The Ecosystem

Austria's AI workforce at a glance

97 %

of firms employ zero AI workers

The question is no longer whether Austria has AI talent. It is whether the base is growing fast enough, retaining enough, and diffusing broadly enough.

AT A GLANCE

4,578
Core AI specialists (2025)

40.8 %
Core share of AI ecosystem

#3 / 38
Core share rank in Europe

+304
Net Core AI adds 2025 (−36 % vs 2024)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The policy question is no longer whether Austria has AI talent — it is whether the base is growing fast enough, retaining enough, and diffusing broadly enough. Austria now counts 4,578 Core AI practitioners across Build, Enable, and Integrate tiers, making it one of the most technically concentrated AI workforces in Europe. But growth lost more than 40 % of its momentum between 2024 and 2025 (Core YoY +12.5 % → +7.1 %), net additions dropped from +476 to +304, and 97 % of Austrian firms still have no AI staff at all. This chapter maps the ecosystem's scale, structure, and dynamics.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Accelerate the Build-tier pipeline. Expanded AI master's capacity, doctoral fellowships, and compute access at Austrian universities. The Build tier (1,302 specialists) is Austria's scarcest strategic resource.

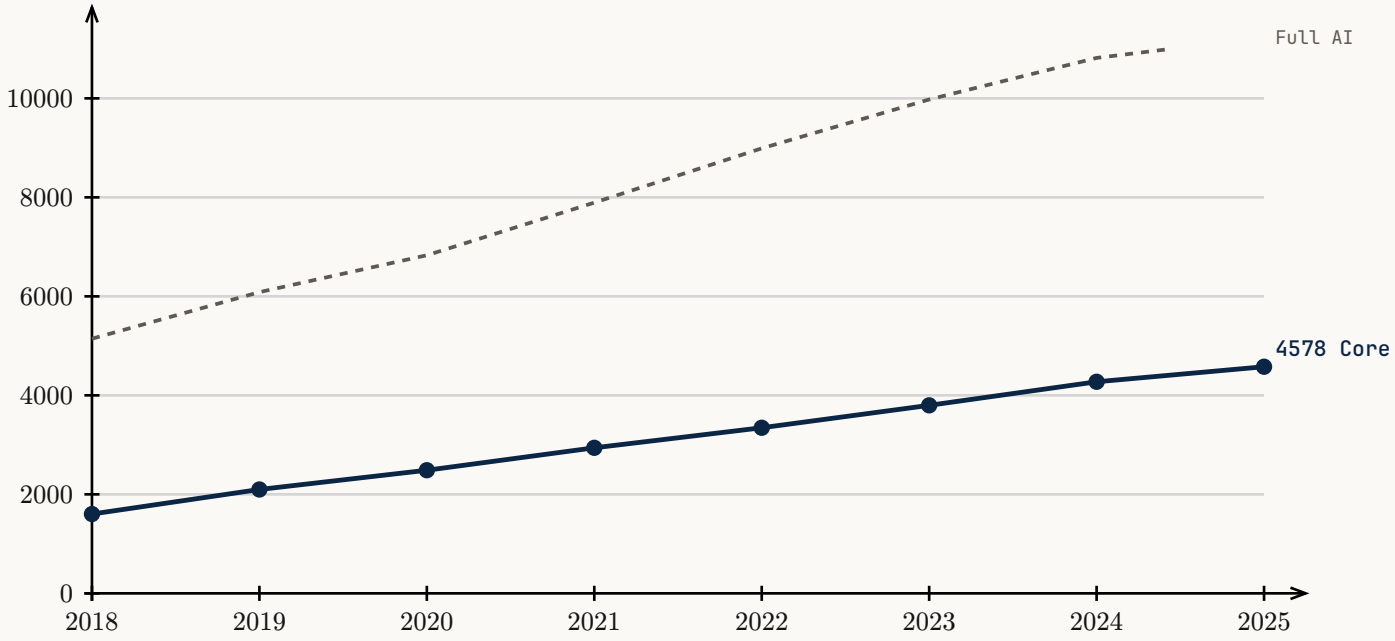
Close the SME adoption gap. Targeted AI readiness programs, shared infrastructure, and advisory services for firms with 10–250 employees. Only 2.6 % of firms have any AI staff — diffusion is the binding constraint.

