European Labour Market Trends
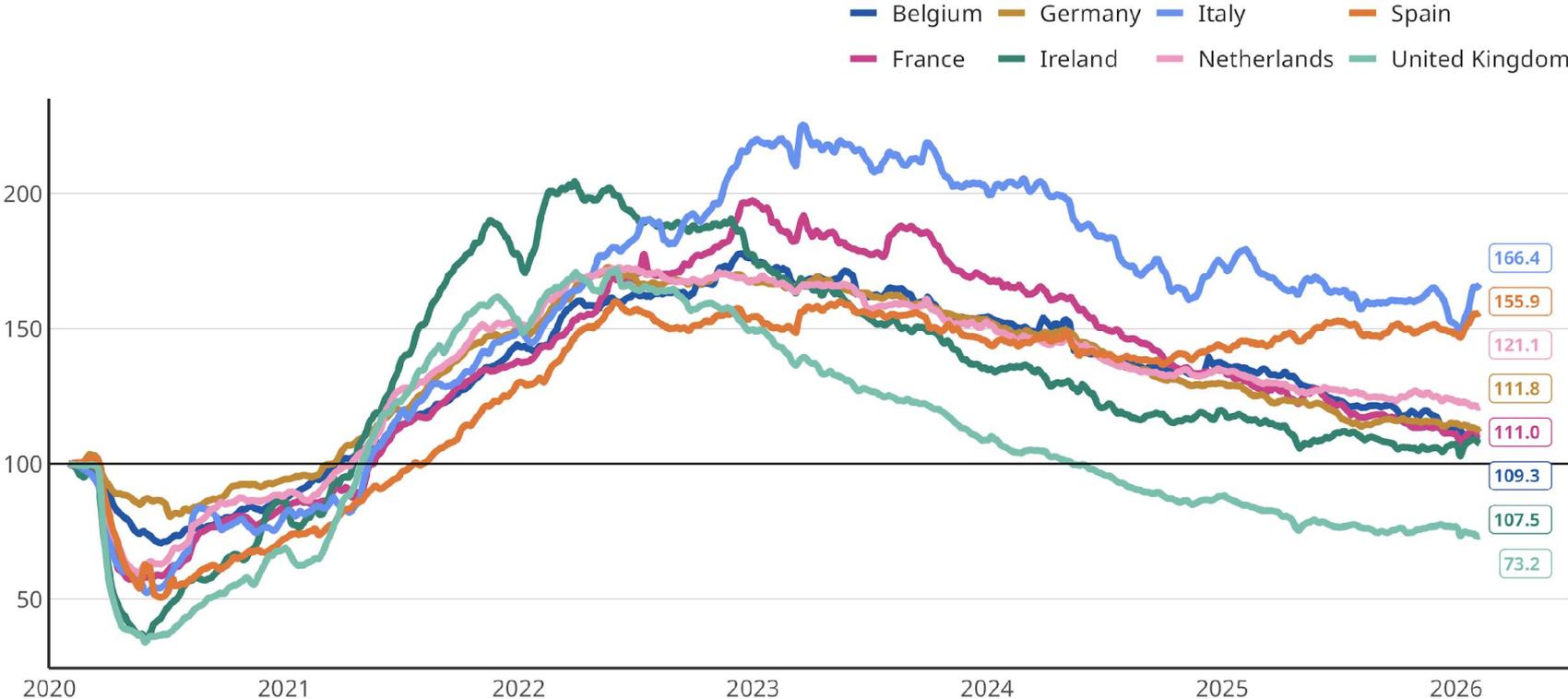
February 2026

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Europe: Labour Market Overview

- European labour markets continue to loosen, especially in larger economies, though the decline in job postings is slowing down in several countries.
- Job postings are declining across occupations; the share of occupational categories above pre-pandemic levels has further decreased in the past year.
- High-remote occupations have seen the largest decreases in postings.
- High-wage jobs are down in France and Germany; in Ireland and the UK, middle-wage jobs dropped the most.
- Postings mentioning AI are generally increasing, with varying rates across Europe.
- Employment expectations remain below average; France shows early signs of recovery.
- While wage growth varies strongly across Europe, it is generally down from post-pandemic highs in most nations.
- Salary transparency in job postings stagnates ahead of incoming legislation in Europe.

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The decline in job postings is levelling off in some European countries

Indeed Job Postings Index (100 = 01 Feb 2020), seasonally adjusted, to 06 Feb 2026

Legend: Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Ireland, Netherlands, United Kingdom

End values:
- Italy: 166.4
- Spain: 155.9
- Netherlands: 121.1
- Germany: 111.8
- France: 111.0
- Belgium: 109.3
- Ireland: 107.5
- United Kingdom: 73.2

Source: Indeed

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Job growth shows improving early-year momentum in some economies

Month-on-month growth rates in the Indeed Job Postings Index, seasonally adjusted, 06 Feb 2025 - 06 Feb 2026
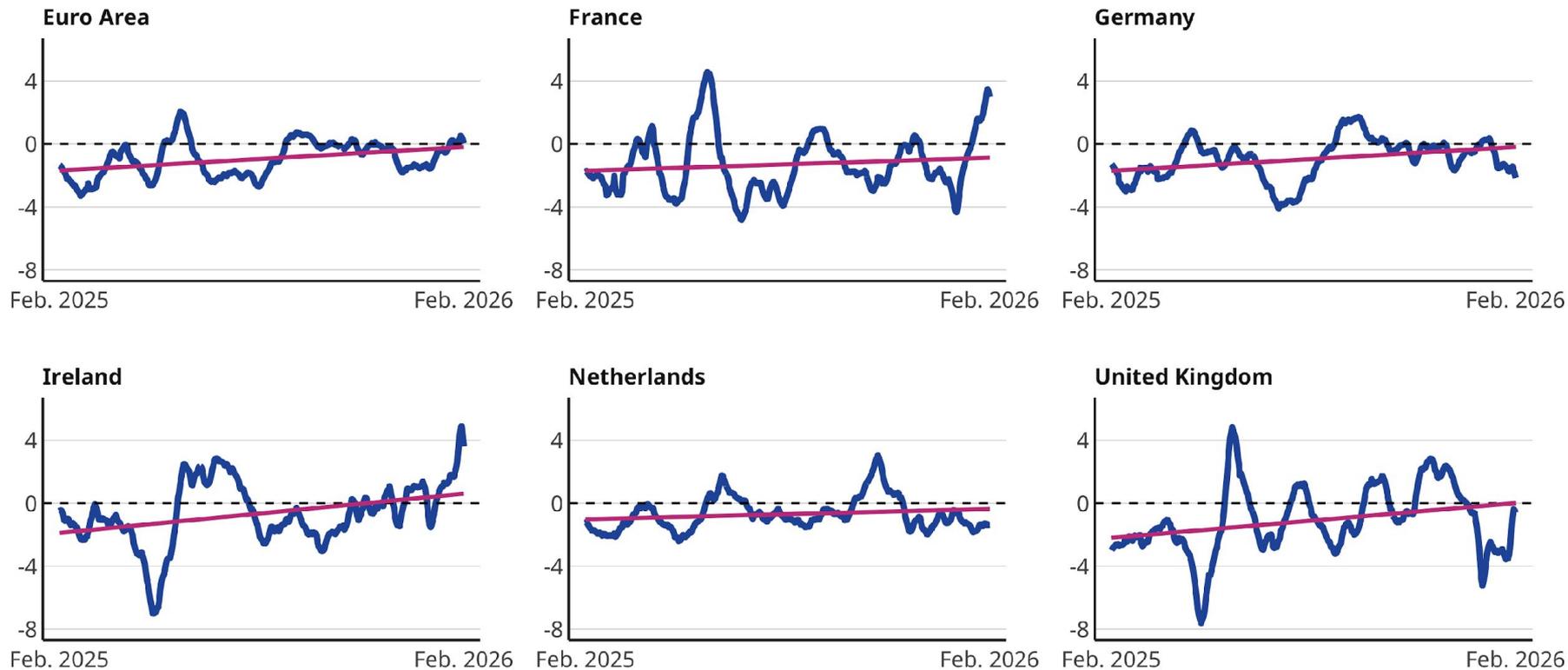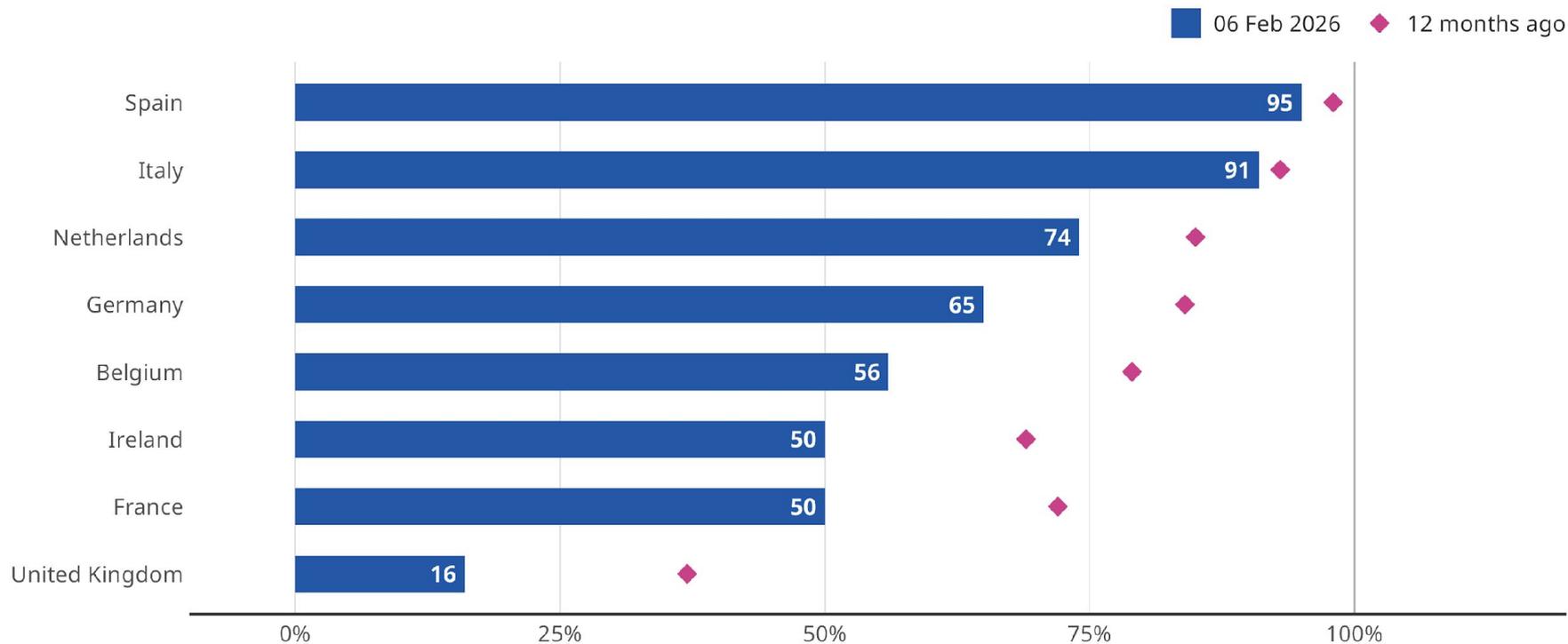

