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Guide to **Hiring Remote Talent** in Europe for APAC-Based Companies



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Introduction

Home to a total of 44 countries – several of which boast the world’s leading economies – Europe is an ideal destination for APAC-based companies with global aspirations.

Granted, companies looking to enter the European market should anticipate a host of to-dos and many challenges that stem from significant differences across the business environments of each country.

This guide offers an overview of top talent hubs in Europe as well as preliminary advice on how to grow your remote team in the region.





Why hire in the European market?

Europe's multitude of thriving economies are upheld in large by its wide consumer and talent market, adding to its appeal as a destination for Asia-Pacific-based companies with global ambitions.

Companies that scale in Europe can benefit from significant opportunities, including:

1. Hire in markets with the world's highest talent concentrations.

Europe's workforce isn't only extensive due to its population's size, but also for the talent it has. Nine of the 25 cities in the world considered to have the deepest [concentration of talent](#) are in Europe, as each city boasts a well-educated workforce, good universities, and industries skewed toward innovation.

2. Scale in a thriving business environment.

While the region's business population is considerably as vast as its residential population, it continues to welcome new companies looking to enter new markets. In the first quarter of 2022 alone, European venture capitalist pre-money valuations across all financing stages continued their upward trajectory to EUR 9.4 million – [43.2 percent](#) higher than in 2021.

3. Grow to surrounding EU markets.

When companies are publicly registered following the corporate law of the European Union, they are categorized as "Societas Europaea" (SE) or a "European company." A key benefit to the SE business structure is that it is easier for a company under it to establish itself in another EU country.

Under normal circumstances, a company with a national business structure must set up a completely new company in their target country – often at a very high cost.

An SE, on the other hand, has the freedom to establish a registered office anywhere within the European Economic Area (EEA – EU plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway). Merging companies is also easier when both have the same SE structure.

4. Increase talent mobility.

Another benefit to hiring talent from the various countries in Europe is that the continent is home to 22 of the top 30 countries with the [most powerful passports in the world](#).

This means companies can employ talent who can enter multiple countries with relative ease – access which can prove beneficial when relocating employees to work on the ground or to expand the business in a new market.

Planning your global growth

For those who have yet to enter Europe, it can be tempting to view the continent homogeneously. However, to successfully hire in any of the region's 50 countries, companies must have a thorough understanding of the differences in the local business practices, labor laws, and employee expectations.

Before you begin recruiting internationally, ask the following key questions:

- Is there a specific market(s) we are considering?
- What does expansion into that country entail?
- How important is it for my employees to be geographically close to customers?
- Am I hiring for national or regional roles?
- Should things go well, is there a particular number of employees that I envision hiring and retaining?
- What is my recruitment budget?
- Should we embark on hiring on our own or work with a local partner?



Labor laws to keep in mind

Along with the differences in culture and language, there are also nuances in legal requirements that you must consider as you hire across Europe. To ensure successful global recruitment, extensive research on the country in which you are looking to hire will help minimize risk and avoid potential lawsuits. Some factors to consider include:

Compensation and payroll

As you hire and retain talent in Europe, there are payroll requirements and minimum wage rules that you will have to meet. As of 2022, minimum wages can range from around [EUR 332 per month \(Bulgaria\) to as much as EUR 2,202 per month \(Luxembourg\)](#). You will also have to determine which currency to pay your international employees in and what payment method to use – all while in compliance with local regulations.

Employment and taxation laws

Compliance is important when entering any new market, and it is essential to be keen on how varied employment and taxation laws are across Europe. In [Poland](#) for instance, residents are subject to tax on their worldwide income, whereas non-residents are subject only to tax on their income generated within the country.

[Germany](#), on the other hand, follows a PAYE (pay-as-you-earn) taxation model that requires employers to calculate and deduct the necessary withholdings from their employees' paychecks.

General Data Protection Regulation

As a company working with remote employees in Europe and subsequently using digital tools and processes, you will need to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation ([GDPR](#)). This is the region's main privacy law that requires companies to have data rights management systems in place and follow a set of guidelines that addresses the handling and safekeeping of customer data.