Address the retention gap. Net additions of +304 in 2025 (down from +476 in 2024) will not deliver the scale Austria needs. Retention interventions — career progression, competitive compensation, R&D tax credits — are as important as recruitment.

EXHIBIT 1.1

Austria's AI Workforce, 2018–2025

Austria's AI ecosystem has more than doubled since 2018 — but the real story is beneath the headline. Core AI practitioners, those whose primary role involves building, enabling, or integrating AI, grew even faster than the broader workforce, nearly tripling from 1,602 to 4,578.



Source: Revelio Labs via WRDS

KEY FINDINGS

- Total AI workforce grew from 5,144 to 11,228 (11.8 % CAGR); Core AI grew from 1,602 to 4,578 (16.2 % CAGR).
- Core AI is growing faster than the periphery (16.2 % vs 11.8 % CAGR) — Austria's workforce is becoming more technically concentrated, not just bigger. The Core share rose from 31.1 % to 40.8 %.
- Growth lost over 40 % of its momentum in a single year: Core YoY peaked at +31.0 % in 2019, recovered to +12.5 % in 2024, then dropped to +7.1 % in 2025 — the steepest single-year slowdown in the time series.

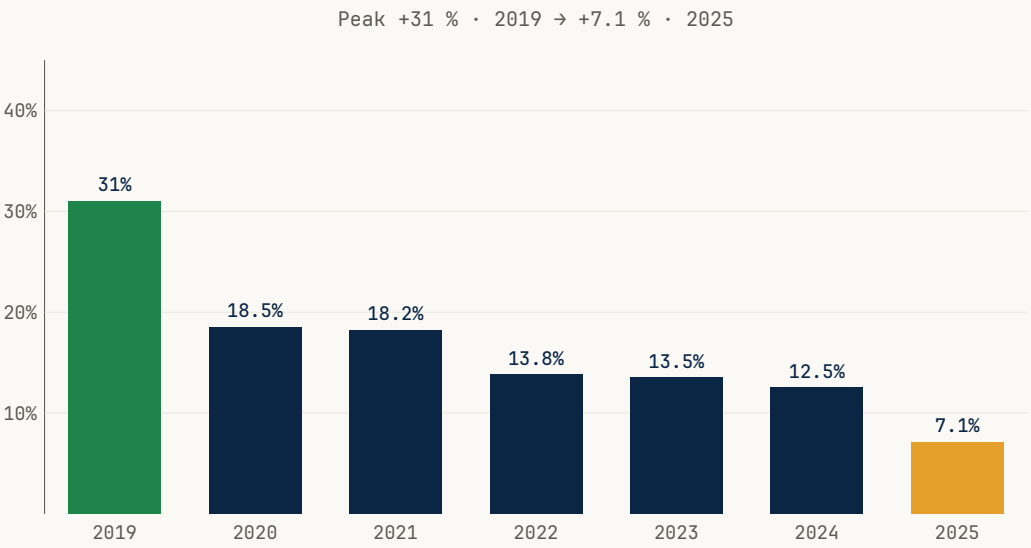
IMPLICATION

Sustaining this growth trajectory requires expanding the pipeline at both ends — more AI master's graduates entering and stronger retention keeping experienced practitioners in Austria.

EXHIBIT 1.2

Year-over-Year Growth

The headline growth numbers mask a deceleration that demands attention. After surging at +31.0 % in 2019, Core AI year-over-year growth steadily moderated through the 2020–2023 ramp, briefly recovered to +12.5 % in 2024, then dropped to +7.1 % in 2025 — the sharpest single-year slowdown in the time series.



Source: Revelio Labs via WRDS

KEY FINDINGS

- Growth peaked at +31.0 % in 2019 and decelerated to +7.1 % by 2025 (preliminary). The 2024 → 2025 fall (+12.5 % to +7.1 %) is the largest single-year reversal observed in eight years of data.
- The 2025 figure reflects preliminary data collection, not actual workforce contraction. Revelio's lag in capturing recent hires means the true 2025 growth rate is likely positive but below the 2018–2023 trend line.
- Core AI growth has consistently outpaced total AI growth (16.2 % vs 11.8 % CAGR over the period), indicating quality deepening even as expansion slows.

