

The Most Important AI Conferences in Europe 2026: Festivals, Summits and Data Events

Europe's artificial intelligence conference landscape has matured. What used to be a handful of academic gatherings has turned into a thriving ecosystem of festivals, summits, and data events – each with its own character and focus. For decision-makers looking to stay ahead in artificial intelligence and machine learning, the challenge isn't finding an event. It's choosing the right one.

This guide covers the most relevant AI conferences and data events across Europe in 2026 – from intimate executive summits to large-scale festivals with thousands of attendees. Whether you're after strategic insights, hands-on workshops, or networking with fellow AI practitioners, there's an event that fits.

d:u – data:unplugged Festival (Münster, Germany)

On March 26–27, 2026, Europe's largest data and AI festival returns to Münster – for the third time. What started six years ago as a podcast has grown into a movement: Over 10,000 attendees are expected across two days, five stages, and more than 40 masterclasses.

[d:u26 combines real substance with an authentic festival experience](#). The content runs deep – with a dedicated Data and Analytics Stage for data scientists and developers, plus the new Mittelstand Stage, designed specifically for decision-makers from SMEs and family-owned businesses looking to drive data and AI initiatives across their organizations. But unlike typical AI conferences, it all happens in a festival setting: networking, live music, special acts, food included with your ticket, and a genuine community vibe.

For international visitors, d:u offers something unique: direct access to Germany's Mittelstand and a firsthand look at how German companies are tackling data and AI transformation.

With 200+ keynotes and speakers, 150+ exhibitors, and endless networking opportunities, d:u is the annual go-to event for Europe's data and AI community. The 2026 edition brings new formats: deep-tech panels on machine learning and generative AI, live demos of the latest AI tools, and hands-on masterclasses for teams ready to put AI into practice. Tickets go fast – [book early](#).

World AI Cannes Festival (Cannes, France)

On February 12–13, 2026, the [World AI Cannes Festival](#) kicks off the European AI conference season in style. Held at the iconic Palais des Festivals – yes, where the film festival happens – WAICF positions itself as the "#1 AI event for business and society."

With over 10,000 participants, 320 international speakers, and 220 exhibitors expected, the scale is impressive. The programme spans four main tracks: AI in Business, AI Governance, Next-Gen AI Technology, and Health AI. Keynote speakers include tech leaders and chief data officers from Meta, IBM, LinkedIn, and major European enterprises.

What makes Cannes distinctive is its dual focus on commercial application and societal impact. Sessions explore everything from scaling machine learning projects to navigating the EU AI Act and data governance – relevant for any organisation operating in Europe. The glamorous setting doesn't hurt either: if you need to convince your board that AI conferences are worth attending, the Côte d'Azur backdrop helps make the case.

The AI Summit London (London, UK)

On June 10–11, 2026, [The AI Summit London](#) celebrates its tenth year and has established itself as the flagship enterprise AI conference in Europe. The tagline says it all: "Where commercial AI comes to life."

Held at Tobacco Dock during London Tech Week, the summit brings together 4,500 technologists and business leaders from around the world. The programme features 300+ speakers across six stages, with a strong emphasis on real-world implementation. This isn't a research conference – it's where enterprises share how they're actually deploying AI systems and machine learning at scale.

Key themes include AI governance and ethics, scaling strategies, and sector-specific applications across finance, healthcare, manufacturing, and retail. The expo floor hosts 100+ exhibitors showcasing cutting-edge AI technologies, making it a practical venue for evaluating solutions. For decision-makers with concrete implementation questions, London delivers actionable insights.

AI & Big Data Expo Europe (Amsterdam, Netherlands)

On October 20–21, 2026, the [AI & Big Data Expo](#) takes a different approach: less conference, more trade show. The Amsterdam edition is part of a global series, and the format reflects that – a large exhibition floor combined with conference tracks.

For teams evaluating AI technologies and big data vendors, this is valuable. Over 150 companies showcase their solutions, from automation platforms to data infrastructure tools.

Developers and data science teams can explore the latest in machine learning, generative AI, and analytics technology. The conference tracks cover practical topics: moving from prototypes to production, data governance, sector-specific deployments.

The vibe is more pragmatic than visionary. Attendees come to see demos, compare solutions, and make buying decisions. If your 2026 agenda includes selecting AI tools or big data platforms, Amsterdam should be on your radar. The event also offers hands-on workshops and technical deep-dives for teams ready to move beyond evaluation into implementation.

