



SOVEREIGN AI SERIES • WHY → HOW → PROVE • 3 SEPTEMBER 2026 • 11:00 CEST

Why now — Palantir alternatives for Europe

What “sovereign” actually means —
and how European governments,
defence and critical infrastructure are
deciding.



Agenda

- 11:00 What changed this summer — and why it is a platform decision, not a vendor swap
- 11:05 What a Foundry-class platform actually is: four layers
- 11:10 **The five sovereignty tests, applied live** — Xavier, on a real estate
- 11:25 The European field, fairly — one slide
- 11:30 Where Scrydon fits — and where it doesn't
- 11:35 The procurement checklist, then Q&A

Questions in the chat as they occur to you — we take them at the end. Replay and transcript on scrydon.com the week after.



Two people, one disclosure

CEO **Nathan Bijns**

AI for government and defence. Former Senior Manager and Lead Cloud Architect for EU institutions & NATO at Microsoft.

CTO **Xavier Geerinck**

Data and agentic AI. Former co-founder & CTO at Composabl, ex-Microsoft. He built the estate you will see at minute ten — and he operates it.

disclosed We are a vendor in this market. So the first two thirds are deliberately vendor-neutral — the tests work against anyone, including us — and we will say where we are **not** the right choice.

An engineering team drawn from Microsoft and Google · delivered with partners including delaware · recently at NATO TIDE Sprint 44, VivaTech 2026 and UC Law SF · scrydon.com/about-us



“

**For a decade it was a
“should we?”
conversation. This year
ended it.**

One year, four moves

the Union bought sovereign cloud

the intelligence services moved

a defence cloud drew a line

two capitals signed a backbone



The Union bought sovereign cloud

The Commission awarded €180 million of sovereign cloud — scored on sovereignty, not just price.

Tendered October 2025, awarded April 2026: **four European providers, not a single winner** — for the EU institutions, bodies and agencies, selected under a published **Cloud Sovereignty Framework**: eight objectives, scored at set assurance levels. Not a policy paper. A contract.

[Why it matters to your decision](#)

Sovereignty moved from the preamble to the award criteria — with a methodology anyone may reuse.

You can copy the scoresheet into your own tender tomorrow.

And note what it bought: the cloud layer. The AI and data layers above it — where the decisions live — are still the open question. They are this session.



The intelligence services moved

France's DGSI and Germany's BfV moved towards European platforms for their most sensitive analytical work.

The interior intelligence services of the two largest member states — the most demanding analytical users on the continent, and historically reference customers for the American platforms.

Why it matters to your decision

If a European platform can carry *their* workload, capability is no longer the automatic counter-argument.

“Not possible in Europe” stopped being an argument and became an excuse.



A defence cloud drew a line

The Bundeswehr's defence cloud excludes vendor-operated systems — not by name, by construction.

“Vendor-operated” means the supplier’s staff hold the administrative keys and run the system on your behalf — which is how Foundry-class platforms are usually delivered.

Why it matters to your decision

A requirement written this way disqualifies a delivery model, not a logo — and every future tender can copy the clause.

Who operates the platform is now on the scoresheet, next to what it does.



Two capitals signed a backbone

Paris and Berlin put a “sovereign digital backbone” on paper.

A communiqué builds nothing by itself. What it builds is **cover**: every procurement officer who was already uneasy now has a policy to cite — and budget lines follow policies.

The four moves together

bought	the Union put money on it, scored
proved	the hardest users showed it is possible
scored	the operating model became a criterion
covered	the capitals made it policy



This is not a Franco-German story

Most of Europe is mid-sized. They will not swap one dependence for another.

Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, the Nordics — less vocal than Paris and Berlin, with the same exposure and less leverage. A national champion with a different flag is the same problem in a different language.

What the mid-sized countries need

an ecosystem, not a national champion

NATO-compatible by design – allies, not autarky

no single-country choke point

open enough that joining never means locked in



Data is the strategic asset

Ukraine made it undeniable: data is *the* strategic asset — and not only in defence.