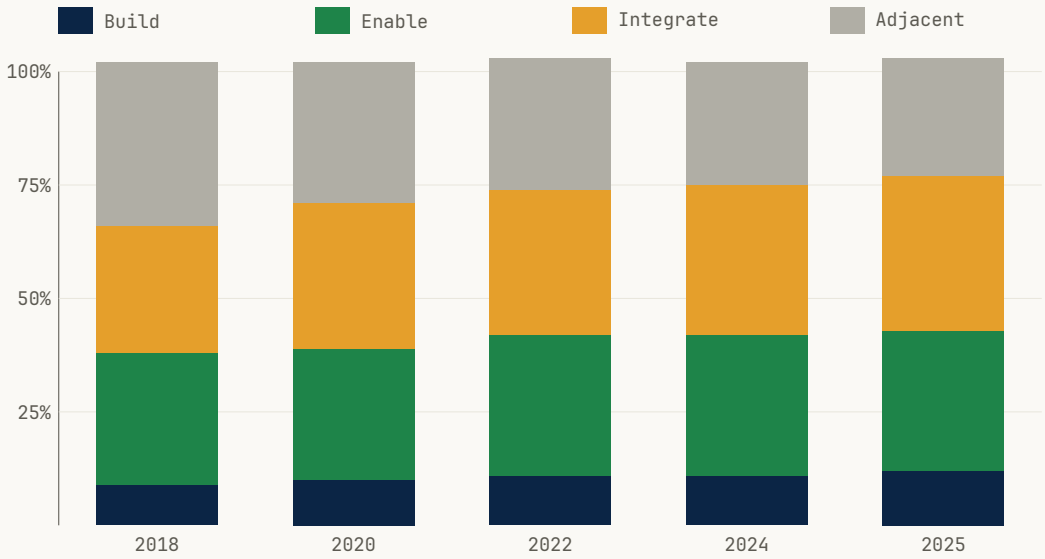
IMPLICATION

Deceleration is not yet decline, but the window for intervention is narrowing. Policymakers should treat the 2025 reading as a structural warning, not a single-year blip.

EXHIBIT 1.3

AI Workforce by Tier

Not all AI roles are created equal. Austria's taxonomy distinguishes between those who build AI systems, those who enable the infrastructure, those who integrate AI into business processes, and those in adjacent roles. The composition shift tells a story of maturation: the Adjacent tier is shrinking, while the technical core is consolidating.



Source: Revelio Labs via WRDS

KEY FINDINGS

- Enable and Integrate now dominate at roughly 31 % each, reflecting enterprise AI adoption across Austrian industry.
- Build tier holds steady at roughly 12 % (1,302 specialists) — a small but critical research and development base. These are the ML engineers, computer vision specialists, and AI researchers who create frontier systems rather than deploy existing ones.
- Adjacent roles declined from 36 % to 26 % of the ecosystem, a healthy sign of workforce specialisation.

