional Director, Europe outlines the discussions of the summit: *"What makes AI such a consequential issue for Europe is not just the technology itself, but the economic and policy choices around it. Decisions made in Brussels increasingly influence how AI is governed globally, which is why these discussions are so important for both Europe and the wider international system."*

"AI is but one of the key factors that will reshape the world order sooner and more thoroughly than we are prepared for. Brace yourselves for an interesting second quarter of the 21st century", said **Jacques Pitteloud, Head of the Mission of Switzerland to NATO & Ambassador of Switzerland to the Kingdom of Belgium**.

"Ports are the perfect proving ground for autonomous technologies – our role is to enable innovators to test, learn and scale solutions that will transform the entire logistics ecosystem", said **Jonathan Van Cauwenberge, Port of the Future Advisor, Port of Antwerp-Bruges.**

"New technology is offering us today, more than ever, remarkable tools to provide a better patient care. The 2026 European Innovation & Tech Summit in Brussels was a fantastic opportunity to discuss with experts and decision makers how we could collectively drive forward the healthcare model for the best interest of patients and for the best support of healthcare professionals", said **Ziad Matta, General Manager Servier BELUX, Board Member, Chamber of Commerce France-Belgium.**

A forum for Europe's technology & innovation decision-makers in the intelligent age

The European Innovation & Tech Summit represents a strategic step toward deeper European cooperation and broader global engagement on AI. Akkodis plans to continue the format as a platform for cross-border dialogue, with a clear focus on implementation, measurable impact and responsible innovation.

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Akkodis is a global digital engineering consulting company that enables organizations to innovate and accelerate by applying technology to redefine how processes and products are developed, powered and optimized. With deep expertise across AI, data, cloud, edge and software engineering, we combine technology and talent to deliver end-to-end solutions, from strategy and consulting to talent development and implementation. Our commitment to Akkodis Intelligence helps businesses connect the exponential power of technology with the irreplaceable strengths of human thinking and collaboration. Part of the Adecco Group and headquartered in Switzerland, Akkodis brings together 50,000 engineers and tech

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