GDPR has far-reaching consequences for mistakes in data handling and collection across all businesses, and the [penalties](#) for disregarding these legal obligations can be severe. These include fines of up to EUR 20 million, or up to 4 percent of the annual worldwide turnover of the preceding financial year – whichever is greater.

As a result of Brexit, the UK is no longer a part of the European Union or under the GDPR specific to the region.

However, the UK government published an update to its Data Protection Act 2018 called the “Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communication” to continue protecting the rights and freedoms of those in the UK regarding their private information.

The Work-Life Balance Directive

[The Work-Life Balance Directive](#) is a law aimed at making it easier for professionals in the EU to balance paid work and private life, including caring responsibilities. It introduces minimum standards for parental leave and the right to flexible working arrangements, and safeguards against unfair dismissals. The directive was formally adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union in June 2019, with member states expected to transpose it into law by the end of 2022.

How to build and scale your team in Europe

Assess your financial readiness.

Building and scaling teams internationally requires significant resources, given that there are several administrative, marketing, and operational expenses to cover. In many cases, companies also usually don't have the in-house legal or human resources expertise to ensure compliance. Failure to properly invest in this key support often results in costly delays and, worse, penalties for noncompliance – all of which can be more expensive than the cost of said support.

To ensure successful entry into Europe, companies are expected to prepare for the cost of operating at each growth stage. Often, this entails establishing resources

that can cover six to 12 months of operations.

Another portion of your company's budget should be dedicated to unexpected expenses. Examples of situations in which such contingencies are necessary would include:

- Subsequent resignation of talent
- Malfunctioning equipment
- Natural calamities
- Hyperinflation affecting local operational costs
- Market exit

Identify your company's priorities.

Each market in Europe has its unique advantages, and [choosing where to scale in the region](#) comes down to your company's goals. For example, your growth goals may include:

- **Hiring top tech talent:** France is a market worth considering as it is presently home to as many as 1.7 million science and technology professionals and cities that are known tech hubs, such as Lyon, Montpellier, and Nice.
- **Building a multilingual team:** While Bulgarian is expectedly the primary language spoken in Bulgaria; international languages such as English, Italian, Spanish, and French are also popular in the country. Turkish and Romanian are also prevalent in Bulgaria, as the country also hosts Turkish and Romanian communities. A multilingual talent market is beneficial in that it eases training and overall communication and is further helpful when hiring in markets that speak any of the languages.
- **Entering a large consumer market:** With the 19th largest population in the world and the leading economy in Europe with a nominal gross domestic product of USD 4.5 trillion in 2022, Germany is a popular choice for companies aiming to eventually incorporate and generate revenue in a large market with significant spending power.

Where to find top talent in Europe

Once you determine your priorities and destinations for your global growth, you can begin your search for local talent. There are several talent hubs in Europe companies should evaluate when sourcing candidates.



Denmark

While often recognized as a cycling capital (over 90 percent of Danes own a bike) or as the birthplace of LEGO®, Denmark has gradually established itself as a highly desirable landing spot for global talent.

The country topped the [IMD World Competitiveness ranking](#) – a comprehensive annual report that analyzes and ranks countries according to how they manage their competencies to achieve long-term value creation.

Denmark's favorable economic and social conditions, combined with advanced digital and physical infrastructure, have also positioned it as the [second-best country in the world for remote workers](#).

Although the official workweek in Denmark is only 37 hours, the country's workforce continues to be widely regarded as among the [most productive in Europe](#).

Notable talent hub: Copenhagen

The greatest concentration of talent is in the country's capital, Copenhagen, the economic and financial center of Denmark. Services and commerce make up a large part of the city's economy, with a majority of its workforce employed in communications, trade, and finance.

Finland

With as many as [4,000 startup companies](#) operating in the country, Finland is widely recognized as one of the best places to establish a new company or expand a business.