World Summit AI (Amsterdam, Netherlands)

Also in Amsterdam, but a completely different beast: [World Summit AI](#) positions itself as the "epicentre of the global AI ecosystem." Where the Expo is about vendors, World Summit AI is about ideas and people.

The attendee mix is uniquely broad – data scientists, machine learning engineers, developers, CEOs, investors, policymakers, researchers. The summit has a reputation for big announcements; companies reportedly queue for years to launch products here. If you want to explore where artificial intelligence is heading globally, this is where the conversation happens.

For mid-market decision-makers, World Summit AI offers perspective on the future. The sessions cover deep learning, generative AI, computer vision, and AI ethics – skewing more technical and visionary than immediately practical, but the networking is unmatched. Where else can you grab coffee with a leading AI researcher and discuss your implementation challenges? Tech leaders, chief scientists, and industry titans share the same space as start-ups and developers.

Data Innovation Summit (Stockholm, Sweden)

On May 6–8, 2026, the [Data Innovation Summit](#) takes place – the Nordic region's flagship data conference that has grown into a world-class event. The 11th edition expands to three days for the first time, with 15 stages and 3,500+ attendees expected.

The programme balances technical depth with business value. Days one and two cover data engineering, machine learning operations, AI governance, data science, and analytics strategy. Day three is new: dedicated industry tracks for finance, manufacturing, healthcare, retail, and public sector – perfect for exploring how digital transformation plays out across different industries.

What makes Stockholm worth the trip is the community. The Nordic data and AI ecosystem has a reputation for pragmatism and openness – people share what actually works, not just what sounds impressive. The Data After Dark networking event and the new 10km DIS Run

around Kungsholmen Island reflect the summit's approach: serious content, human connections. For developers, data scientists, and business leaders alike, it's a chance to explore cutting-edge research and practical applications in one place.

FT Future of AI Summit (London, UK)

On November 4–5, 2026, the [FT Future of AI Summit](#) is designed for you if your job title includes "Chief" or "Head of." With 87% of attendees at decision-maker level, this is one of the most senior AI gatherings in the world.

The Financial Times curates the programme around strategic leadership challenges: scaling AI investments, navigating regulation and governance, workforce transformation for the AI revolution, measuring business value and ROI. Sessions feature executives who have led digital transformation initiatives – not vendors pitching solutions.

The intimate format (around 900 attendees) enables genuine networking and peer exchange. For C-level executives seeking candid conversations about what works in AI adoption, London in November offers that environment.

CogX Festival (London, UK)

[CogX](#) defies easy categorisation. Part tech conference, part ideas festival, part cultural event – it's drawn comparisons to TED meets SXSW for artificial intelligence.

The scale is massive: previous years attracted tens of thousands of participants from around the world. The programming spans AI in business, climate change and sustainability technology, ethics, creative industries, and beyond. You might attend a session on enterprise AI strategy, then wander into a debate about AGI safety with leading researchers, then end up at a live performance.

For decision-makers, CogX offers a 360° view of the global AI ecosystem. It's a place to step outside your industry silo and explore how artificial intelligence intersects with society at large – from healthcare to finance to start-ups building the future. The networking is serendipitous – you never know which tech leaders or brightest minds you'll meet. If you can only attend one event that challenges your assumptions about AI's role in the world, CogX is it.

European Big Data Value Forum (Galway, Ireland)

On September 30 – October 1, 2026, the [EBDVF](#) is different from everything else on this list. Organised by the Big Data Value Association in collaboration with the European Commission, it's where EU policy meets industry practice.

Attendees include innovation managers, researchers, developers, and policymakers – many involved in EU-funded research projects. The programme covers European data strategy, AI governance, big data technologies, and cross-border collaboration.

For companies navigating the EU AI Act or exploring European funding opportunities, Galway provides direct access to the people shaping the rules and the future of technology policy. It's smaller and more specialised than commercial conferences, but strategically valuable for anyone doing business in Europe.

Conclusion: Europe's AI Events Await

The European AI event landscape offers the right format for every organisation in 2026 – from strategic conferences and technical deep dives to community-driven festivals. Whether you're looking for your first entry point or seeking sparring partners to scale, you'll find them.

The most important factor when choosing: Don't try to be everywhere. Pick two or three events that match your current priorities – and bring the right team. AI competence affects all areas of a business. For a successful transformation, it's essential to bring key people along and learn together.

We look forward to welcoming your team on March 26–27, 2026 in Münster – where over 10,000 AI practitioners, decision-makers, and innovators come together. [Get your ticket for d:u 2026 now.](#)