

2025

Europe Private Capital Compensation Survey



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A message from the authors

Welcome to the *2025 Europe Private Capital Compensation Survey*. This report provides a comprehensive picture of both compensation practices and backgrounds of investment and operating professionals at private capital firms across Europe.

This year's survey includes responses from 302 professionals. We would like to thank each person who has completed the survey over the years—we appreciate your time and effort in contributing to the project. If you wish to discuss the survey in greater detail, please do not hesitate to contact us.

With warmest regards,



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Introduction:

Market context

The private capital market closes out 2025 in a similar situation to 2024. Liquidity is still the defining constraint, LPs are evaluating managers through a DPI-first lens, and the hierarchy is clear: those who have returned capital are able to raise it; those who have not faced slow, uncertain fundraises. Fundraising, therefore, remains bifurcated. Strong platforms, especially larger platforms, continue to attract commitments, but many others, particularly those in the middle, are extending timelines or downsizing targets. With a meaningful cohort of firms returning to fundraising in early 2026, the coming quarter will be decisive.

The investor mix continues to shift. With institutional portfolios still tight on liquidity, private-wealth channels have become a strategic growth engine for many managers. UHNW platforms, family offices, and insurance capital are now established allocators rather than experimental ones, and evergreen and semi-liquid structures have accelerated as a result, offering investors ongoing access and smoother pacing than traditional closed-end funds. What began as product innovation is quickly becoming a structural feature of private markets.

Deal activity improved through the back half of the year as financing markets stabilised and valuation expectations came closer to meeting. Still, buyers remain highly selective. Businesses with durable earnings, pricing power, and clear value-creation pathways continue to attract competitive processes; cyclical names or assets requiring heavy capital have seen more muted demand. The relative strength of public markets has sharpened scrutiny further, increasing pressure on managers to justify private-market performance given longer hold periods and sluggish distributions.

With exit routes still constrained, liquidity has increasingly been engineered rather than earned. Capital-solutions tools, GP-led secondaries and continuation vehicles, and NAV lending have become mainstream mechanisms to manage holding periods, provide optional liquidity to LPs and GPs, while offering the option to retain control of high-conviction assets.

Direct lending continues to command attention. The asset class remains a structural winner, but recent stress has heightened focus on underwriting quality and concentration risk. The easy spread capture of the early rate-hike period has given way to a more nuanced environment in which origination discipline and downside protection carry greater weight. LPs are asking deeper questions, particularly of platforms that scaled rapidly during 2021–2023.

These market dynamics are influencing how firms hire. Demand remains concentrated at the senior end, where firms prize leaders with a realised track record, credibility with LPs and the ability to lead a strategy or sector. Firms are using this period to enhance leadership capability ahead of a fundraise, build capabilities in capital-solutions or wealth-oriented products, or reinforce sector depth.

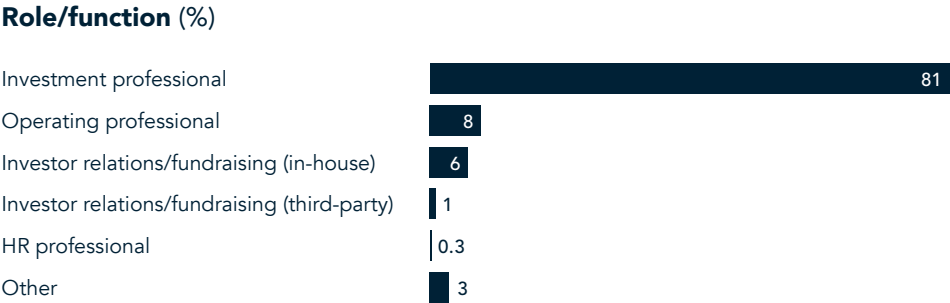
Demand for mid-level “deal captains” remains subdued; slower deployment and longer holds mean execution capacity is not the limiting factor it once was. Associate hiring is steady but measured. On the non-investment side, capital-formation roles, particularly those focused on private-wealth distribution and semi-liquid product expertise, remain the most active.

As 2026 approaches, the market feels transitional. Fundraising conditions remain challenging; wealth channels and evergreen products continue to scale; deal activity is improving; and capital-solutions strategies are growing rapidly.

The coming quarters will be defining. Firms that can demonstrate realised performance, articulate a clear strategic identity and secure consistent access to capital will strengthen their position. Others—lacking track-record, differentiation or capital formation infrastructure—will face difficult decisions.

Respondent and firm background

The majority of survey respondents are investment professionals. Given the large sample size, the final section of this report provides a detailed analysis of compensation trends specific to this group.



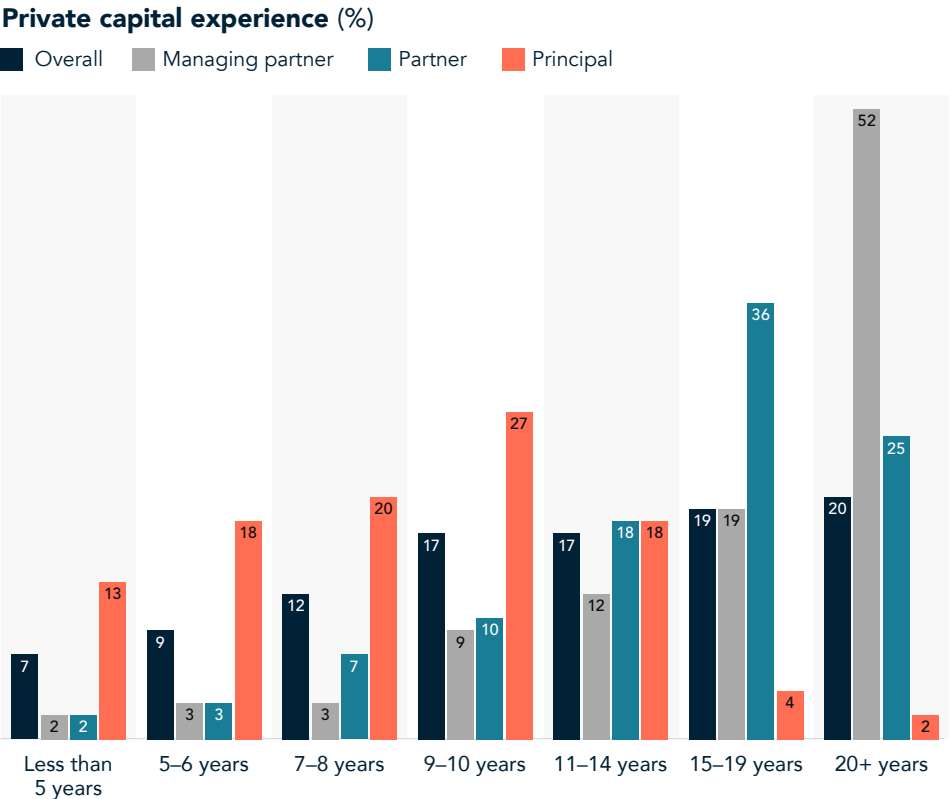
Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 301 respondents

The most common title among respondents is principal, though managing partners and partners are also well-represented.