The country also has the [largest share of remote workers in Europe](#) at 25 percent. And with 48 percent of Finns speaking three languages, Finland presents a remote workforce that is relatively easy to communicate with and can be helpful when scaling into other new territories.

Notable talent hub: Helsinki

Home to as many as [500 tech startups](#), Helsinki is a growing hub for innovative businesses. The Finnish capital is also regarded as [the best city in the world for work-life balance](#), which draws the attention of many top professionals.

Finland-based companies like Wolt, Smartly, and Supercell have trained Helsinki's tech workers – many of whom are looking to bring their experience and expertise to new teams.



Germany

Accounting for 28 percent of Europe's gross domestic product (GDP), Germany is the largest economy in the region and the fourth largest in the world.

The country is also regarded as the [best country in the world for remote workers](#) because of its healthy economy, favorable social conditions, cybersecurity, and digital and physical infrastructure.

Notable talent hub: Berlin

A large majority of Germany's remote talent can be found in its capital, Berlin. It ranks among the top cities in the world for talent concentrations because it has good universities that continue to produce a well-educated workforce.

Berlin is also considered to be one of the [most attractive cities for global tech](#) talent, further diversifying its workforce.

Ireland

Ireland is steadily positioning itself as a go-to hub for hiring remotely in Europe. It has developed plans for the creation of as many as [400 remote working hubs](#), and created a [Right to Request Remote Work Bill](#) aimed at making remote work a permanent feature of its workforce.

The latest [Labour Market Pulse](#) also shows that the share of digital skills of professionals in Ireland has risen by almost 20 percent since 2019. This includes non-technology skills, such as digital expertise in construction, transportation and logistics, corporate services, and finance.

Notable talent hub: Dublin

Large tech companies such as Facebook, Google, and Udemy have established offices in Dublin. The presence of these companies in the Irish capital is a testament to the qualifications and availability of the city's tech workforce.

According to the local government, there are about 230,000 professionals working in Dublin, which continues to grow with the help of government-backed specialist training in digital technologies, life sciences, and manufacturing.



Netherlands

The Dutch Parliament approved the legislation to make work from home a legal right, making the Netherlands [one of the first countries](#) to do so – now the country is waiting on the Dutch Senate for final approval.

Ranked as the 6th best country for [remote talent](#), the Netherlands' workforce is home to a wealth of professionals who can be hired as employees or contractors. The country also offers the opportunity for [digital nomads](#) to register as independent workers in the country.

Notable talent hub: Eindhoven

The city of Eindhoven ranked 10th globally in the [Quality-of-Life Index 2022 Mid-Year](#) report, which measures the quality of life in terms of purchasing power, cost of living, safety, climate, health, and traffic. Due to this, it continues to attract digital nomads both locally and internationally.

In addition, the city is home to [High Tech Campus Eindhoven](#), where there are over 260 companies and 11,000 research professionals, innovators, and engineers.

Poland

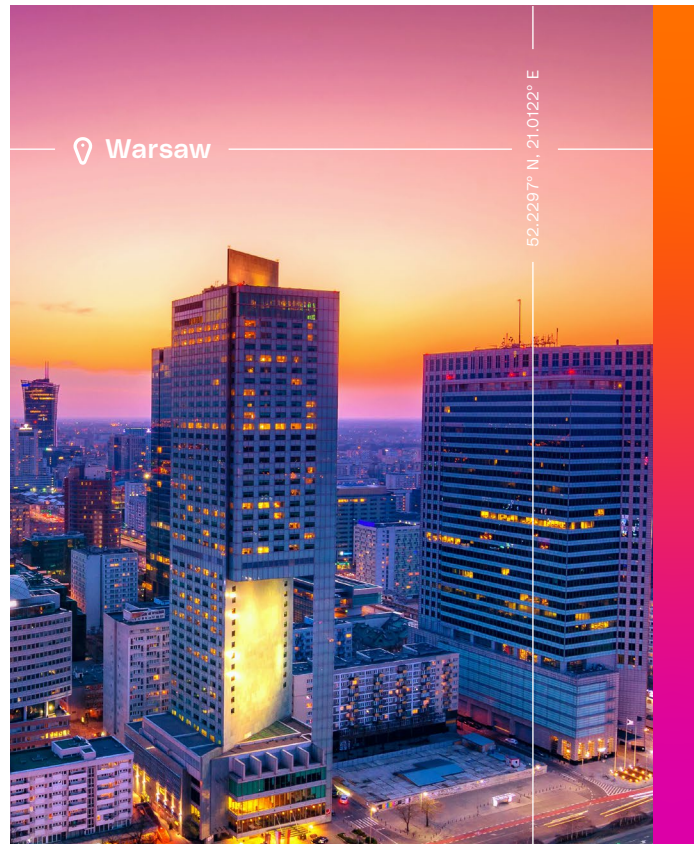
Poland is home to over [3,000 startups and more than 130 venture capitalists](#) – business activity that is supported in large by the presence of nearly [430,000 information technology specialists](#) in the market.