Source: Indeed

Majority of categories above baseline but trending downward, with the UK notably lower

Share of occupational categories with postings above the pre-pandemic baseline (01 Feb 2020)
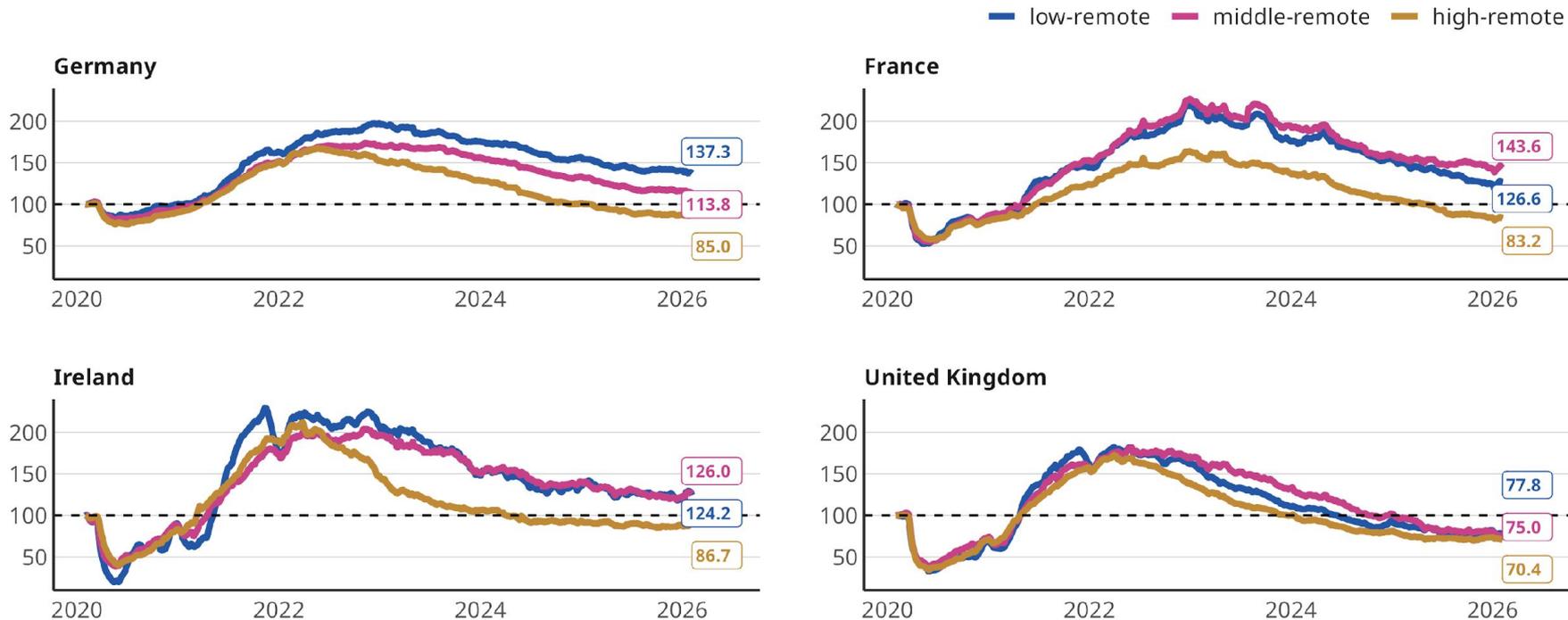
Legend: ■ 06 Feb 2026   ◆ 12 months ago

Country	06 Feb 2026
Spain	95
Italy	91
Netherlands	74
Germany	65
Belgium	56
Ireland	50
France	50
United Kingdom	16

Axis: 0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

Source: Indeed

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Postings are weakest in high-remote sectors