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 302 respondents

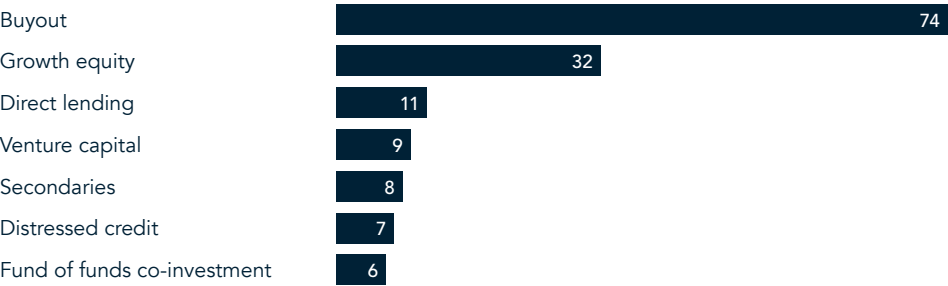
About three-quarters of respondents have over eight years of private capital experience. As expected, managing partners are the most seasoned group, while principals tend to have less experience.



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 301 respondents

Roughly three out of four respondents operate in the buyout space, with growth equity a distant second.

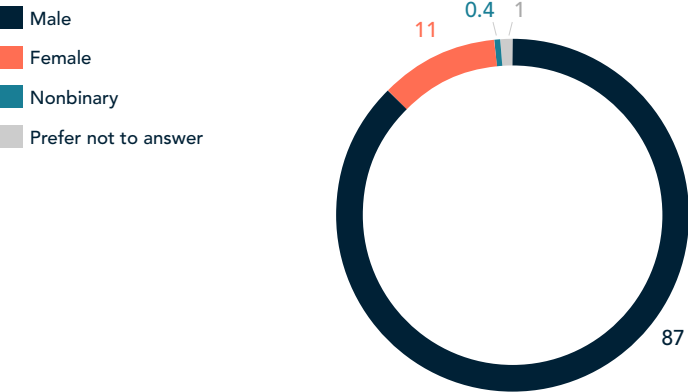
Investment areas (%)



Note: Respondents could select multiple answers.
Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 296 respondents

Respondents from the private capital sector were overwhelmingly male.

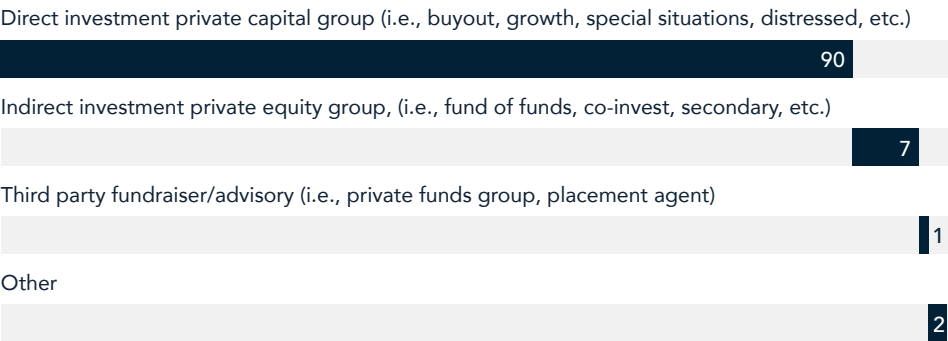
Gender (%)



Note: Numbers may not total 100 due to rounding.
Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 270 respondents

The vast majority of respondents are affiliated with direct investment private capital firms.

Firm investment option (%)



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 300 respondents

More than 80% of respondents work at either single-strategy GP-led investor partnerships or multi-strategy alternative investment groups that include both LP and GP functions.

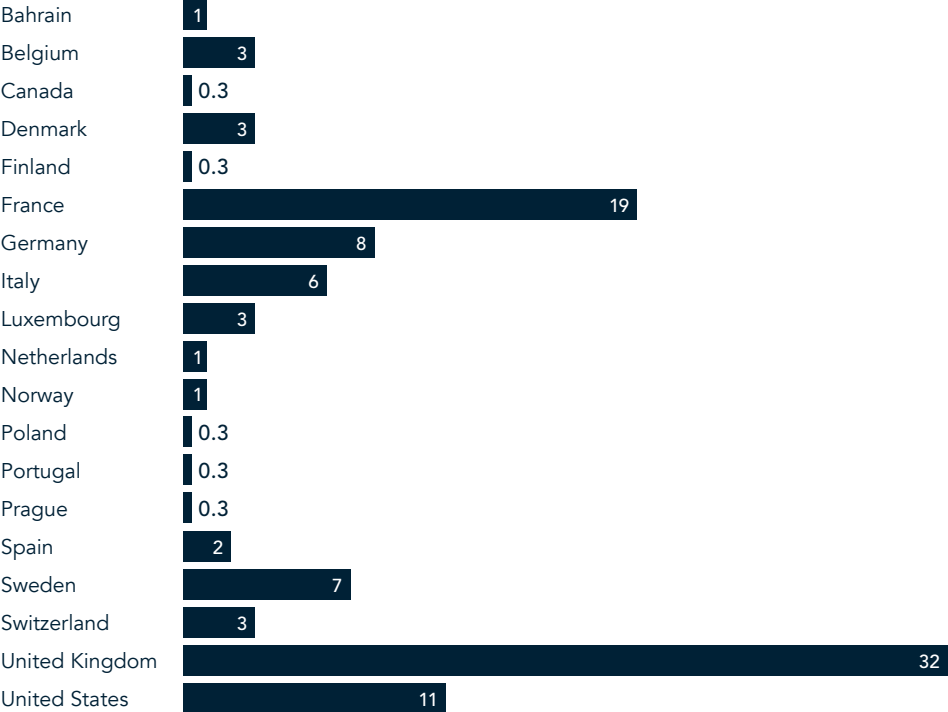
Firm strategy option (%)