[Three of the top five universities in Europe](#), the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) for technical skills are in Poland, producing qualified young professionals looking for longterm roles.

Notable talent hub: Warsaw

The capital of Poland, Warsaw is also the leading economic and financial hub of Central Europe. One of the wealthiest regions in the European Union, Warsaw’s economy is upheld by its population – the largest in the country.

Along with the locals, Warsaw’s talent market is boosted by its international population which recently rose by as much as [15 percent](#). The city boasts top talent in prominent industries, including chemicals, cosmetics, construction, food processing, media, and printing.



Sweden

Sweden is often considered a top country to scale to in Europe. It ranked 10th among 190 economies in 2020. Renowned companies like Spotify and Skype first launched as startups in the country.

The [Swedish government supports innovation and growth](#) through various agencies and investments in infrastructure. Over 3 percent of the country’s GDP is spent on research and development.

Notable talent hub: Stockholm

Stockholm is widely recognized for producing the second-highest number of tech unicorns per capita, following only Silicon Valley. The Swedish capital has also managed to rank 4th among the best cities in the world for work-life balance.

As Sweden’s leading industrial area, many professionals in Stockholm can be counted on for their experience and expertise in metal and machine manufacturing, paper and printing, foodstuffs, and chemicals. Home to the headquarters of several banks and insurance companies, the city can also be tapped for finance professionals.

Switzerland

Topping the [INSEAD Global Talent Competitiveness Index](#), Switzerland is an ideal market for companies looking to hire remote talent in the region.

Home to two of the top 20 academic institutes in the world, the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich), Switzerland is known as a country of inventors – perfect for companies with innovative and global growth plans.

Notable talent hub: Geneva

A major reason Switzerland has been at the top of the INSEAD Global Talent Competitiveness Index since 2013 is the continued growth and diversification of local talent hubs like Geneva.

Regarded as one of the leading [financial centers in the world](#), Geneva boasts a large pool of financial experts. The city also hosts the world's largest concentration of international organizations, including the Red Cross, the International Labour Organization, and the European headquarters of the United Nations.



United Kingdom

With the fifth largest economy in the world and the second largest in Europe, the United Kingdom is home to several highly productive industries and accompanying talent markets.

Among its largest are the automotive and aerospace industries. Academics and research are also a significant contributor to the economy, as the country is home to several of the foremost universities and academic institutions in the world.

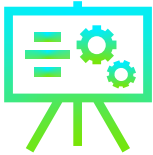
Notable talent hub: London

The fifth wealthiest city in the world, London is the global leader in foreign direct investments, drawing as many as [114 projects in 2021](#). A number of these are based in East London Tech City, also known as Silicon Roundabout.

Both local and international talent are drawn to the city to either take part in these projects, gain experience and training in the Silicon Roundabout, or earn a degree in one of the city's renowned universities. Fifth on the work-from anywhere index and considered the most attractive global destination for talent, London features a workforce that is significantly diverse in terms of culture and skills.

