



Where AI engineering is growing across Europe

A market-data briefing for technology and talent leaders

Tides Market Intelligence



Tides is a specialist talent partner connecting the brightest minds within the technology industry to the world's most innovative and forward thinking companies.

We are a specialist recruitment and talent advisory partner, focused on building high-performing teams across AI, product, engineering, data, and design. Our clients range from stealth-mode startups and VC-backed scaleups to established technology-led businesses. What unites them is their need for world-class talent, and our ability to deliver it.

With offices in London and Berlin, and a network that spans Europe and beyond, we work at the cutting edge of tech hiring. Whether it's data scientists shaping the future of AI, backend engineers building scalable architecture, or product leaders defining new categories, we support teams that are solving tomorrow's problems today.

We're more than just recruiters. We act as strategic partners, people-first, insight-led, and quality-driven. Every engagement is tailored, every placement intentional. We pride ourselves on our speed, precision, and integrity.

Our mission is simple: to help companies grow with the right builders, not just great candidates, but the right ones for the right moment in their journey.



Charlie White

Recruitment Consultant 360 -
Product Engineering EMEA



Tides Market Intelligence

Tides Market Intelligence is our research and insights platform, exploring the trends shaping AI, Data and Engineering talent across the UK and Europe.

Combining published labour-market research, hiring data and specialist knowledge of the technical recruitment market, we look beyond the headlines to understand what is changing, why it matters and what it means for businesses building technical teams.

From emerging skills and evolving engineering roles to salary trends and talent demand, our aim is to give hiring leaders a clearer view of the market they are operating in, helping them make better-informed decisions about the people and capabilities their businesses need.

Through regular reports and market analysis, Tides Market Intelligence turns complex data into practical insight for the people building the next generation of technology.

Vol. I - The 2026 AI & Engineering Hiring Market

Understanding the skills, roles and trends reshaping technical hiring across the UK and Europe.

AI is changing the way technology is built, the skills businesses need and the roles they must hire to deliver it. Yet understanding the talent market behind that change is becoming increasingly difficult.

Job titles are evolving, technical requirements are overlapping and demand for specialist capabilities is shifting across markets. For hiring leaders, keeping pace means looking beyond headline vacancy numbers to understand the skills employers are seeking, where demand is concentrated and how the definition of an effective engineering team is changing.

The first volume of Tides Market Intelligence brings together published research and labour-market data to examine these developments across the UK and Europe.

Inside, we explore the geography of AI engineering demand, the technical skills appearing in vacancies, the changing economics of AI talent and the implications for organisations planning their next stage of growth. Our objective is straightforward: to provide a clearer, evidence-led view of the AI and engineering talent market, giving business leaders, technology teams and talent professionals useful context for their hiring decisions.

This is the first edition of an ongoing research series from Tides, tracking the developments that matter to businesses building with AI and engineering talent.

The market is growing, but not evenly

Three signals help explain where demand is building and what hiring leaders should take from it.

72,533

AI engineering openings

Recorded across Europe by PredictLeads from 18 June 2025 to August 2026.

+57.1%

Year-on-year growth

July 2026 openings compared with July 2025, the clean comparable month.