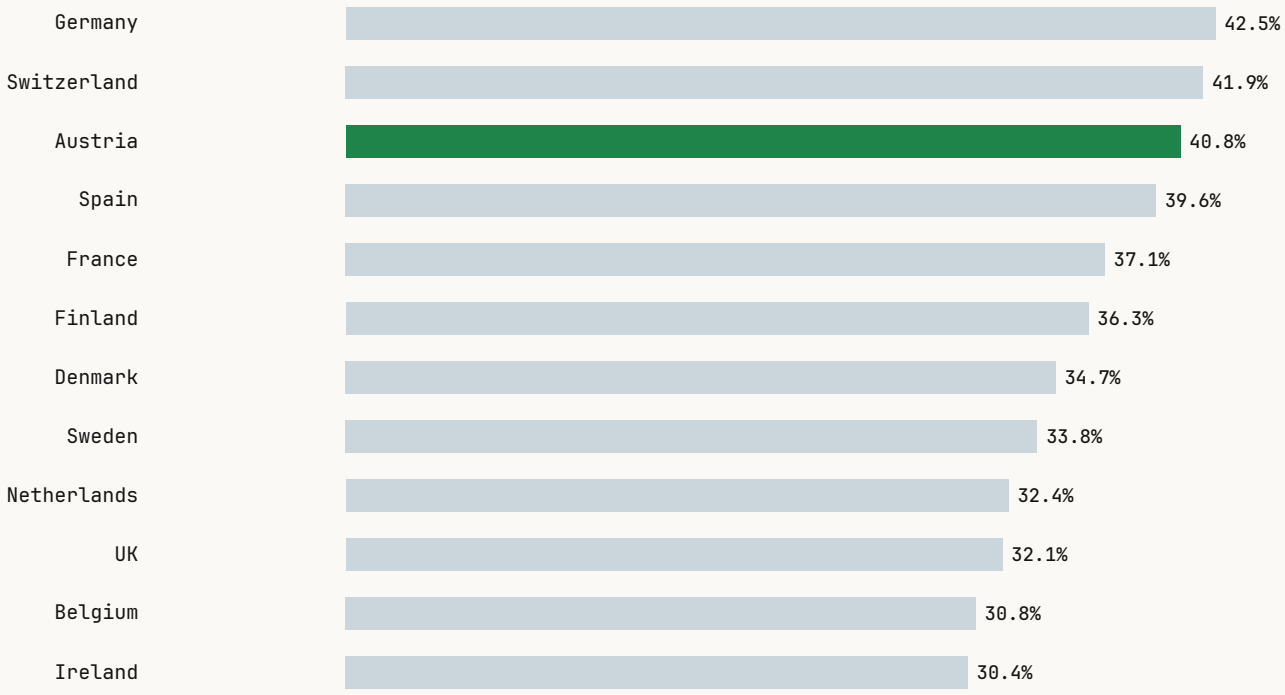
IMPLICATION

The Build tier is Austria's scarcest and most strategically important layer. Expanding it by even 200–300 specialists would meaningfully shift the country's capability frontier.

EXHIBIT 1.4

Core AI Share — Austria vs Europe

Austria's most distinctive competitive position in Europe is not its scale — it is its depth. Among 38 European countries, Austria ranks #3 in Core AI share: the proportion of its AI workforce in specialised roles rather than peripheral ones. Only Germany and Switzerland concentrate their AI talent more intensely.



Source: Revelio Labs via WRDS · 38 European countries benchmarked

KEY FINDINGS

- Austria's Core share (40.8 %, v5 panel) places it #3 in Europe, behind only Germany (42.5 %) and Switzerland (41.9 %).
- The DACH region is remarkably homogeneous on this metric: Germany (42.5 %), Switzerland (41.9 %), and Austria (40.8 %) form a tight cluster — Austria competes at the region's depth standard rather than trailing it.
- Internally, Austria's Core share rose from 31.1 % (2018) to 40.8 % (2025) on the v5 panel — a 9.7 percentage-point improvement in seven years.

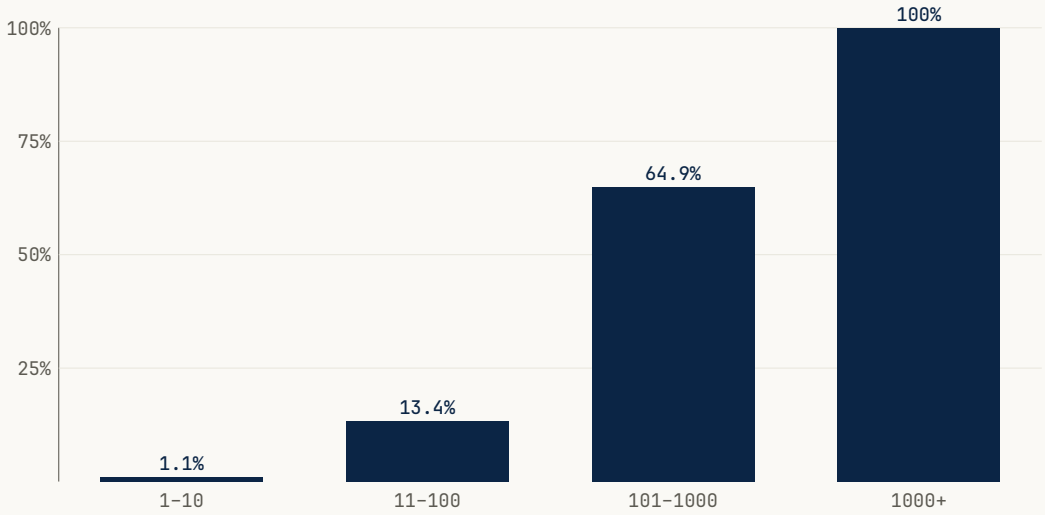
IMPLICATION

Protect this quality advantage as Austria scales. Expanding the workforce through lower-skill Adjacent roles would dilute the core share that makes Austria distinctive.