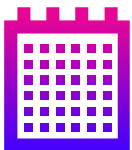
Hiring best practices

Hiring a remote team often means hiring from a distance. As the differences in time zones may make the process a bit more arduous, there are a few things you can do to [streamline and simplify the process](#):



Present a coordinated interview process.

Outline your interview topics and questions beforehand to ensure a seamless flow throughout the interview. Also be sure to test your remote meeting platform to avoid technical challenges and delays. Presenting a polished and professional interview experience gives potential hires a positive first impression that also effectively boosts your company's image.



Be flexible from the get-go.

Scheduling interviews or onboarding meetings may require some negotiation. By being flexible right at the start of the hiring process and allowing candidates to choose from multiple dates and times, you're showing them that you value their time, and that flexibility is a component of your company's work culture. This is particularly important, as flexibility is no longer a perk professionals hope for, but an expectation among today's top talent. In fact, a recent report found that employees [value flexibility as much as a 10 percent pay raise](#).



Invest in quality onboarding.

In most instances, building a global remote team often means onboarding them remotely as well. However, regardless of whether the onboarding process is in person or from a distance, it should ensure new team members are well acquainted with their team and the company culture.

They should also be familiarized with your policies, their responsibilities, and your expectations. A positive onboarding will also provide the tools and training your employees need to become fully integrated team members.



What successful entry into Europe can look like.

From South Korea to Germany: How wondermove hired local talent and accelerated their expansion.

Established in March 2020, wondermove, a Hyundai Motor Group spin-off startup, provides a mobility solution. The company has achieved eight times its annual recurring revenue growth every year since its establishment and is continuously driving global expansion. It now plans to offer its solutions and services across as many as 10 European countries, starting with Germany.

Wondermove faced considerable challenges when expanding to the European market. The company experienced difficulties obtaining local insights, legal familiarity, and key information to assess its target market in the region.

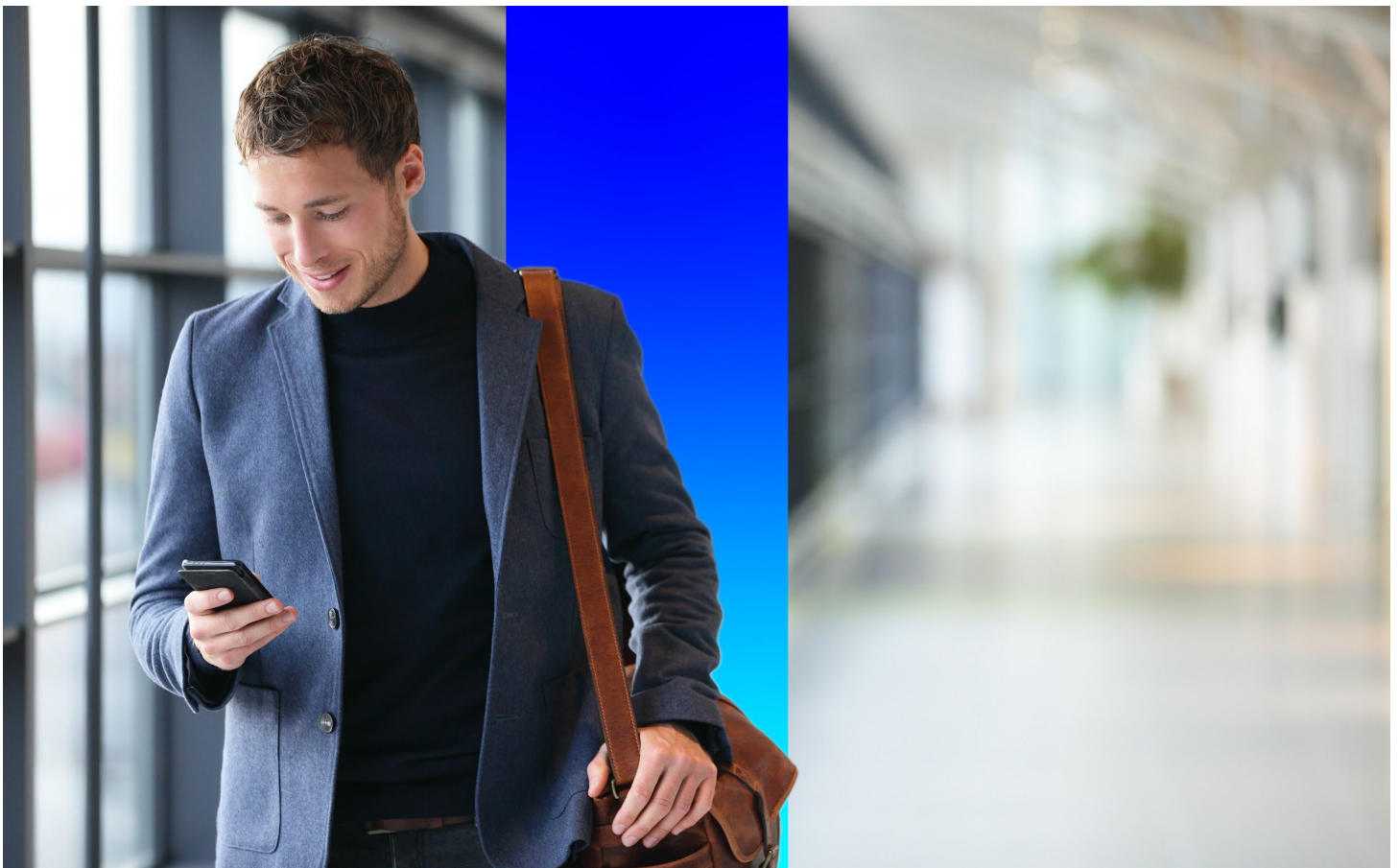
The wondermove team soon realized that access to expert advice and local know-how would be vital to

