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Europe seeks to end dependence on American cloud giants with new legal entity - Gaia X

French and German authorities and partners have put their weight behind a platform to challenge AWS, Azure and GCP

Nima Green
05 June 2020

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22 French and German companies, with the backing of Germany, France and the European Commission, have set up a legal entity to reduce Europe's dependence on American and Chinese cloud providers.

Gaia X cloud computing platform has been registered as a non-profit firm in Belgium's legal jurisdiction.

French systems integrator giant Atos is among the channel firms involved, which also include vendors such as SAP, Deutsche Telekom, Siemens and Bosch.

Europe's sole hyperscaler OVHcloud is also a signatory.

Last year, CEO Michel Paulin told *CPI* that the initiative comes from a desire among European customers wanting to gain more control over European data.

He claimed that many would consider true data sovereignty impossible without a **"trustworthy" cloud ecosystem for Europe**.

CPI has heard from several European partners in recent years that there is indeed a wariness that does persist with some customers who still view US cloud computing providers - AWS, Azure and Google Cloud - and Chinese player Alibaba Cloud, as able to have too much access to their data.

Some have referenced the US Cloud Act, passed in 2018, which gives US authorities' greater access to data under law-enforcement guidelines.

Others like €130m French reseller Cheops' CEO has been even more blunt.

CEO Nicolas Leroy-Fleuriot said that customers have told him they would "never, never" entrust their IP and sensitive data to Alibaba Cloud to **avoid "risks of being spied on** or of having data violations".

According to Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, the Gaia-X cloud computing platform is expected to be ready to launch in early 2021.

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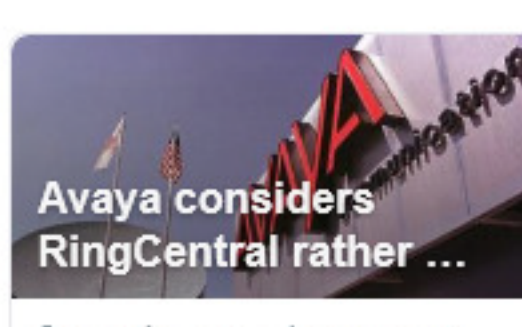Distribution   🕓 05 JUNE 2020

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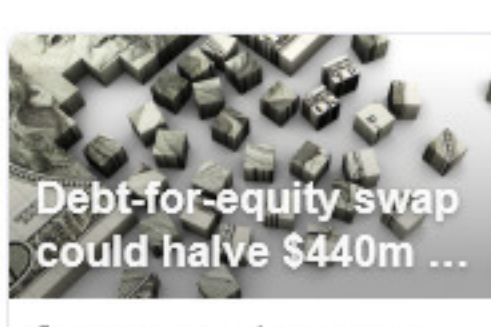
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