Index 100 = Feb 2020, seasonally adjusted, to 06 Feb 2026

Legend: ▬ low-remote ▬ middle-remote ▬ high-remote

Germany
- low-remote: 137.3
- middle-remote: 113.8
- high-remote: 85.0

France
- middle-remote: 143.6
- low-remote: 126.6
- high-remote: 83.2

Ireland
- middle-remote: 126.0
- low-remote: 124.2
- high-remote: 86.7

United Kingdom
- low-remote: 77.8
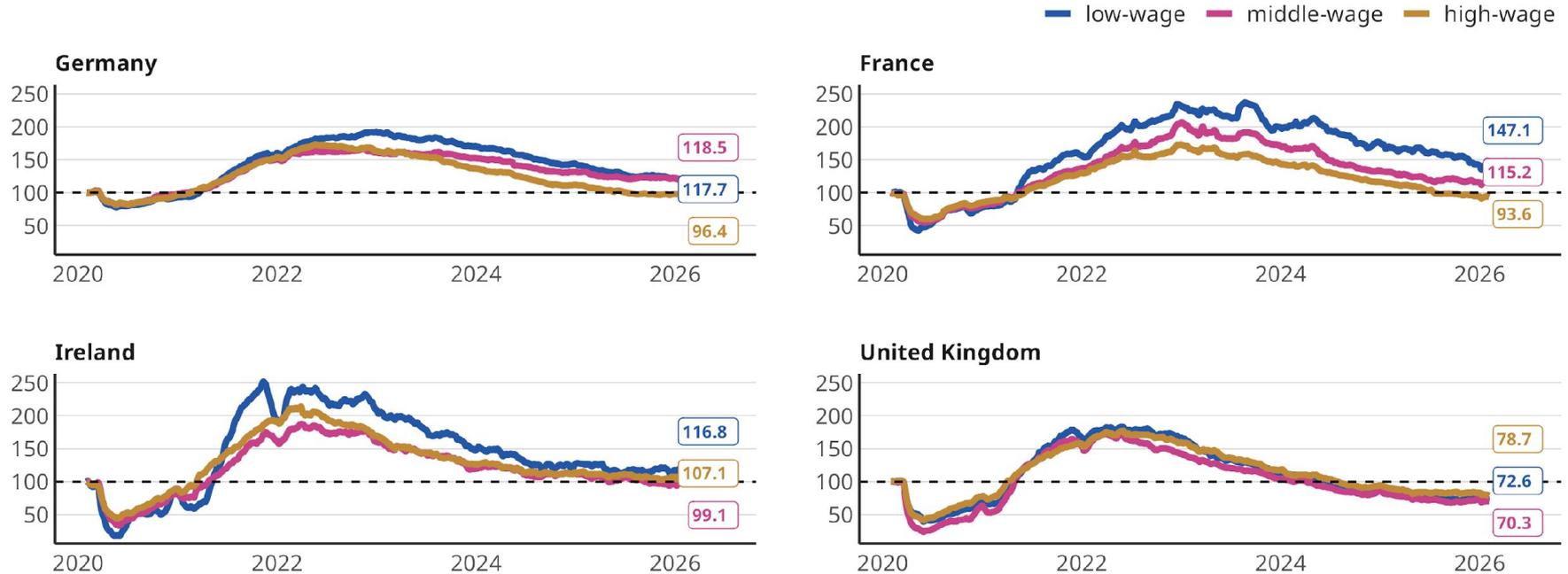- middle-remote: 75.0
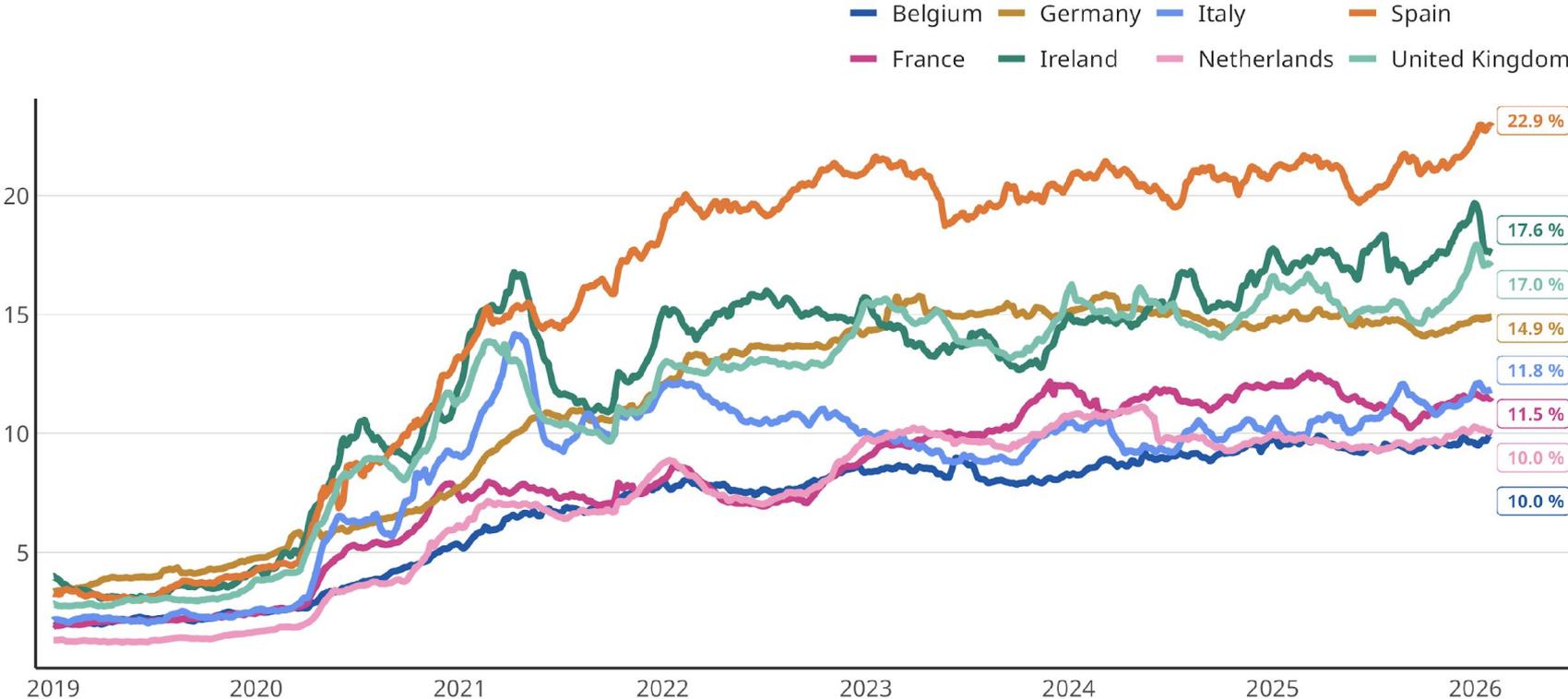- high-remote: 70.4

Source: Indeed

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Demand for high-wage jobs declined in France and Germany, while middle-wage jobs fell most in Ireland and the UK

Index 100 = Feb 2020, seasonally adjusted, to 06 Feb 2026

Legend: low-wage (blue), middle-wage (pink), high-wage (gold)

Germany
- 118.5 (middle-wage)
- 117.7 (low-wage)
- 96.4 (high-wage)

France
- 147.1 (low-wage)
- 115.2 (middle-wage)
- 93.6 (high-wage)

Ireland
- 116.8 (low-wage)
- 107.1 (high-wage)
- 99.1 (middle-wage)

United Kingdom
- 78.7 (high-wage)
- 72.6 (low-wage)
- 70.3 (middle-wage)

Source: Indeed

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Incidence of remote work shows strong cross-country differences

Share (%) of job postings mentioning remote/hybrid terms, to January 2026

Legend: Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Ireland, Netherlands, United Kingdom

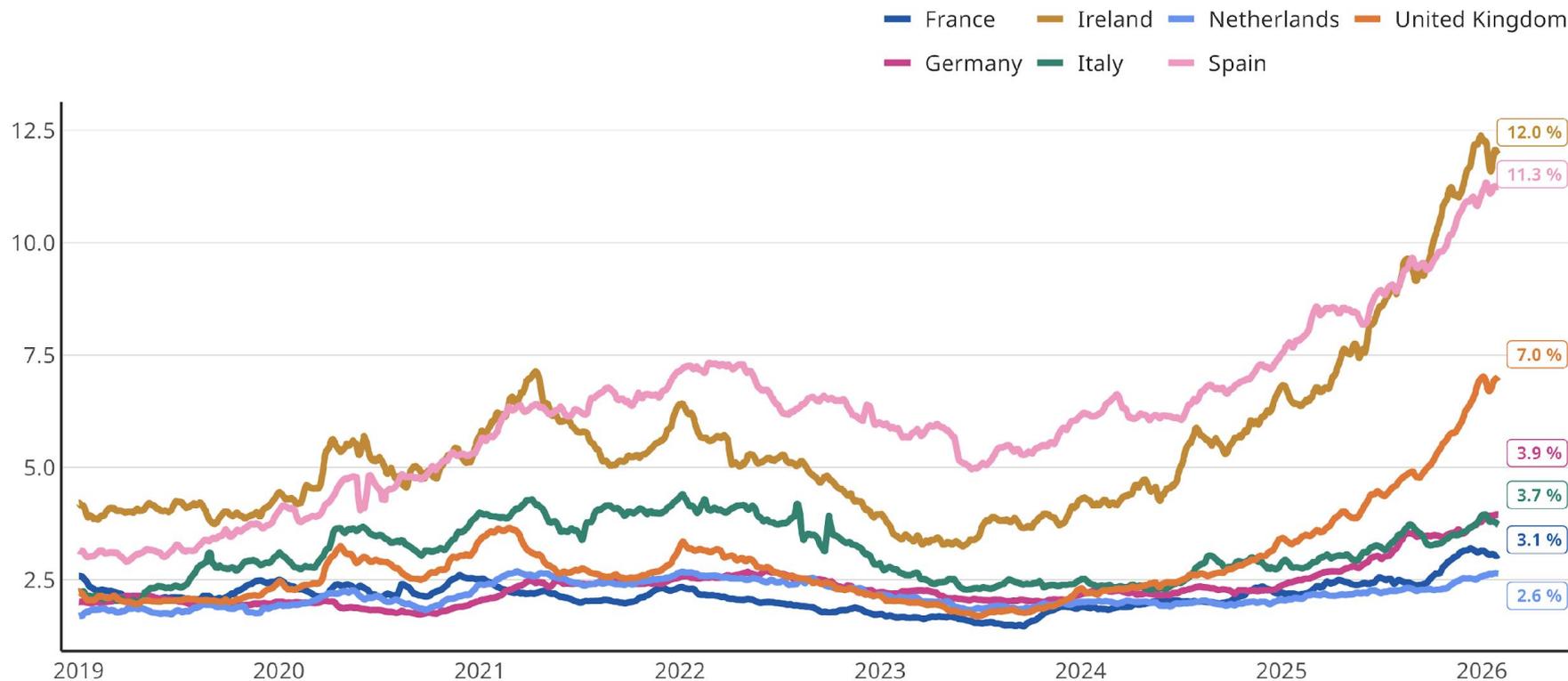Values shown on right: 22.9 %, 17.6 %, 17.0 %, 14.9 %, 11.8 %, 11.5 %, 10.0 %, 10.0 %