overcome these hurdles, which led them to G-P.

With G-P, the company promptly launched an expansion strategy and hired qualified local talent in Germany while minimizing the costs, time, risk, and resources involved in global growth.

By leveraging G-P's cutting-edge technology, wondermove hired a Korean employee living in Germany, which enabled the company to accelerate its solution development.

Thanks to G-P's Global Employment Platform™, wondermove efficiently expanded sans the worries that come with complicated legal procedures or tax issues that are common with international hiring.





Grow your remote team in Europe with G-P.

With a multitude of thriving economies, burgeoning talent hubs, and large consumer and talent markets, there's no doubt that Europe is an attractive destination for APAC-based companies with global aspirations.

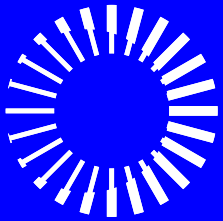
Planning your growth in Europe is the first step. Finding the right global expansion partner is the next. That is where G-P comes in.

Our comprehensive and fully compliant Global Employment Platform™ helps companies build and scale international teams quickly and easily. Our industry-leading technology streamlines and automates otherwise complicated and time-consuming processes like payroll setup, onboarding, and hiring.

As labor and tax laws continuously change, we make sure your company remains compliant, so you can focus on growing your business and expanding your workforce.

To support you through your expansion journey, we've added two new extensions to our platform to provide ample and customized support:

- **G-P Recruit:** Quickly identify and hire new team members in key locations globally through our market-leading Global Employment Platform™. Companies can access an unrivaled selection of recruiting specialists to find the ideal candidate based on their unique requirements.
- **G-P Contractor:** Hire contractors for both short- and long-term projects in 180+ countries, quickly and easily. Whether you're hiring employees or contractors, we streamline the process with a single solution for your global workforce.



G-P

Global Made Possible

About us

G-P helps growing companies unlock their full potential by making it possible to build highly skilled global teams in days instead of months. Through our SaaS-based platform, we help find, hire, onboard, pay, and manage team members, quickly and compliantly, to expand growth opportunities for everyone, everywhere – without the hassle of setting up local subsidiaries or branch offices.

G-P: Global Made Possible

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