EXHIBIT 1.5

AI Adoption by Firm Size

Austria's AI talent is concentrated at the top. While effectively all firms with 1,000+ employees employ at least one AI professional, adoption drops precipitously at smaller scales. The gap between Austria's AI leaders and its vast SME base is the ecosystem's central structural challenge.



Source: Revelio Labs via WRDS · austria_located 2025 cumulative thresholds

KEY FINDINGS

- 100 % of XL firms (1,000+ employees) have AI staff vs. only 1.1 % of micro firms (1–10 employees) — a 91× gap.
- Even at the 101–1,000 employee Large bucket, AI adoption sits at 65 % — a handful of large firms anchor the Core AI employer landscape, with the top three each employing 40–80 specialists.
- Specialised niche firms achieve extraordinary AI density: some dedicate up to 30 % of their workforce to Core AI.

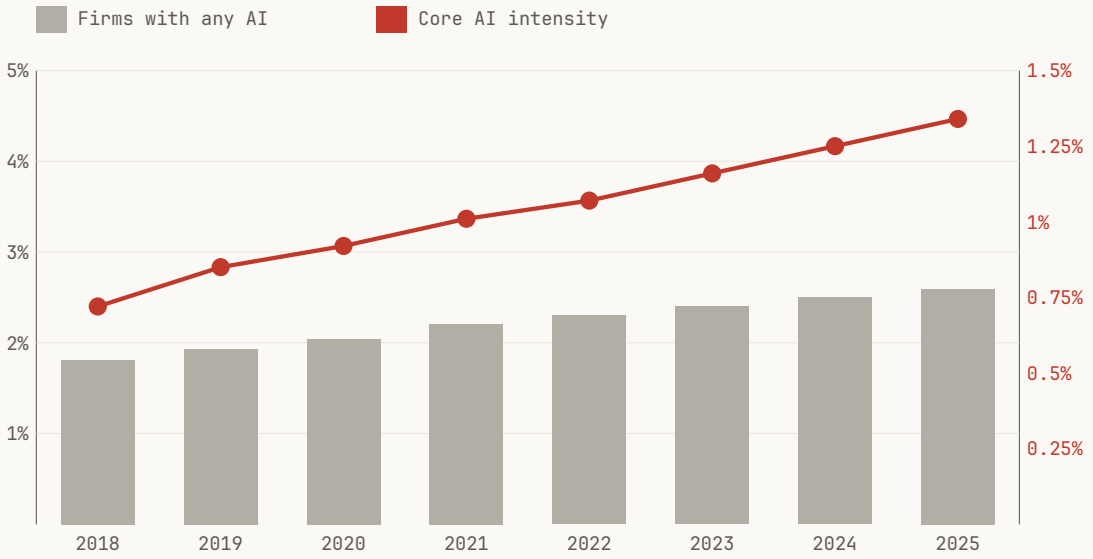
IMPLICATION

Close the SME adoption gap with targeted AI-readiness programs, shared infrastructure, and sector-specific advisory services. Not every firm needs internal AI teams — transfer centres can bridge the gap.

EXHIBIT 1.6

AI Penetration in Austria's Economy

Behind the growth headlines lies a sobering structural reality. Austria's AI expansion has happened largely within existing AI-adopting firms, not across new ones. The share of firms with any AI presence has barely moved in seven years.



Source: Revelio Labs via WRDS · austria_located firm panel · 2018–2025

KEY FINDINGS

- Only 2.6 % of all Austrian firms (3,190 of 123,226) employ anyone in an AI role.
- Core AI intensity in firms with AI staff has nearly doubled (0.72 % → 1.34 %), but from an extremely low base. Growth has been driven by deepening within existing AI-adopting firms, not by new firms entering the AI space — a pattern that reinforces concentration risk.
- The flat firm-adoption curve means Austria's AI revolution is a phenomenon of the few, not (yet) the many.