The institutions that kept functioning were the ones whose data, and the ability to decide on it, stayed available and under their own control. A bank, a grid operator, a hospital runs on exactly the same asset.

Who this decision is landing on

governments – national and regional

defence and security

banks and insurers

utilities, telecoms, ports

hospitals and labs – the NIS2 essential entities



Dependency is not dependence

Dependency you mostly cannot escape. Dependence you very much can.

Nobody here will fab their own silicon or train every frontier model — that dependency is real, and it is not the point. The point is *dependence*: someone else deciding how you use what you run on. Conflating the two is how organisations conclude sovereignty is impossible — and sign the renewal.

Two words, two questions

dependency “Where was it built?” — the supply chain. For almost everyone, unavoidable.

dependence “Who can turn it off?” — where decisions are made, who holds the keys. Avoidable.

The test: when the vendor changes the terms, **what stops working — and how fast?**



“

Nobody concluded the software was bad. They concluded dependence is a decision in its own right.

The question, before and after

before “Should we?” – sovereignty as a value, weighed against capability

now “Which one, and how?” – sovereignty as a requirement, with tests

The rest of this session is that question.



“

This is not a vendor swap. It is choosing the layer your decisions run on.

What lives in that layer

your operational data model

your process flows and write-backs

your audit trail

your people's working habits

Whoever owns that layer owns your switching cost. Choose it like infrastructure, not like a licence.



CADA reads the same way

CADA's top levels are about ownership, control and supply chain — not where your servers stand.

The Commission's Cloud and AI Development Act (June 2026) sets four assurance levels for sensitive public and critical-sector workloads. The top levels **cannot be retrofitted**: ownership and supply chain are decided the day you sign.

What it covers — and the half it leaves open

covers the cloud layer — where workloads run

open the application layer — where the sensitive decisions are actually made

Sovereign infrastructure with a non-sovereign superstructure is half a solution.



One product name. Four layers.

01 Data foundation

Pipelines, lakehouse, governance.
Data in, trustworthy, catalogued.

02 Ontology

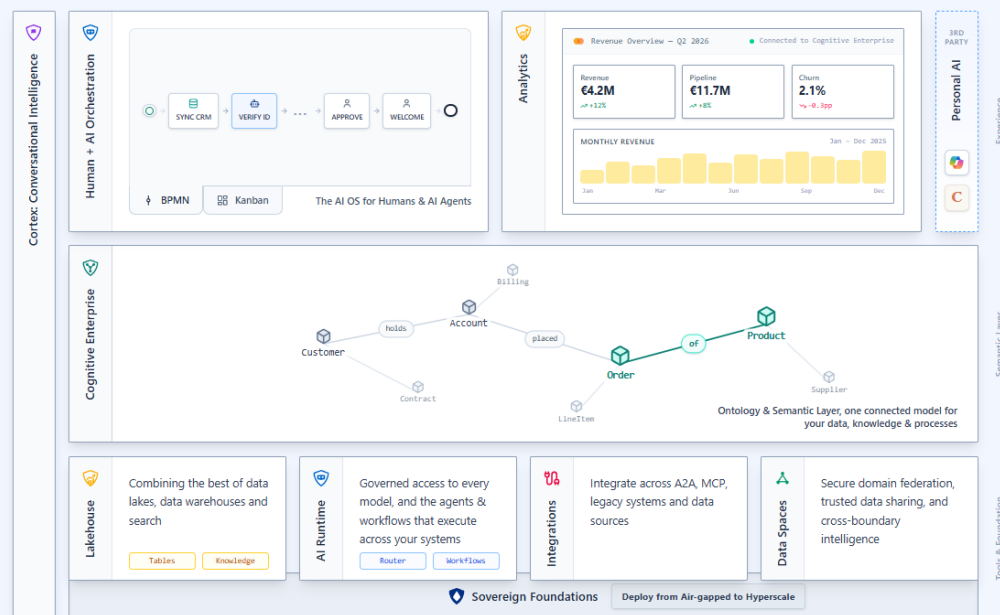
A shared operational model —
entities, relationships, state — that
people, applications and AI read
and write.