~40%

UK + Germany share

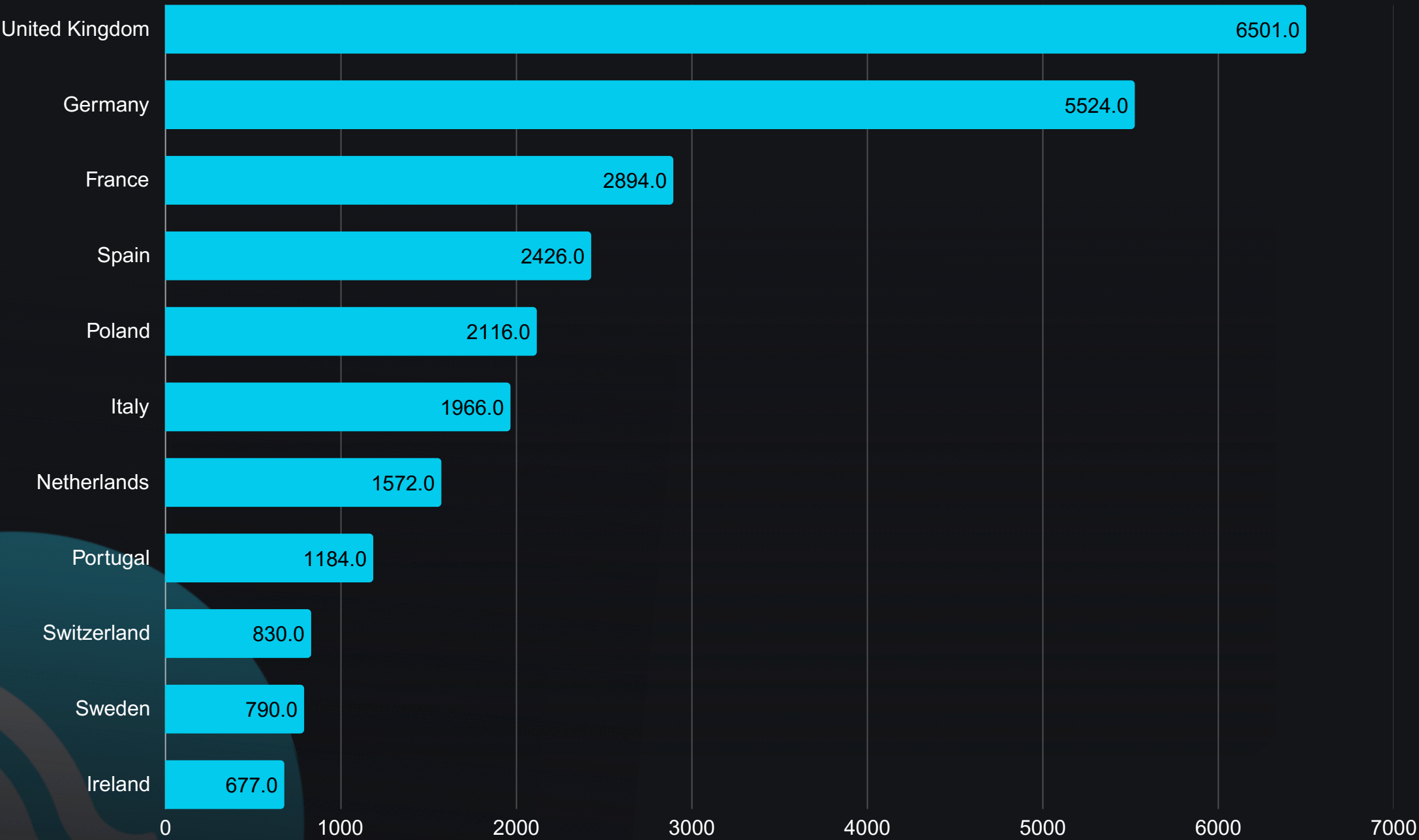
Together, the two markets account for around 40% of European openings in this dataset.

These are signals from one commercial job-opening dataset, not a census of every vacancy in Europe.

[Source: PredictLeads, AI Engineering Jobs in Europe: 2026 Hiring Report](#)

The UK and Germany lead European AI engineering demand

AI-engineering openings recorded by PredictLeads, March–August 2026.