Source: Indeed. Cross-country level differences are partly due to differences in sector composition.

The share of postings mentioning AI is rising across most of Europe

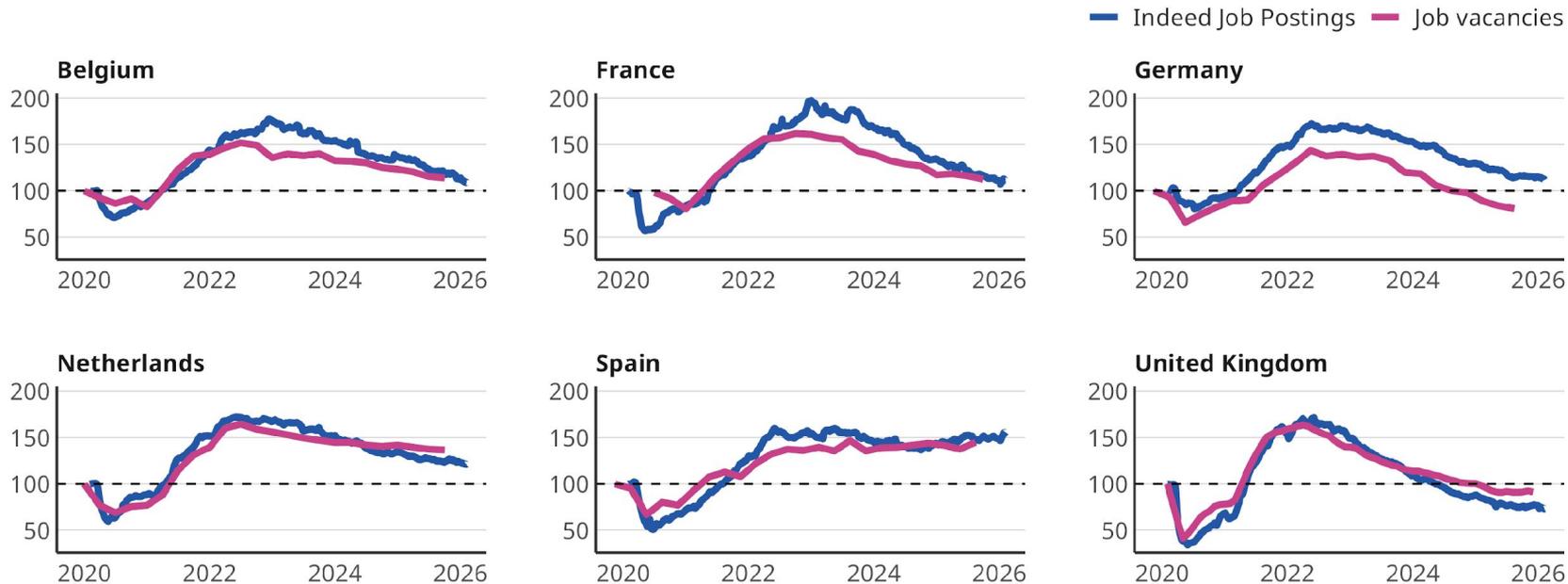Percentage (%) of job postings containing AI terms, 7-day moving average, to Jan 2026

Legend: France, Ireland, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Spain

Values at Jan 2026: Ireland 12.0 %, Spain 11.3 %, United Kingdom 7.0 %, Germany 3.9 %, Italy 3.7 %, France 3.1 %, Netherlands 2.6 %

Source: Indeed. Cross-country level differences are partly due to differences in sector composition.

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Indeed job postings and official job vacancy data track each other well
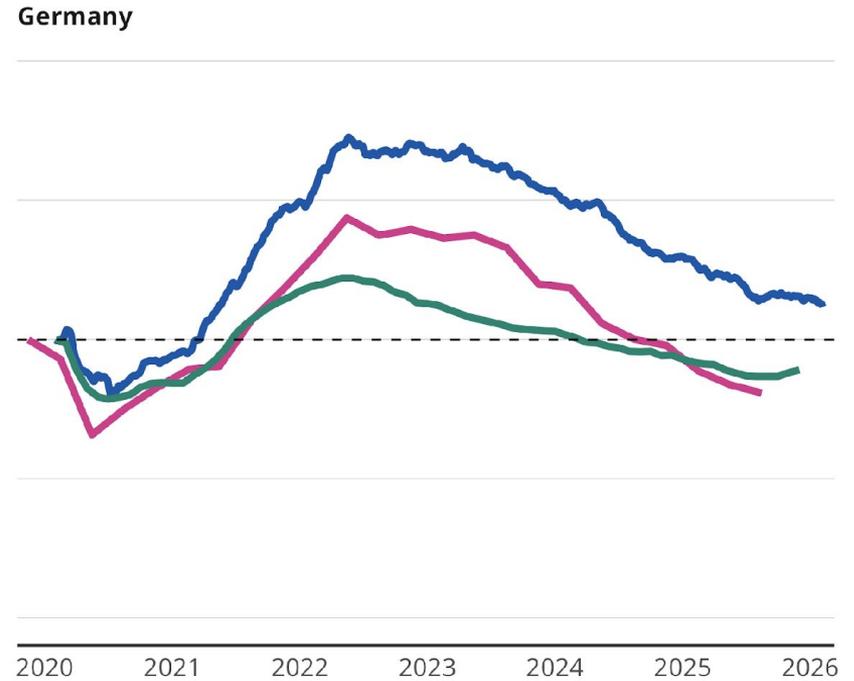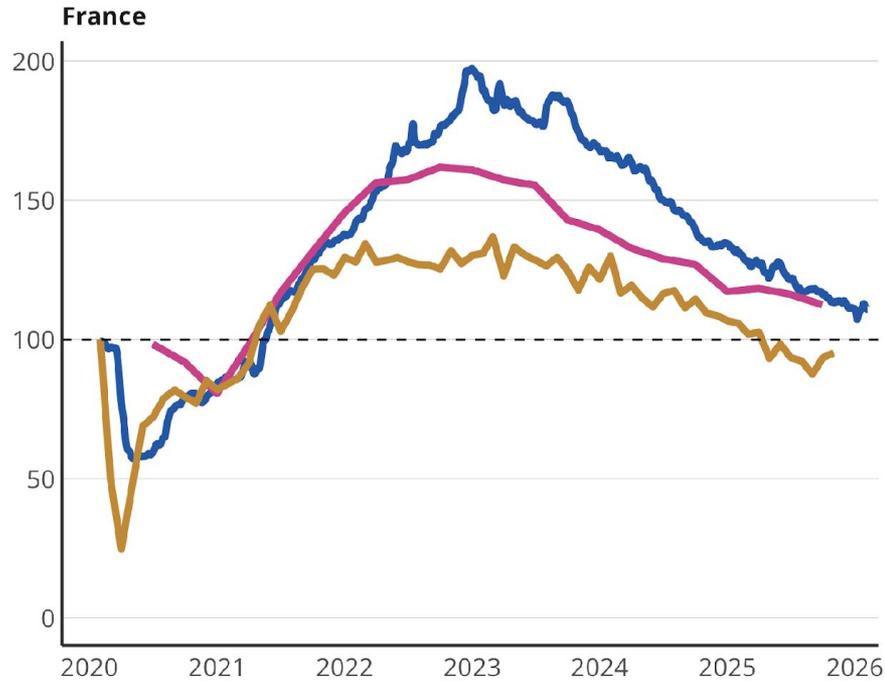
Seasonally adjusted index, to 06 Feb 2026