03 AI & agents

Models and agents acting on the
same ontology — governed,
permissioned, audited.

04 Process flows

End-to-end processes across
people, agents and systems —
written back, under policy, with
audit.



An alternative answers for all four layers — or it is a component with a roadmap.



Data foundation

Getting data in, trustworthy and catalogued. Necessary — and table stakes.

Pipelines, lakehouse, governance, catalogue. A decade of European data-platform investment lives here, and nothing above it works without it. But this layer answers *what is true*, not *what should we do*.

The question to ask a vendor

Which open formats does the data live in – and could another engine read them tomorrow, without you?

gap

most pitched “alternatives” are this layer, plus a roadmap



The ontology

A shared operational model of your world — that people, applications and AI read *and write*.

Entities, relationships, state and rules: an aircraft, its parts, its crew, its mission — as living objects, not rows in seventeen tables. This is the layer Palantir genuinely got right, and the one most alternatives quietly skip.

The question to ask a vendor

Can an application — or an agent — write back through the model, under policy? Or is it read-only?

gap

a read-only “semantic layer” is a reporting layer wearing a new badge



AI & agents

Agents acting on the same model, under the same policy, leaving the same audit trail.

An agent gets an identity and scoped permissions, retrieves from the ontology rather than raw tables, and every action is recorded. Capability is the easy half; governance is the layer. And keep the model *swappable*: a model you can replace in an afternoon is a supplier — one your processes have grown around is a landlord.

The question to ask a vendor

What stops an agent doing what it shouldn't — and what evidence exists afterwards?

gap

a chatbot bolted onto a lakehouse is a demo, not a layer



Process flows

End-to-end processes, made visible and executable — every step routed to a person, an agent or a system.

Most organisations' processes live in siloed systems or in people's heads. Process flows put them on the model: each step acts on the ontology under policy, and the outcome is written back to the systems where work happens — with an audit record a reviewer will accept. This is where a data platform becomes an operations platform.

The question to ask a vendor

Show me one end-to-end process — people and agents in the same flow — landing in an operational system, with its audit record.

gap

a dashboard that ends with a human re-typing the answer is one layer short



“

All four layers — or a component with a roadmap.

Use it brutally

It is the fastest filter you will apply to any pitch this year. Including ours, in fifteen minutes.

Layers describe what a platform *does*. Sovereignty is about who *controls* it — which is the next fifteen minutes.



Replace the word with five questions

01 • Jurisdiction

Whose law governs the operator — and which foreign statutes can compel it?

02 • Keys

Who generates, holds and can revoke the encryption keys? Can you, without the vendor?

03 • Operating staff

Whose hands are on the admin plane — and is that written into the contract?

04 • Disconnected mode

What still works with the cable unplugged — updates, identity, evidence export?

05 • Exit

What leaves with you, in what format, at what cost — tested before you sign?

Five dependence tests — who decides, not where it was built. Each has a yes-or-no answer. **A vendor who answers with an adjective has answered.**



Live: a real estate, fifteen minutes

shown deploying disconnected – the deployment guide itself, not a diagram
shown identity, as configured – who can do what, from where
shown the LLM router – Claude swapped for another model, live
shown inside a process and workflow – swapping the dependency, live
shown building on top with packs – extending the platform, without Scrydon having access
shown the lakehouse tables – Apache Iceberg, with the public docs that make them anyone's to read
shown ontology & notebooks – a first look at the model, with egress control and microVMs underneath
said anything we can only claim rather than show, we say so out loud

Five backup slides sit behind this one — one per test, what passes and what fails. Press **h** to pull them into the deck if the screen share dies.
Questions in the chat; we batch them for the end.