12,025

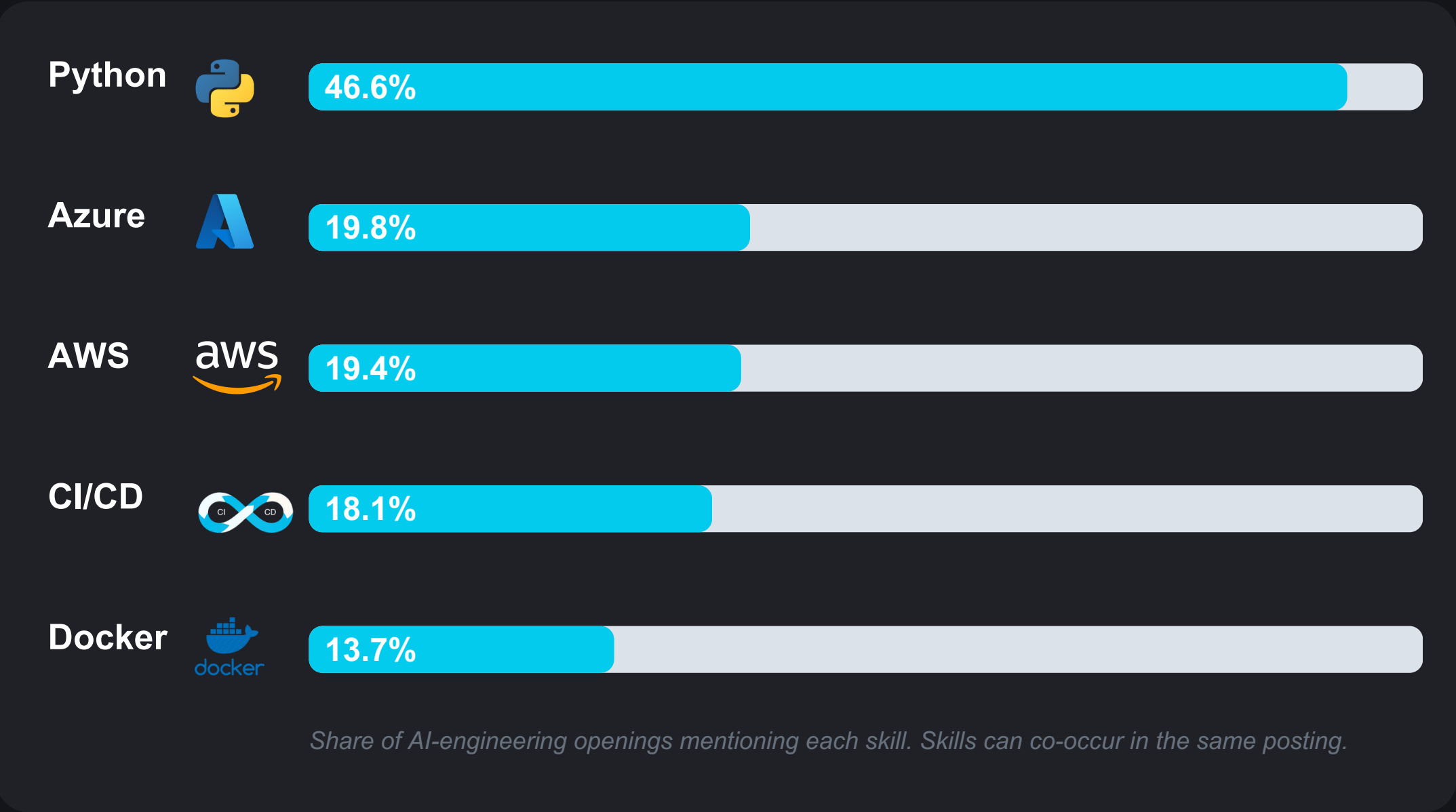
combined openings in the UK and Germany

France, Spain and Poland form the next tier. Poland records more openings than Italy and the Netherlands in this dataset.

Counts do not measure candidate availability, competition or skill fit.

AI engineering increasingly looks like production engineering

The most frequently mentioned skills point to cloud, deployment and operations alongside AI development.



What stands out

Python leads at 46.6%. Azure and AWS each appear in roughly one in five postings. CI/CD and Docker underline the importance of deploying and operating systems, not only prototyping models.

Source: [PredictLeads, 2026 Hiring Report](#)

AI hiring is expanding while the wider market remains subdued

PwC’s 2026 AI Jobs Barometer shows the growing value attached to specialist AI skills in the UK.

+61%

specialist AI job postings in 2025

Rose from 112,000 in 2024 to 180,000 in 2025.

34.2%

average AI skills wage premium

Up from 11% in 2024, according to PwC.



Important nuance

PwC reports growth was driven more by AI-user roles—people applying AI within an existing field—than by AI developer roles. These figures capture broader AI adoption, not only demand for AI engineers.

[Source: PwC, 2026 AI Jobs Barometer \(published 15 June 2026\)](#)

Where should employers focus?

Market volume is a starting point. Role fit and delivery constraints determine where to search.

01

Benchmark across markets

Start with the UK and Germany, then assess France, Spain and Poland against the role.

02

Search by capability

Compare actual skills and responsibilities, not job titles alone.

03

Look for production experience

Cloud, CI/CD and container skills appear alongside Python in the dataset.

04

Treat salary data carefully

Only about 14.2% of postings in the PredictLeads sample published a salary.

The question is not simply where the most AI jobs are. It is where the right skills can be found for the team you need to build.

How to read this briefing

This Volume uses published third-party datasets. It is not presented as original Tides vacancy analysis.

- PredictLeads.** Country openings and skill mentions come from its AI Engineering Jobs in Europe: 2026 Hiring Report. The report identifies July as the cleanest comparable month for year-on-year analysis.
- PwC.** UK specialist AI posting volumes and wage premium come from the 2026 AI Jobs Barometer, published 15 June 2026, based on more than one billion job advertisements across 27 countries and territories.
- Comparability.** The datasets use different definitions. PredictLeads counts AI-engineering postings based on normalized titles and detected technologies; PwC tracks postings requiring specialist AI skills. Do not combine them into one total.
- Limitations.** Job-opening counts are not the same as unique employers, available candidates or successful hires. Salary is reported in a minority of postings and should not be treated as a definitive market rate.

SOURCES

[PredictLeads — AI Engineering Jobs in Europe: 2026 Hiring Report](#)

[PwC — 2026 AI Jobs Barometer](#)

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