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 300 respondents

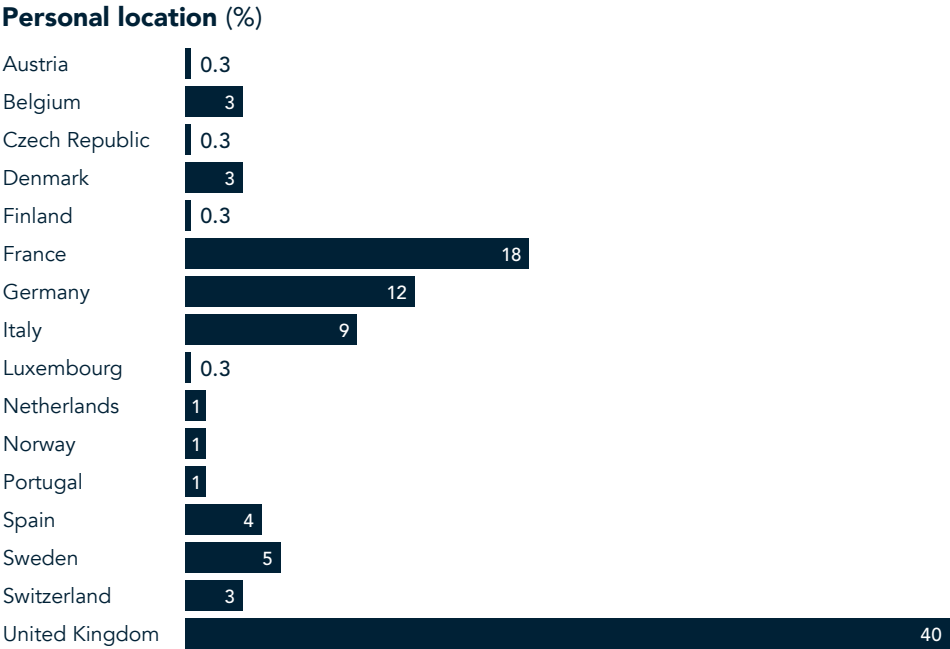
About one-third of respondents work at firms based in the United Kingdom, followed by 19% in France and 11% in the United States.

Firm headquarters (%)



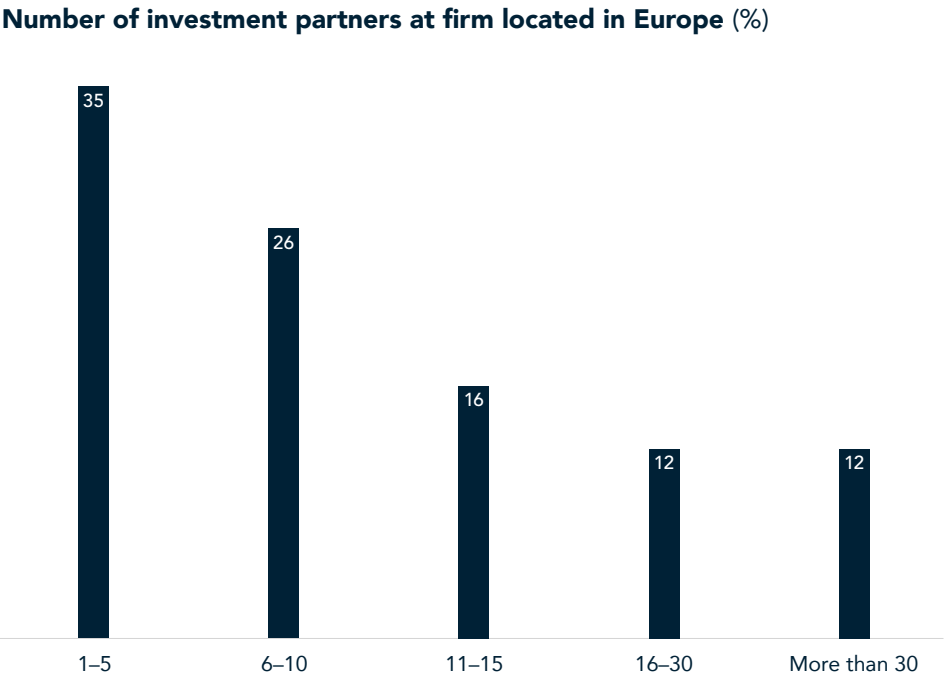
Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 301 respondents

As with the location of firm headquarters, the largest portion of respondents, 40%, are based in the UK.



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 301 respondents

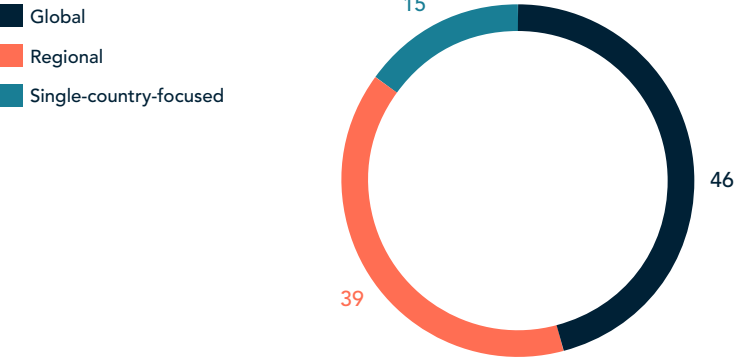
More than half of respondents are at firms with fewer than 10 investment partners located in Europe.



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 284 respondents

Only 15% of respondents are at firms focused on a single country.

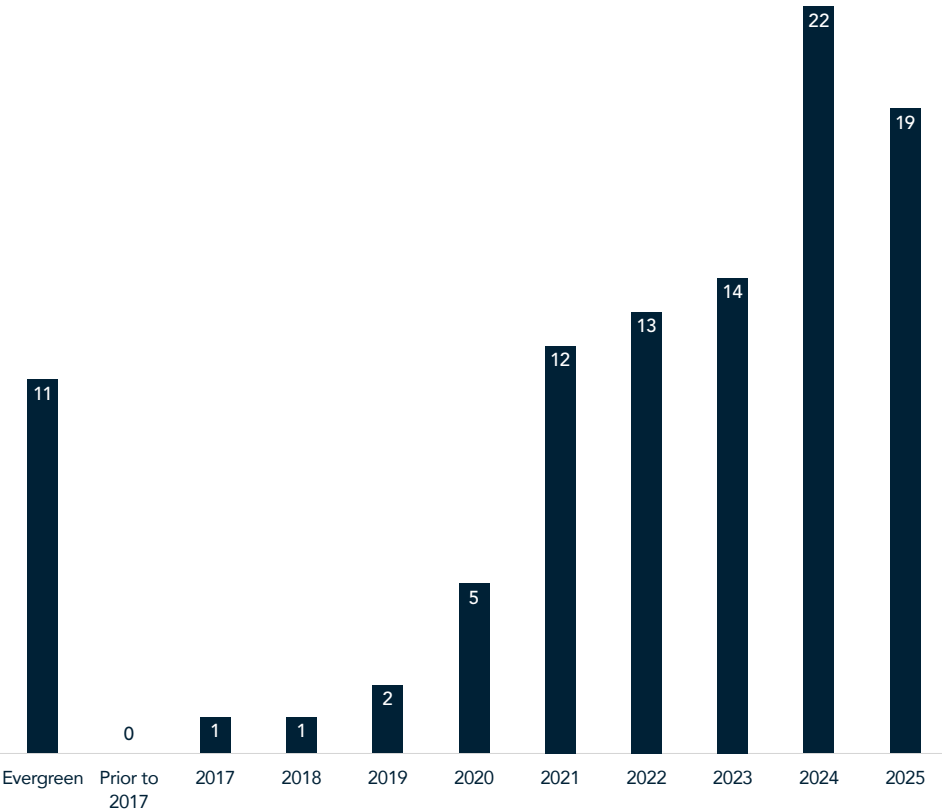
Firm’s platform (%)



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 302 respondents

More than one in ten respondents report that their most recent fund is evergreen, while an additional 41% indicate that the vintage of their most recent fund is within the last two years.