Jurisdiction

Which legal entity operates the platform, under which law — and which foreign statutes can compel it?

Data location is not jurisdiction. A data centre in Frankfurt operated by a non-EU parent answers to that parent's law — a “sovereign region” is a real-estate answer to a legal question.

What the answer looks like

- passes** an EU operating entity, under EU governing law, control plane included
- passes** a written compulsion analysis — which statutes reach it, and what they can compel
- fails** “your data stays in Europe” — while the operator, and its law, do not



Keys

Who generates, holds and revokes the keys — and can you do all three without asking the vendor?

If the vendor can decrypt when compelled, tests one and two fail together — and the padlock icon on the datasheet is decoration.

What the answer looks like

- passes** a customer-held KMS: you generate, you rotate, you revoke — demonstrated
- passes** revocation locks the vendor out, and the platform keeps running for you
- fails** “bring your own key” — where the vendor’s service quietly keeps a decryption path



Operating staff

Whose hands are on the admin plane — and is that in the contract, or in the brochure?

This is the test the Bundeswehr requirement is really about:
“vendor-operated” means the supplier’s people hold root on your decisions.

What the answer looks like

- passes** your staff – or named, screened personnel under your contract
- passes** every privileged action logged, and reviewable by you
- fails** “support may access production for troubleshooting”
– unnamed, from anywhere



Disconnected mode

What still works with the cable unplugged — ingestion, identity, ontology, agents, updates, evidence out?

For defence and critical infrastructure — the grid, the hospital, the port — disconnected is the design case, not the edge case. It is also the honest proxy for every other test: no connection, no hidden dependence.

What the answer looks like

passes

the full stack runs on an isolated network — demonstrated, not diagrammed

passes

updates and evidence export have an offline path, by design

fails

an “offline mode” that is a cache — or a licence server that phones home



Exit

What leaves with you — data, ontology, process flows — in what format, at what cost, rehearsed when?

The switching cost is set at signature, not at exit. This is the test almost nobody runs before signing — and the reason this is a platform decision.

What the answer looks like

- passes** data, ontology and process definitions out, in open formats — rehearsed
- passes** the exit priced in the contract, before you sign
- fails** a proprietary export, a PDF, or a price you discover when you ask to leave



Six ways to buy it — and what each answers

Hyperscaler “sovereign” regions

Microsoft, AWS, Google. Familiar tooling at scale — jurisdiction and operating staff are where the tests usually fail.

Data & analytics platforms

Databricks, Microsoft Fabric. Strong on the data foundation — not built for the disconnected case, and no operational ontology.

Model champions moving up-stack

Mistral · Cohere × Aleph Alpha. The model layer, not an org-wide platform — and ownership counts at the top assurance tier.

Specialist sovereign players

ChapsVision (ArgonOS, at the DGSI), Helsing (missions), Wonderful (customer agents). Real and funded — each covers one slice.

Open-source assemblies

Maximum control on paper. You become the integrator — and the accreditation burden is yours.