Legend: — Indeed Job Postings — Job vacancies

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Alternative measures of job vacancies show similar declining trends

Indeed job postings and official vacancy data, seasonally adjusted, to 06 Feb 2026

— Indeed Job Postings — Job vacancies — New registered vacancies — Registered vacancies


Sources: Indeed, Eurostat (Job vacancies, quarterly data, to Q3 2025, missing value in French vacancy data for Q1 2020), OECD (Registered vacancies, monthly data, to Dec 2025). Index 100 = Feb. 2020 for Indeed and OECD data. Index = Q4 2019 for Eurostat data.

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Labour markets are gradually loosening in several European economies

Vacancies per unemployment, normalised to their long-term mean, seasonally adjusted data, to Q3 2025

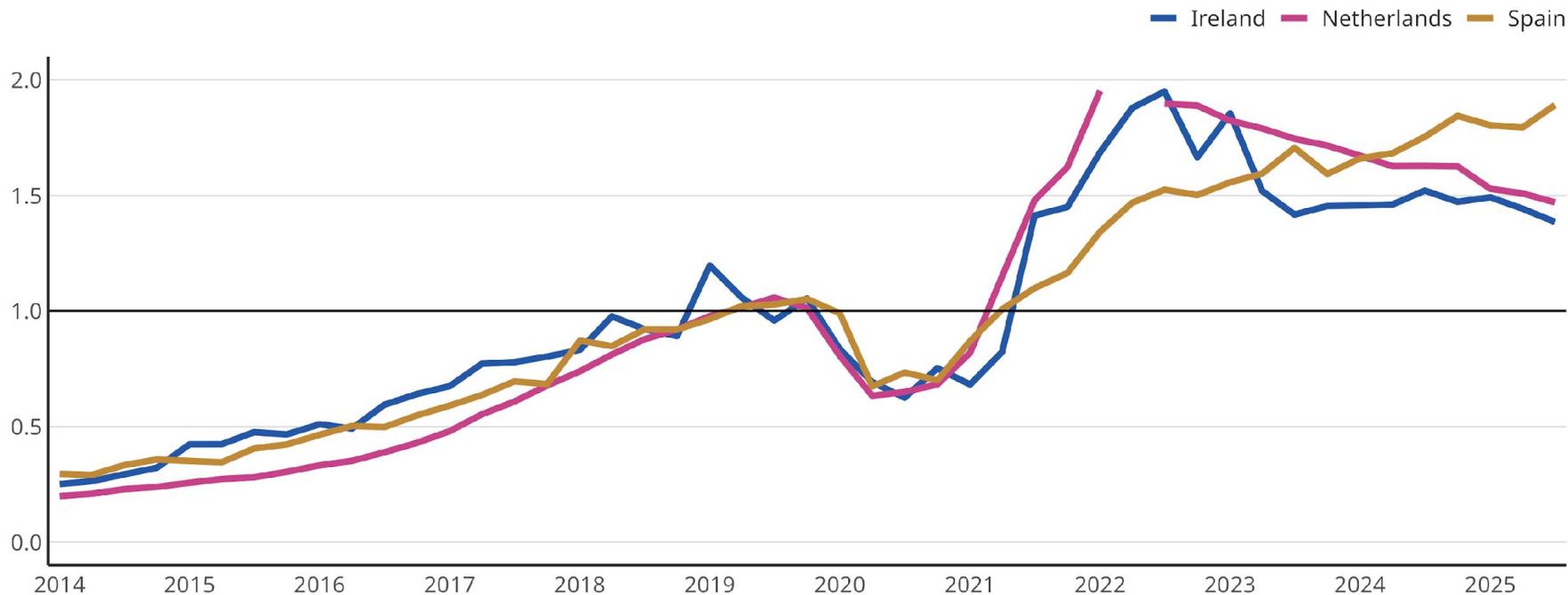Legend: — Belgium — France — Germany — United Kingdom
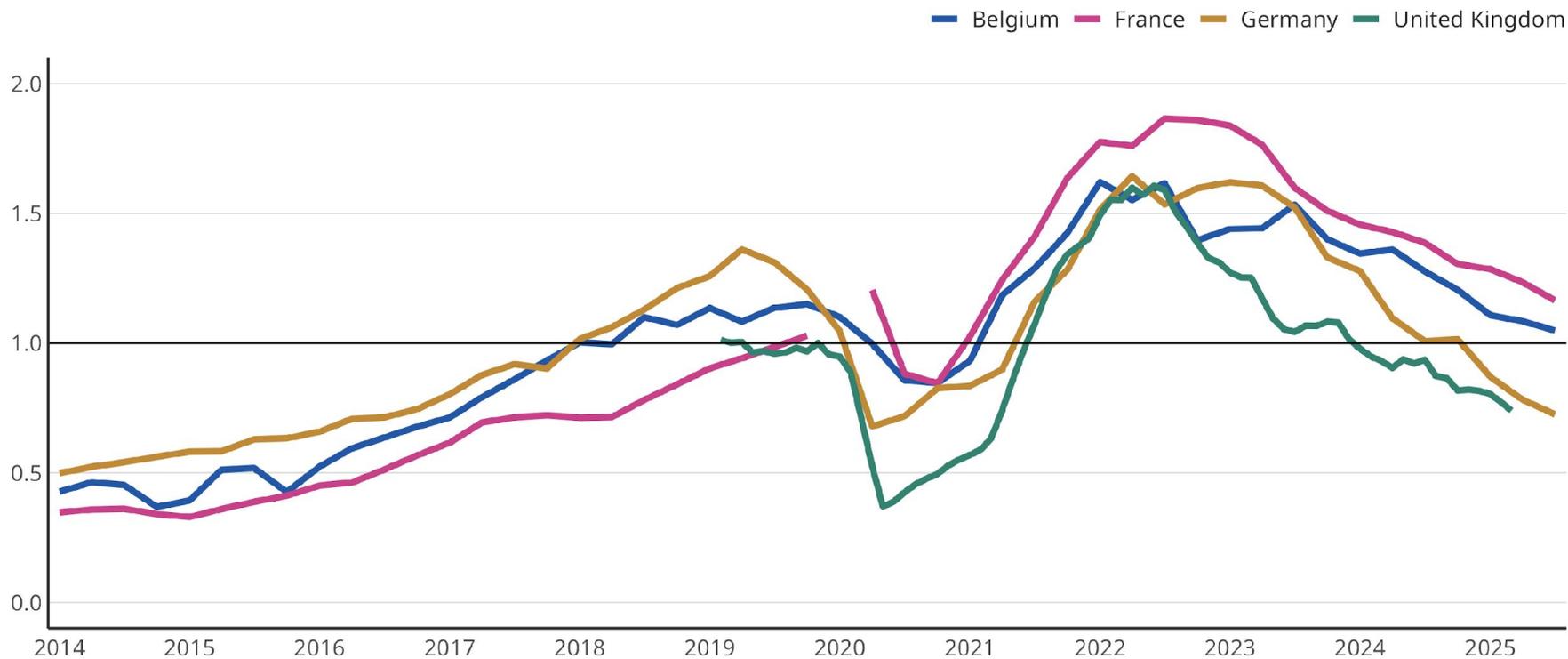
Sources: Eurostat, ONS. Tightness is normalised to its mean over the observed period. Unemployment among ages 15-74 (UK: 16-64). Vacancies from Eurostat refer to NACE-Rev.2 sectors B-S. Missing value in French vacancy data for Q1 2020.