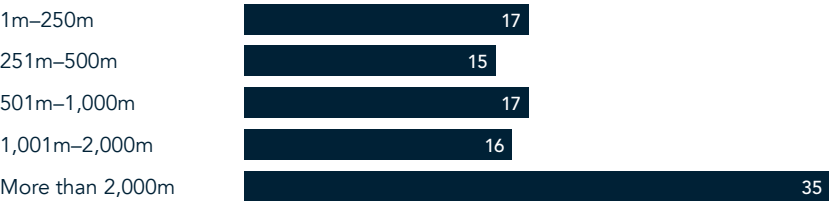
Vintage of most recent fund (%)



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 297 respondents

About one-third of respondents report that their most recent fund exceeds €2 billion.

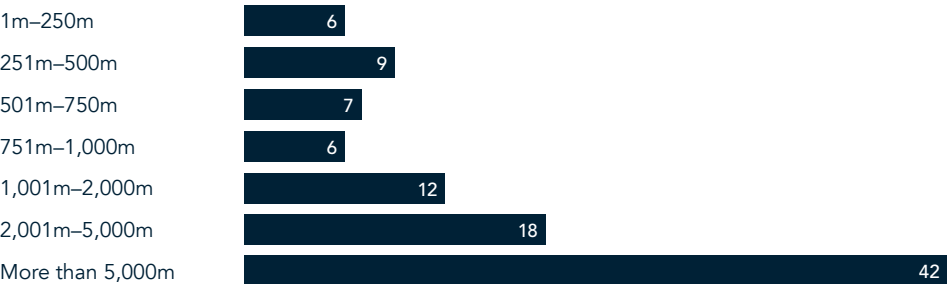
Size of most recent fund (EUR)



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 292 respondents

Almost half of respondents report that their aggregate AUM across all funds exceeds €5 billion.

Aggregate AUM across all funds (EUR)



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 290 respondents

Compensation trends, 2023–2025

From 2023 to 2024, 63% of respondents reported an increase in cash base, with a similar proportion seeing further increases from 2024 to 2025. This trend was consistent across countries. However, operating professionals and those in investor relations and fundraising were more likely to report no change in cash base, with some operating professionals even experiencing a decrease from 2024 to 2025.

Looking at roles and responsibilities, individuals with more senior titles were less likely to report increases in cash base or cash bonus, likely because they receive other forms of compensation. Overall, slightly more than half of respondents saw their cash bonuses increase from 2023 to 2024, and again from 2024 to 2025. Unlike cash base, a small but notable portion of respondents reported decreases in cash bonus each year since 2023, with no clear differences across countries.

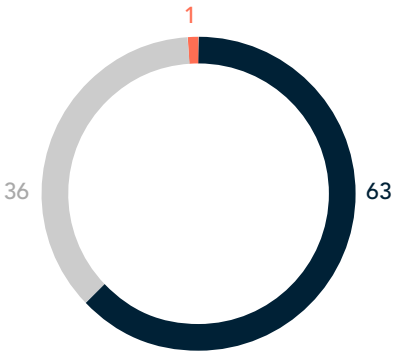
There were, however, significant variations by role. In HR and other support functions, one-third of respondents experienced a decrease in cash bonus from 2023 to 2024, though by 2024 to 2025, none reported decreases. Among managing partners, 24% reported a decrease and 56% reported no change in cash bonus from 2023 to 2024. Their bonuses rebounded from 2024 to 2025, but still have not reached aggregate levels.

Cash base growth— all professionals, by country, by role, and by title respectively

Cash base growth, all professionals (%)

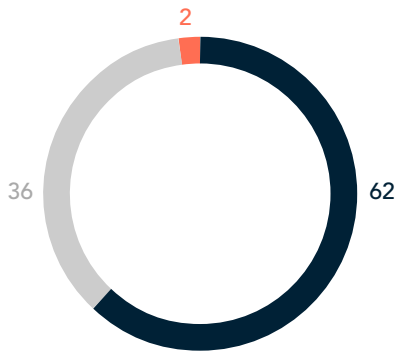
■ Increase ■ No change ■ Decrease

2023 to 2024



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 276 respondents

2024 to 2025

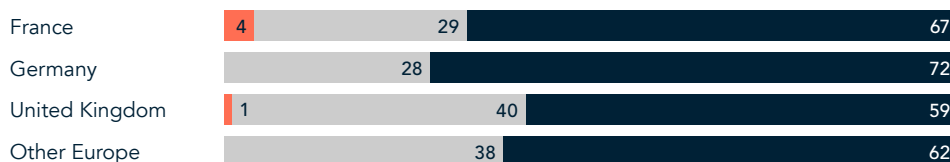


Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 278 respondents

Cash base growth, all professionals, by country (%)

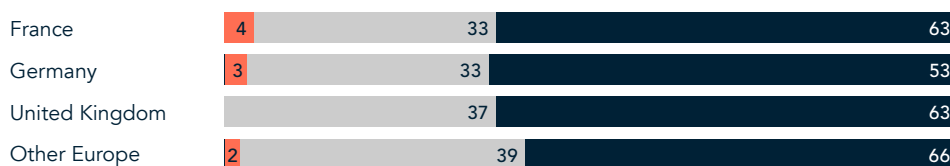
Decrease No change Increase

2023–2024



Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 276 respondents

2024–2025

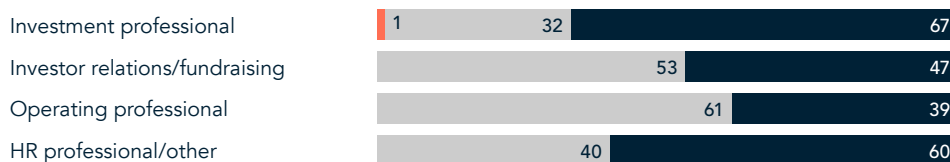


Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 278 respondents

Cash base growth, all professionals, by role (%)

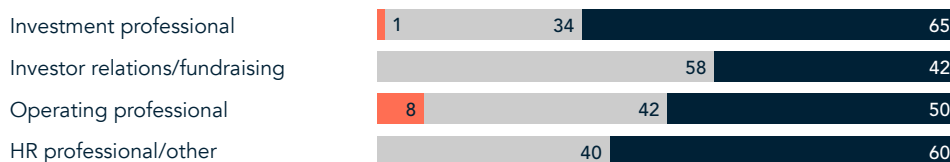
Decrease No change Increase

2023–2024



Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 276 respondents

2024–2025

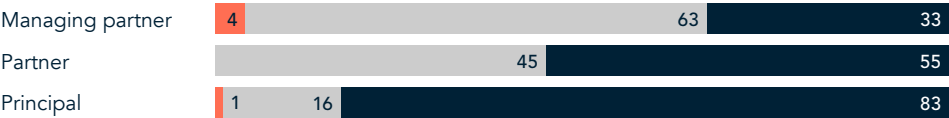


Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 277 respondents

Cash base growth, all professionals, by title (%)