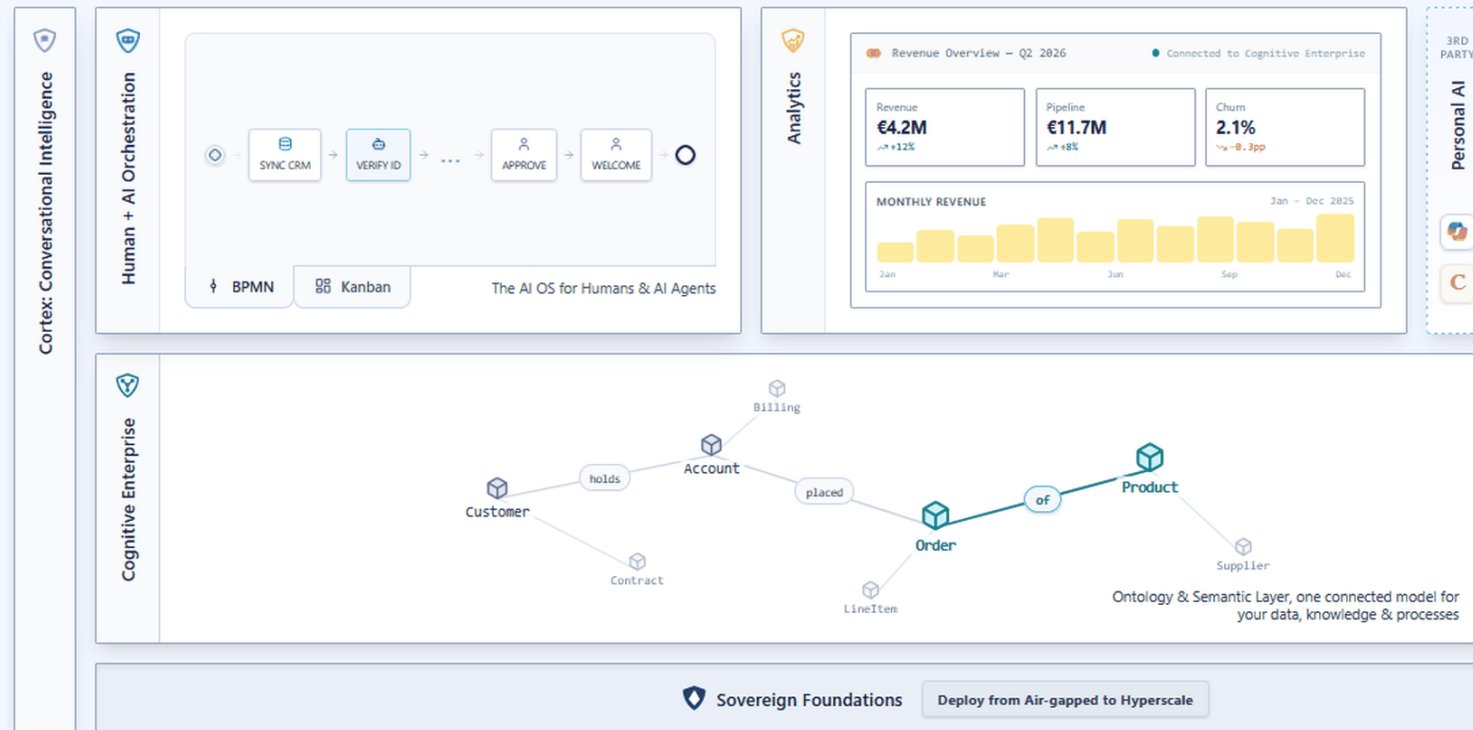
European Foundry-class platforms

All four layers under European jurisdiction. A short list — run the five tests on each of them. Including us.

The field is real and growing — an ecosystem, not a new champion. **The five tests are how you sort it** — vendor by vendor, kept current: scrydon.com/platform/compare



All four layers, one platform



Built in the shape of the four layers, because that is the shape of the problem. We didn't build the accelerators and we didn't train every model — the dependency stays. **The dependence goes.**



The five tests, run on ourselves

- 01 **Jurisdiction** – Scrydon BV, Ghent. EU entity, EU governing law, control plane included.
- 02 **Keys** – customer-held KMS. You generate, you rotate, you revoke – without asking us.
- 03 **Operating staff** – your people, or ours under your contract and screening. The identity model you just saw configured; every privileged action logged.
- 04 **Disconnected mode** – deployed from the guide you just read, egress-filtered even when connected.
- 05 **Exit** – open formats: the Iceberg tables you just saw. Rehearsed, priced before signature – and no model welded in.