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Labour market tightness is still above its long-term average in several European economies

Vacancies per unemployment, normalised to their long-term mean, seasonally adjusted data, to Q3 2025

Legend: Ireland, Netherlands, Spain

Sources: Eurostat. Tightness is normalised to its mean over the observed period. Unemployment among ages 15-74 (Spain: 16-74).
Vacancies refer to NACE-Rev.2 sectors B-S.
For Italy, the number of vacancies is approximated by the vacancy rate referring to sectors B-S except O.

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Unemployment rates drifting slightly upwards in the North, levelling off at higher level in Southern Europe

Unemployment, in % of the labour force, Europe, Jan 2019 - Jan 2026
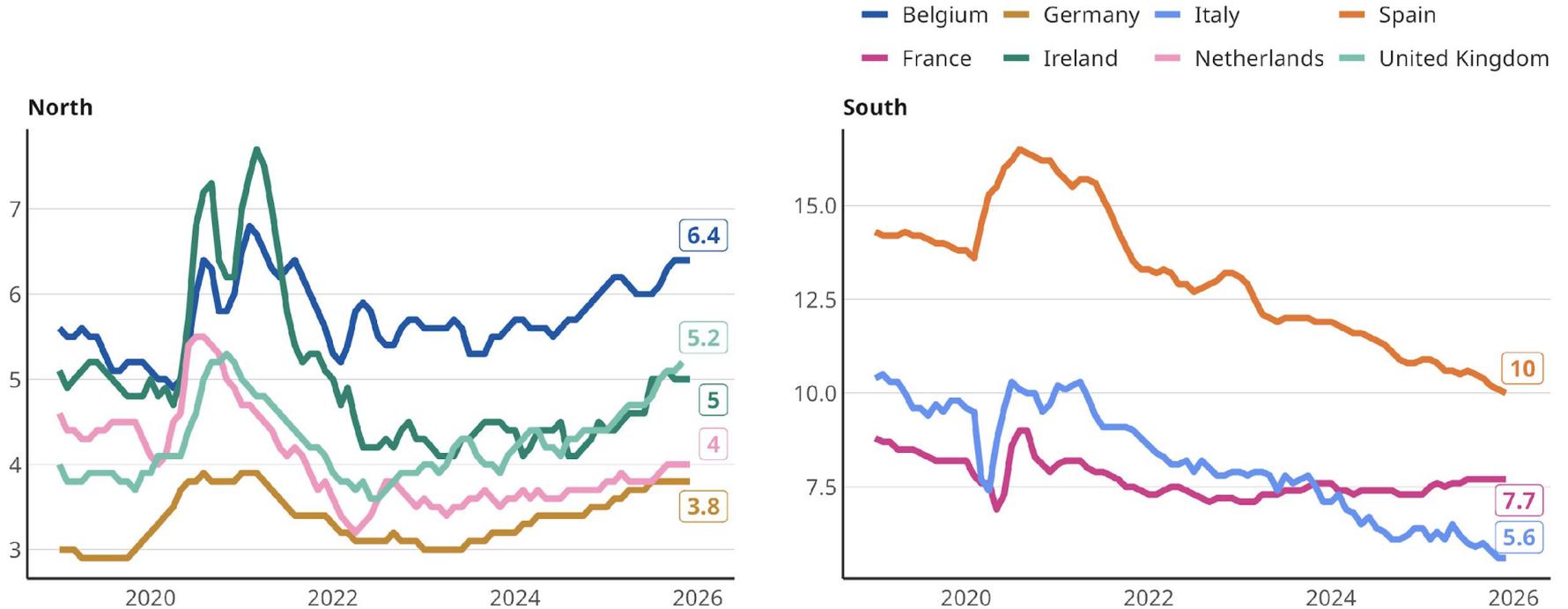
Sources: Eurostat, ONS. Seasonally adjusted unemployment rate among ages 15-74.
ONS data refers to ages 16-64, latest data: Nov 2025.

Employment expectations in Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands buck the downward trend; France shows first signs of recovery

Index (long-term average = 100), monthly data, to Jan 2026
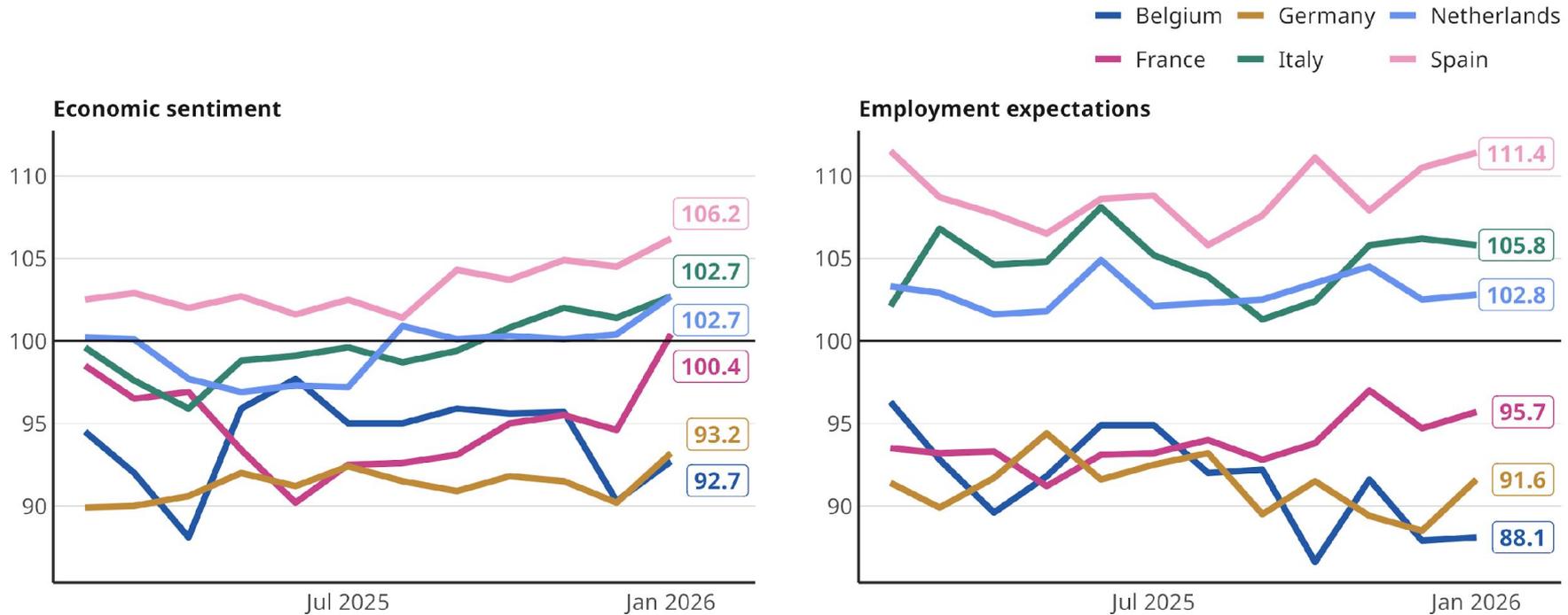
Legend: ■ Belgium ■ Germany ■ Netherlands ■ France ■ Italy ■ Spain

Economic sentiment

- Spain: 106.2
- Italy: 102.7
- Netherlands: 102.7
- France: 100.4
- Germany: 93.2
- Belgium: 92.7

Employment expectations

- Spain: 111.4
- Italy: 105.8
- Netherlands: 102.8
- France: 95.7
- Germany: 91.6
- Belgium: 88.1

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Women's labour force participation is slowly catching up to men's