Decrease No change Increase

2023–2024



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 276 respondents

2024–2025



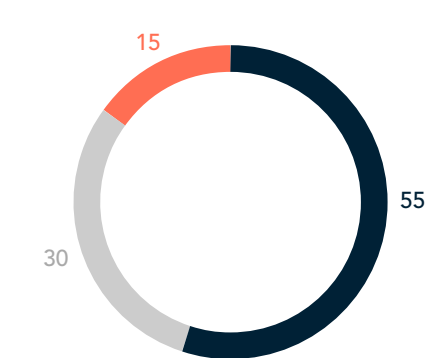
Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 278 respondents

Cash bonus growth—
all professionals, by
country, by role,
and by title respectively

Cash bonus growth, all professionals (%)

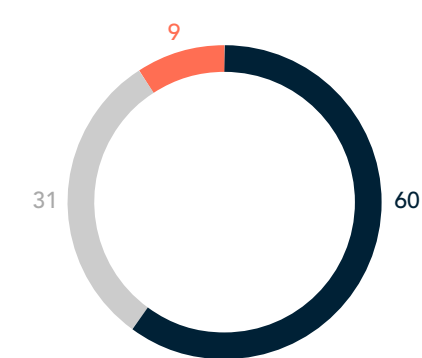
Increase No change Decrease

2023 to 2024



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 240 respondents

2024 to 2025

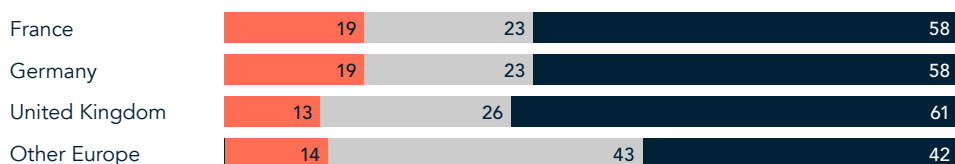


Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 235 respondents

Cash bonus growth, all professionals, by country (%)

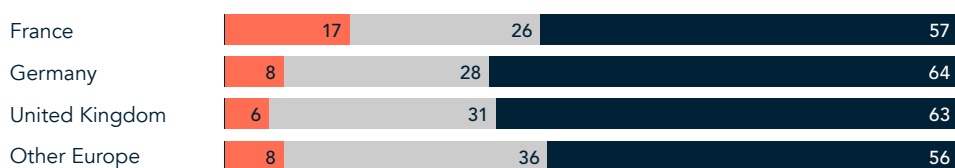
Decrease No change Increase

2023–2024



Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 240 respondents

2024–2025

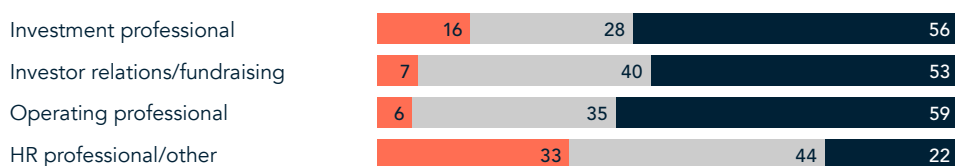


Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 235 respondents

Cash bonus growth, all professionals, by role (%)

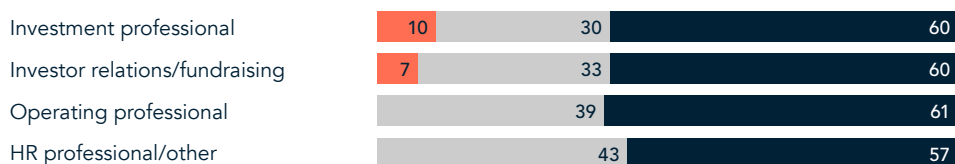
Decrease No change Increase

2023–2024



Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 240 respondents

2024–2025

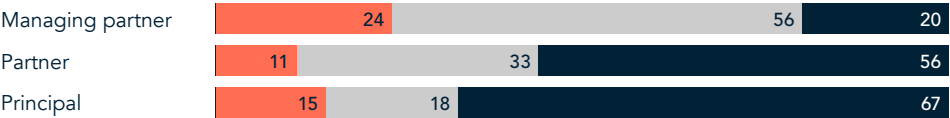


Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 235 respondents

Cash bonus growth, all professionals, by title (%)

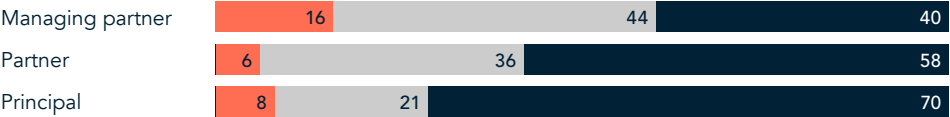
Decrease No change Increase

2023–2024



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 240 respondents

2024–2025



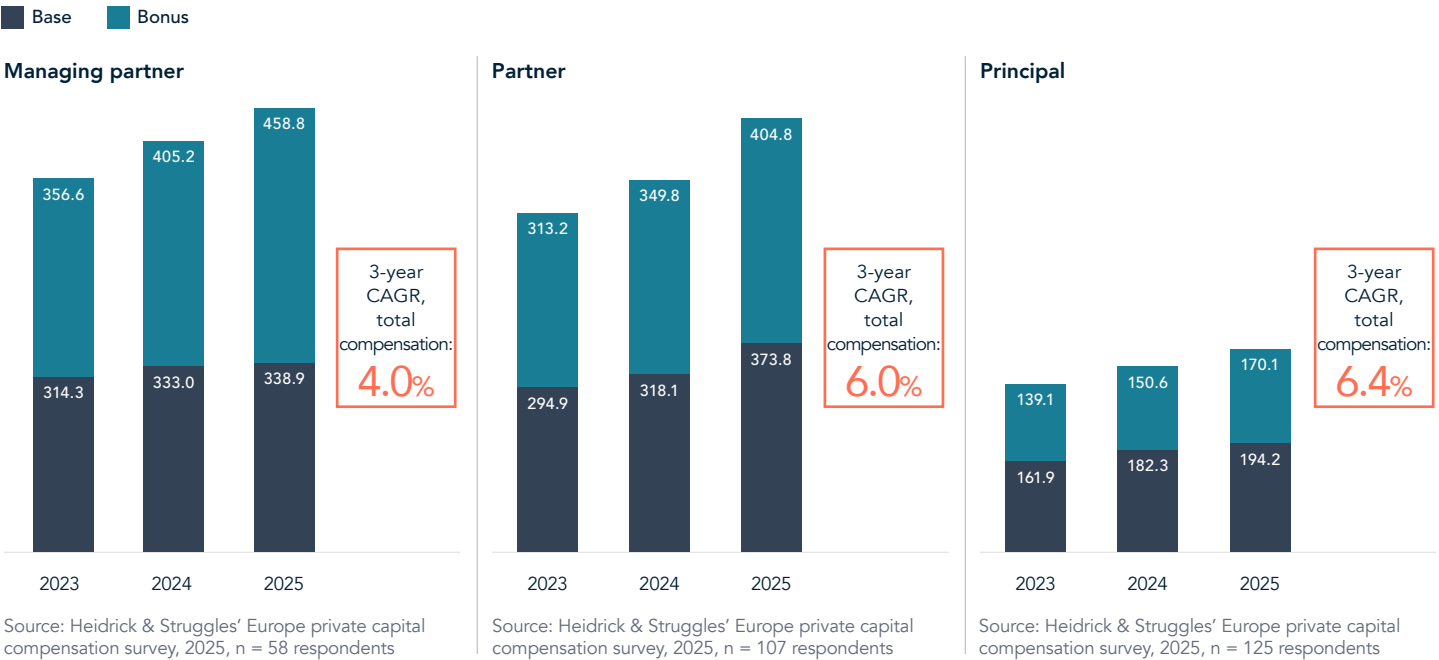
Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 235 respondents