Hold every vendor to this sheet. **We just went first.**



Three reasons not to buy Scrydon

- not us** Your problem is giving people an AI assistant to chat with. An AI chat tool is cheaper – and right.
- not us** You want the vendor to operate it inside their tenancy. That is the model Europe is walking away from – and not what we sell.
- not us** You need a thousand forward-deployed engineers next quarter. That services army is real – ours arrives through partners and your own teams.

And if it might be us: **the price of finding out is on the next slide.**



What finding out costs

The briefing · free

30 minutes with a founder or architect. Your sector, your perimeter — and a written next step, including “not us”.

The two days · €1,500 each

Organisational AI Day, or Lakehouse to Ontology in a Day. Hands on, report within five days. Credited.

The six-week pilot · €25-90k

One use case, your data, your perimeter — exit criteria written down *before* anything is installed. Credited.

Training · from €200 pp

AI intro to a developer masterclass. On site or online — English, Dutch, French or German.

The platform

Priced on three questions: where it runs, what runs through it, who operates it. The pilot answers all three with real numbers.

The days and the pilot are credited against your first platform year. **Evaluating us properly costs nothing if you go ahead.** Whoever you shortlist — including us — take the next slide into the room.



The procurement checklist

- 01 Which legal entity operates the platform, under which governing law — and which foreign statutes can compel it? In writing.
- 02 Who generates, holds and revokes the encryption keys? Can you rotate them — and lock the vendor out — without asking?
- 03 Whose staff hold admin access — nationality, clearance, employer — named in the contract, not the brochure?
- 04 Has disconnected operation been demonstrated — including updates, identity and evidence export — not just described?
- 05 Is the exit tested and priced before signature — data, ontology and process flows out, in open formats?
- 06 Does the offer answer for all four layers — data, ontology, AI, process flows — or one layer plus a roadmap?
- 07 Will each answer be demonstrated on a live system — or only asserted on a slide?

If any answer is a slide rather than a demonstration, you have your answer.

And the lesson from the Union's own tender: write procurement so it **increases** competition, not reduces it. Four providers, not one — a shortlist with alternatives is leverage; a single winner is the next dependence.



Four links, no funnel

The comparison, kept current

Palantir, Databricks, Fabric, Copilot and the field — vendor by vendor.

scrydon.com/platform/compare

Score your own estate

The Commission's Cloud Sovereignty Framework as a self-assessment — run it before any vendor is in the room.

scrydon.com/sovereignty/score

The ontology, in depth

"What Palantir got right with ontologies" — the pre-read for session five.

scrydon.com/insights

Too specific for chat?

A 30-minute sovereignty briefing — the same conversation, one to one. A person replies.

scrydon.com/do-a-demo

We won't collect your details to sell you something afterwards — a person follows up only if you ask.



Send the right colleague

17 Sep · How

Inside the AI OS, live on a cluster. For the person who has to **run it**. Xavier. More demo than slides.



scan to
register

01 Oct · Prove

AI agents inside a NIS2 essential entity. For the person who has to **sign it off**. Cornelia Kutterer & Xavier.



scan to
register

13 Oct · Scale

From personal AI to organisational AI. For the person who makes it **how the organisation works**.



scan to
register

29 Oct · Ground

Beyond the lakehouse: the ontology. For the person who **owns the data**. CDOs and architects.



scan to
register

All five sessions: 11:00 CEST · 45 minutes · free · **a live system, not a deck**. Replay and transcript the week after.

ONE LINE TO LEAVE WITH

“Sovereign” is not a label on a datasheet.

It is five tests you can run against a live system — and a platform decision you only make once.

Before you go

The checklist — in the replay, and on the site next week

Next: 17 Sep — inside the AI OS, live on a cluster

Pre-read: scrydon.com/platform/compare/palantir-foundry-alternative

All sessions, registration and replays · scrydon.com/webinars



The newsletter

What we learn about sovereign AI — a few times a year, when there is something worth reading.

scrydon.com/newsletter



Scrydon

Nathan Bijns & Xavier Geerinck · Ghent · scrydon.com