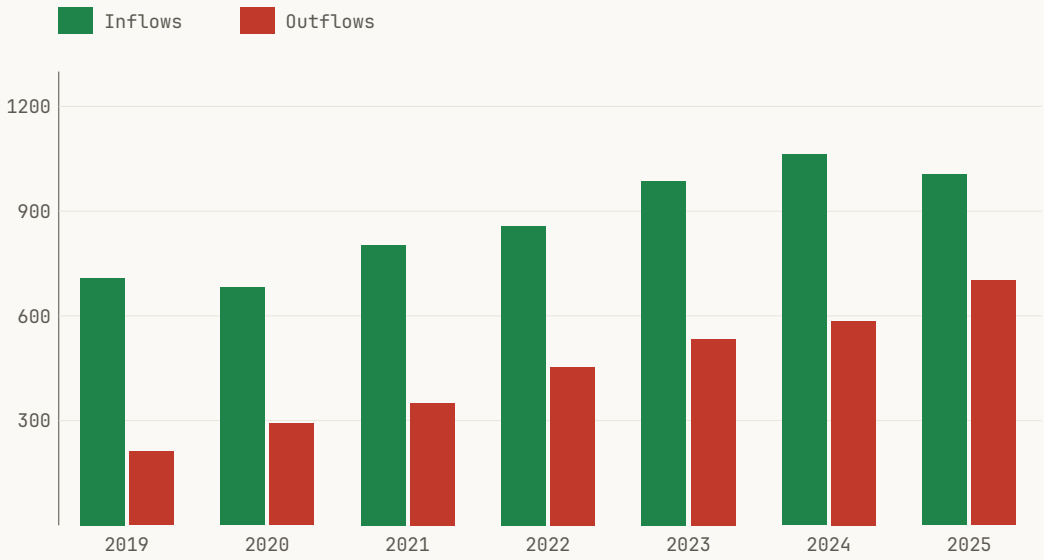
IMPLICATION

Diffusion policy is as important as capability policy. Austria needs a strategy to bring AI into the remaining 97 % of its firm base — starting with the Mittelstand.

EXHIBIT 1.7

Talent Flows: 2018 vs 2025

Austria's AI hiring pipeline is working — but the leak is growing faster than the pipe. Inflows nearly doubled between 2018 and 2025, but outflows more than tripled. The result: net Core flows have remained near +300 per year since 2022 — a plateau, not the expansion the rate of inflow growth would suggest.



Source: Revelio Labs via WRDS

KEY FINDINGS

- Inflows grew from 562 to 1,101 (nearly 2×); outflows grew from 240 to 780 (3.3×) — the gap is widening.
- Integrate tier shows the largest absolute outflows, making it the leakiest part of the pipeline.
- Net Core flows have hovered between +281 and +336 per year since 2022 (+321 in 2025) — a flat plateau, not a floor that scales with inflows.

IMPLICATION

Retention-focused instruments — career-progression pathways, competitive compensation for mid-career specialists, AI-focused R&D tax credits — may yield higher returns than expanding university intake alone.

EXHIBIT 1.8

Domestic vs Multinational AI Employment

Austria's AI ecosystem rests on two pillars: of the Core AI workers on company payrolls, domestic firms employ about 70 % and multinationals headquartered abroad about 30 %. This duality is both an asset — multinationals bring global knowledge and scale — and a vulnerability.

Austrian-HQ · 70 % Foreign-HQ · 30 %

Source: Revelio Labs via WRDS

KEY FINDINGS

- Domestic firms employ about 70 % of Core AI workers on company payrolls; multinationals headquartered abroad about 30 %. A further 13 % sit at firms with no resolved HQ country.
- Austrian firms also employ 1,482 Core AI workers abroad — an international network that could channel knowledge back.
- Concentration risk: a handful of multinationals account for a disproportionate share; a single relocation decision could be disruptive.

IMPLICATION

Use multinationals as spillover channels — training partnerships, supplier upgrading, talent circulation — while building Austrian-headquartered alternatives. Diversifying the employer base hedges against concentration risk.

Method, sources, taxonomy.

This analysis draws on individual-level workforce data from Revelio Labs, accessed via Wharton Research Data Services (WRDS). Revelio aggregates professional profiles from LinkedIn, XING, and other networks, enriched with machine-imputed salaries, predicted gender, education records, and role classifications. The dataset covers 2.86 M employment records in Austria across 2018–2025.

PARAMETERS

Data provider	Revelio Labs via WRDS
Time period	2018–2025 (8 years, 2025 preliminary)
Core AI taxonomy	approx. 120 roles across Build, Enable, Integrate
Full AI taxonomy	approx. 370 roles across Build, Enable, Integrate, Adjacent
Primary segment	austria_located (workers physically in Austria)
Revelio coverage	approx. 22.5 % of Eurostat official employment (~4.49 M)
Total employment records	2.86 M individual positions
Core AI stock (2025)	4,578 professionals (preliminary)
Firms in panel	123,226 (of which 3,190 have any AI staff)