Labour force participation rate by gender, in percent of the population aged 25-54, to Q3 2025
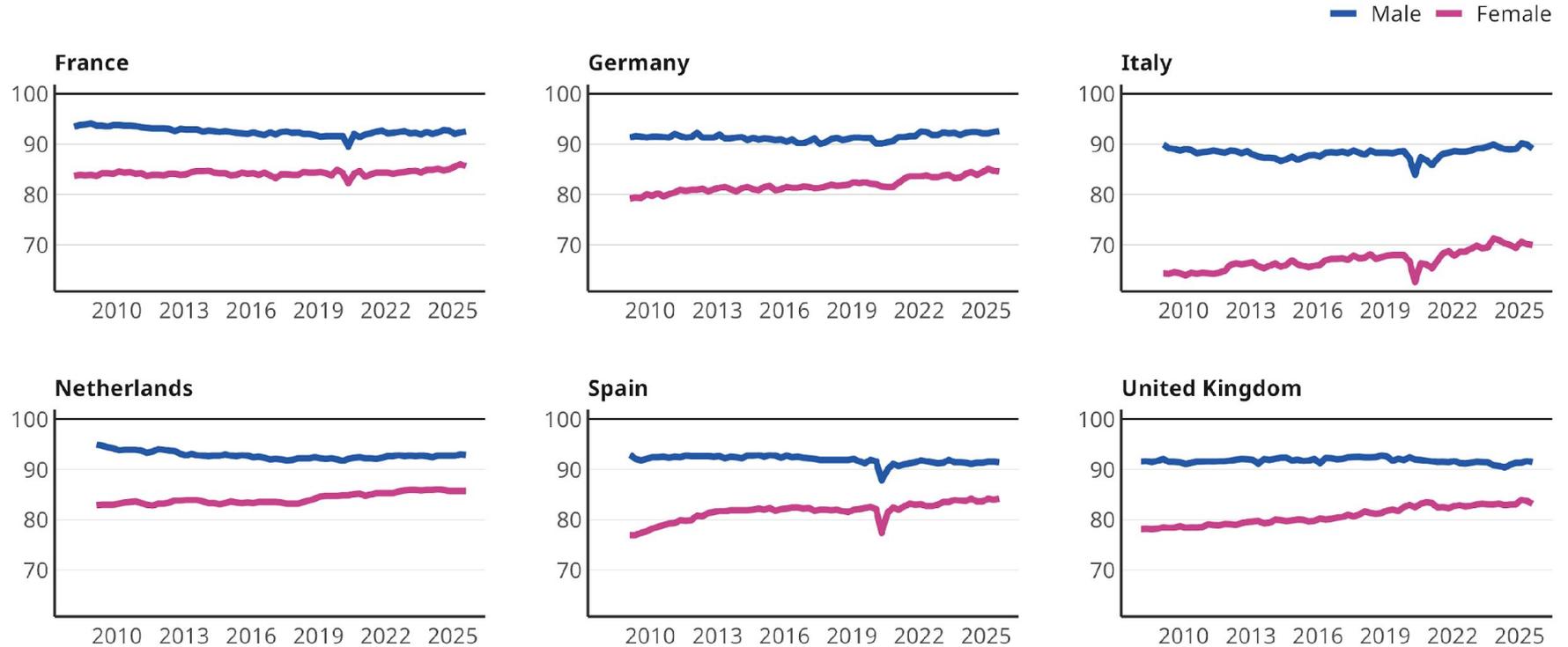
Sources: ILOSTAT (UK, to Q3 2025), Eurostat (EU countries, to Q3 2025). Seasonally adjusted.
Limited data availability due to break-corrected data from Eurostat with back estimates for 2009-Q1 to 2020-Q4 (except France).

Older workers participate at increasing rates with strong cross-country differences

Labour force participation rate by gender, in percent of the population aged 55-64, to Q3 2025

— Male — Female

Sources: ILOSTAT (UK, to Q3 2025), Eurostat (EU countries, to Q3 2025). Seasonally adjusted.
Limited data availability due to break-corrected data from Eurostat with back estimates for 2009-Q1 to 2020-Q4 (except France).
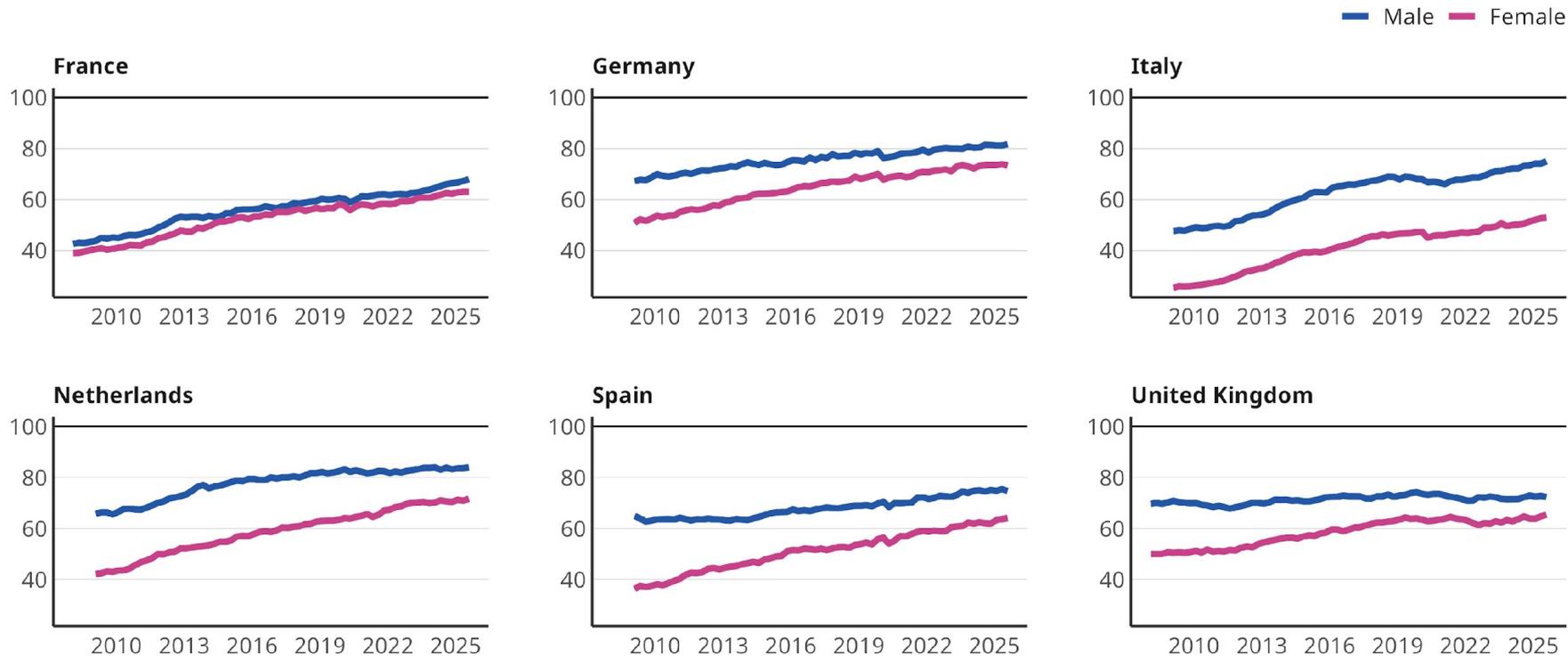
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Employment has remained stable overall since two years, with recent declines in hospitality and admin roles

Employment, Germany, index 2023-Q3=100, to 2025-Q3

Share in total employment (2025-Q3)

◆ 2024-Q3   ■ 2025-Q3

Activity	Share in total employment (2025-Q3)
Human health and social work activities	15%
Education	6.9%
Information and communication	4.1%
Transportation and storage	4.9%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	7.4%
Accommodation and food service activities	3.7%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	5.5%
Total - all NACE activities	100%
Manufacturing	17.9%
Administrative and support service activities	4.4%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	12.3%
Construction	6.3%

Source: Eurostat. Unadjusted series, ages 15-74.

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Employment has increased since 2023, particularly in hospitality and ICT

Employment, France, index 2023-Q3=100, to 2025-Q3

◆ 2024-Q3   ■ 2025-Q3

Share in total employment (2025-Q3)

Category	Share in total employment (2025-Q3)
Accommodation and food service activities	4.9%
Information and communication	3.9%
Construction	6.6%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	13.1%
Manufacturing	11.2%
Total - all NACE activities	100%
Education	7.6%
Administrative and support service activities	4.4%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	6.6%
Transportation and storage	4.9%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	7.9%
Human health and social work activities	13.3%

Source: Eurostat. Unadjusted series, ages 15-74.