Average base and bonus

Overall, total cash compensation tended to increase over time and with greater responsibility. In 2025, managing partners earned an average cash base of €338,900 and an additional average cash bonus of €458,800. Among managing partners, those in the UK had the highest cash base, while those in Germany received the largest cash bonuses. This pattern of UK professionals having the highest cash base also applied to partners and principals, though German professionals with less seniority did not lead in cash bonuses.

Regarding gender, female partners tended to earn more overall than their male counterparts, despite male partners earning a higher cash base. Conversely, male principals earned more than female principals in terms of both cash base and cash bonus. Where differences exist, they are primarily driven by cash bonuses rather than the cash base.

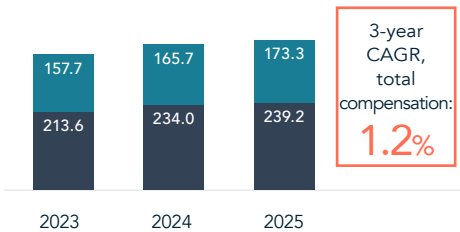
Average base and bonus, all professionals (EUR thousands)



Average base and bonus, all professionals, France (EUR thousands)

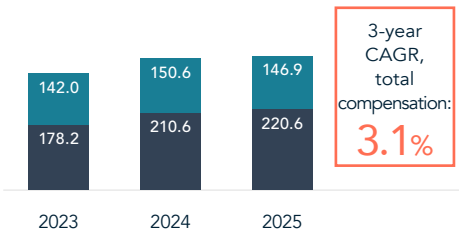
Base Bonus

Managing partner



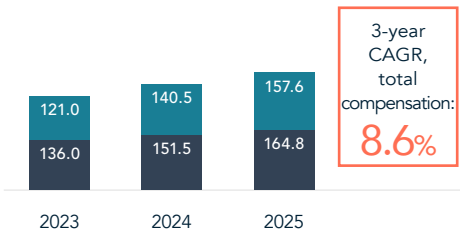
Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 15 respondents

Partner



Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 18 respondents

Principal

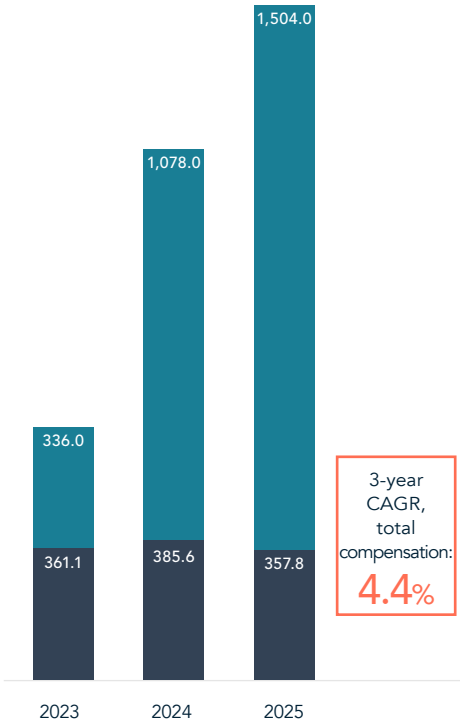


Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 21 respondents

Average base and bonus, all professionals, Germany (EUR thousands)

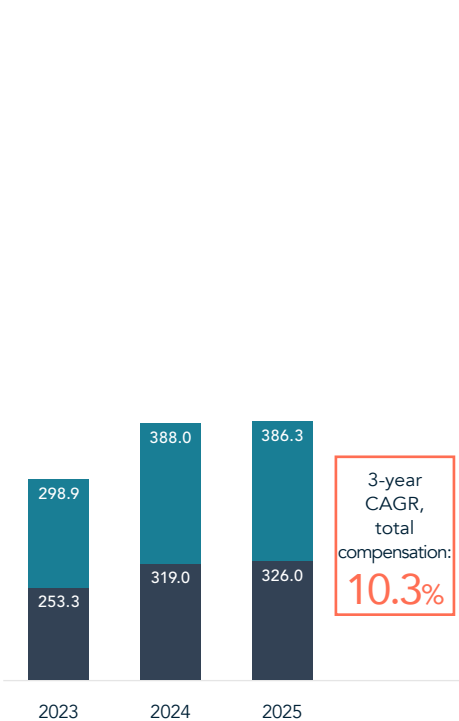
Base Bonus

Managing partner



Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 9 respondents

Partner



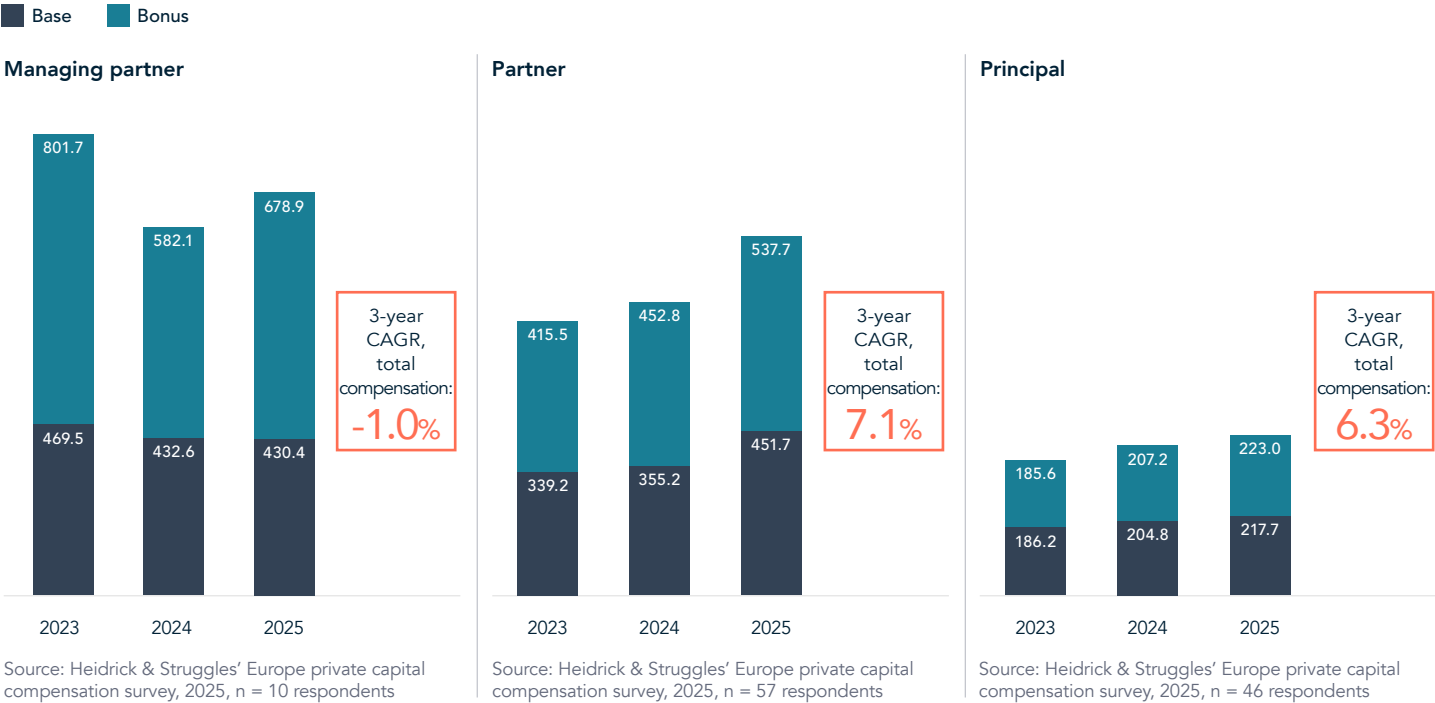
Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 10 respondents

Principal

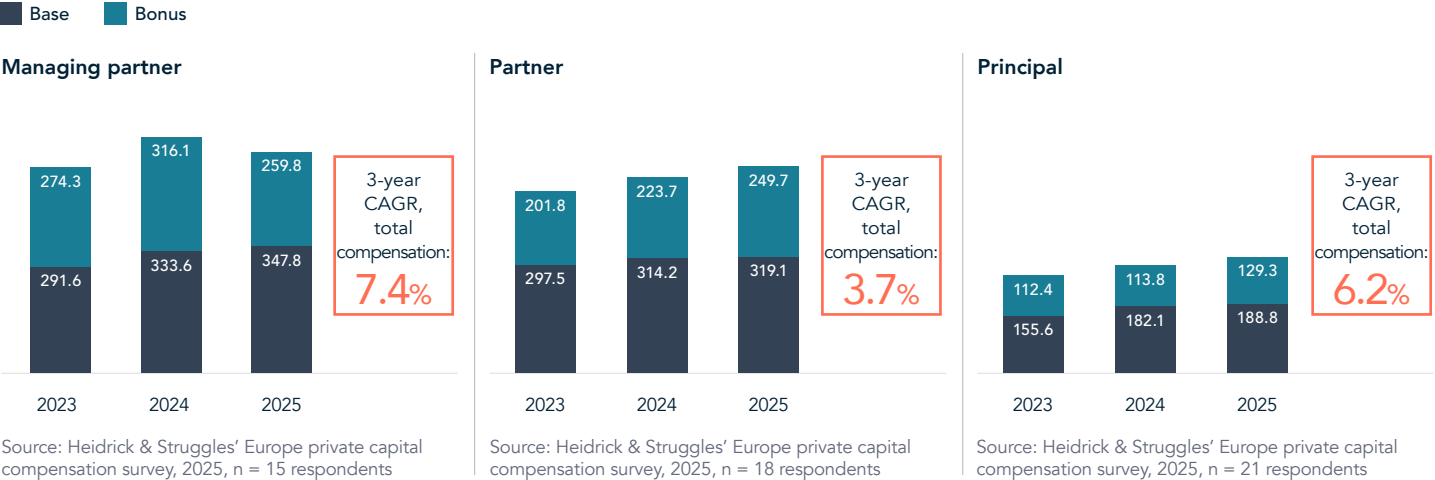


Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 15 respondents

Average base and bonus, all professionals, United Kingdom (EUR thousands)



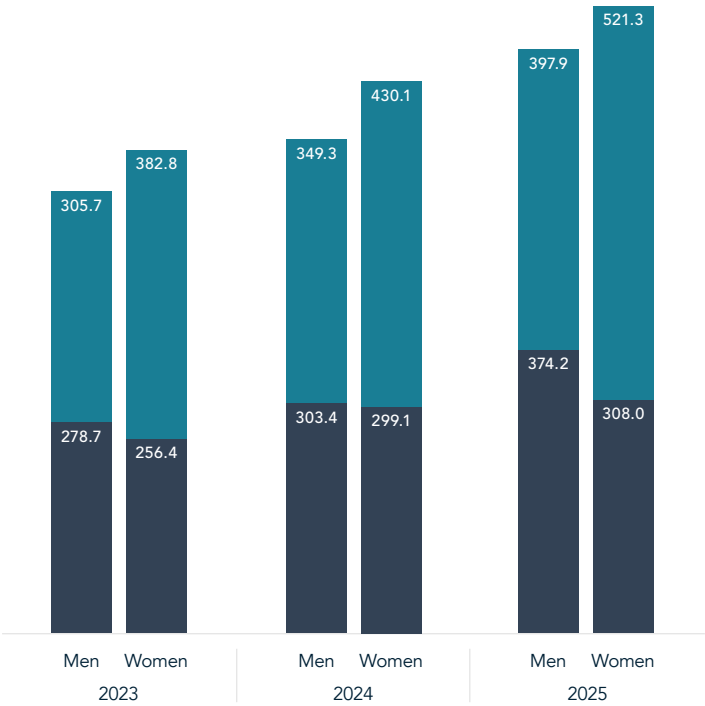
Average base and bonus, all professionals, other European countries (EUR thousands)



Average base and bonus, all professionals, men vs. women (EUR thousands)