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Posted wage growth remains robust across Europe, slower in France

Y-o-y growth in posted wages, to Jan 2026

— Wage growth y/y — Wage growth y/y (3mo avg)

France

1.1 %

Germany

3.5 %

Ireland

3.4 %

Netherlands

4.2 %

Spain

2.9 %

United Kingdom

4.2 %

Source: Indeed Wage Tracker

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Wage growth patterns vary considerably across the EU

Y-o-y growth rates in labour compensation measures, to 2025-Q4

Sources: Eurostat (LCI refers to hourly compensation, including taxes and subsidies; NACE-Rev. 2 B-S, seasonally and calendar adjusted), ECB (CPE, W&S; Total economy, German and French data are seasonally adjusted, the remaining countries are both seasonally and calendar adjusted.)

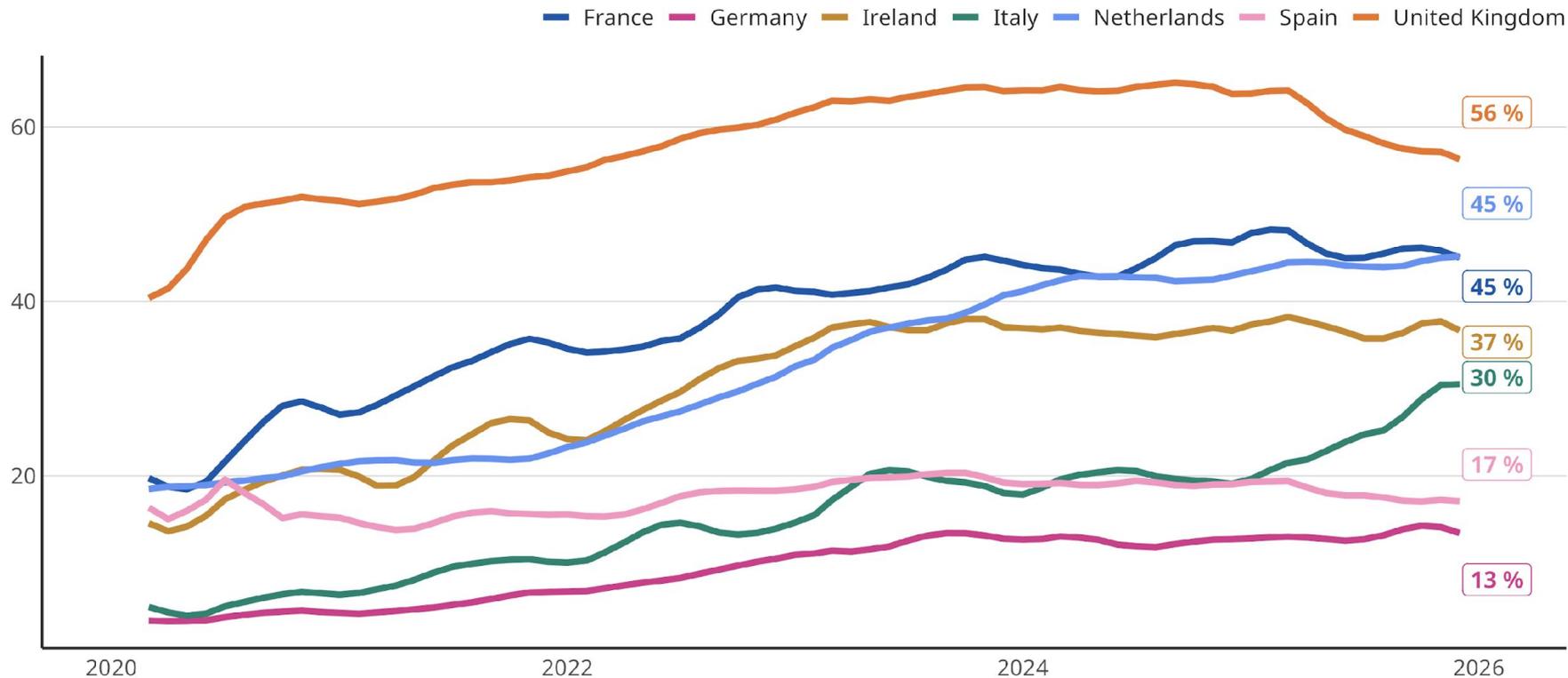# United Kingdom: growth in average weekly earnings remains strong

Year-on-year growth rates in regular pay, seasonally adjusted, to December 2025

— Private sector
— Public sector

7.2 %

3.4 %
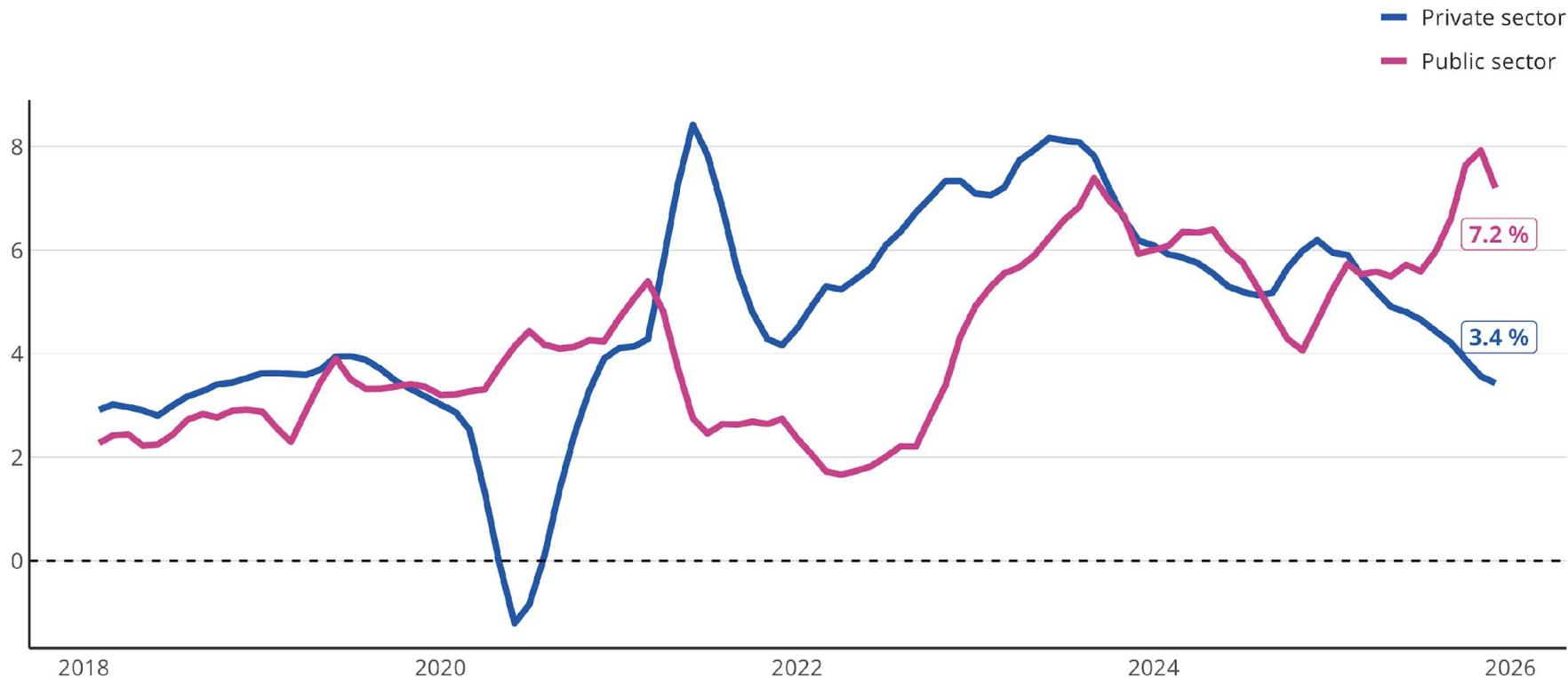
Source: ONS.

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Salary transparency has stalled ahead of incoming legislation

Share of postings containing salary information, 3-month rolling average, to December 2025

Legend: — France — Germany — Ireland — Italy — Netherlands — Spain — United Kingdom

Data labels:
- United Kingdom: 56 %
- Netherlands: 45 %
- France: 45 %
- Ireland: 37 %
- Italy: 30 %
- Spain: 17 %
- Germany: 13 %

X-axis: 2020, 2022, 2024, 2026

Source: Indeed

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→ hiringlab.org

→ data.indeed.com

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