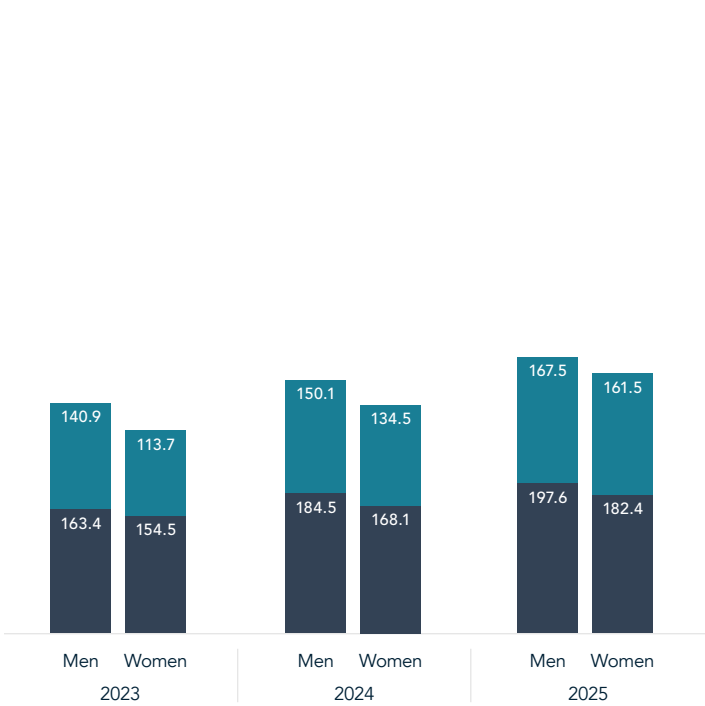
Base Bonus

Partner



Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 82 respondents – Men; n = 9 respondents - Women

Principal



Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 99 respondents – Men; n = 18 respondents - Women

Other incentives

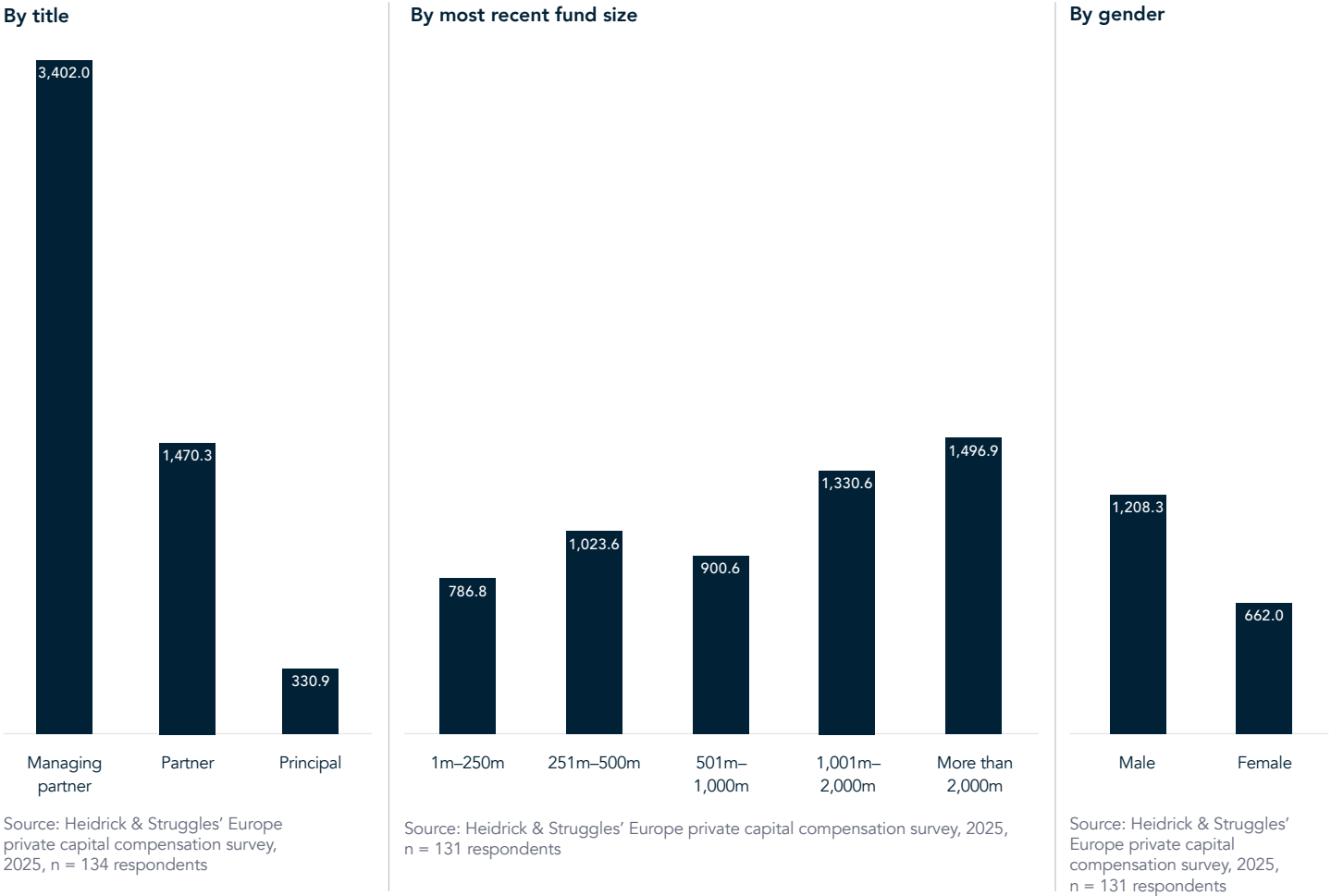
As expected, co-investment tended to increase with seniority and with the size of the most recent fund. However, more surprising is that men report almost double the amount of co-investment than women.

One-quarter of respondents indicated that a portion of their annual incentives is deferred, though for two-thirds of them, the deferred portion is 30% or less of their bonus.

Regarding carry, 84% of respondents say their carry vests on a fund basis.

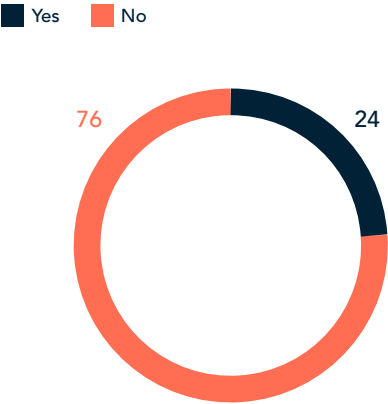
Of the 16% whose carry vests on a deal-by-deal basis, one-quarter are fully vested when the first deal closes, while another quarter have only 1% to 5% vested at the same time. Two-thirds of respondents report that their carry vests in a straight-line structure, and about half say that it vests based on the time elapsed since the inception of each fund. The most common maximum vesting periods are five and ten years. However, one-quarter of respondents report that a portion of their carry never vests, with the most commonly cited portion being 20%.

Co-investment (EUR thousands)



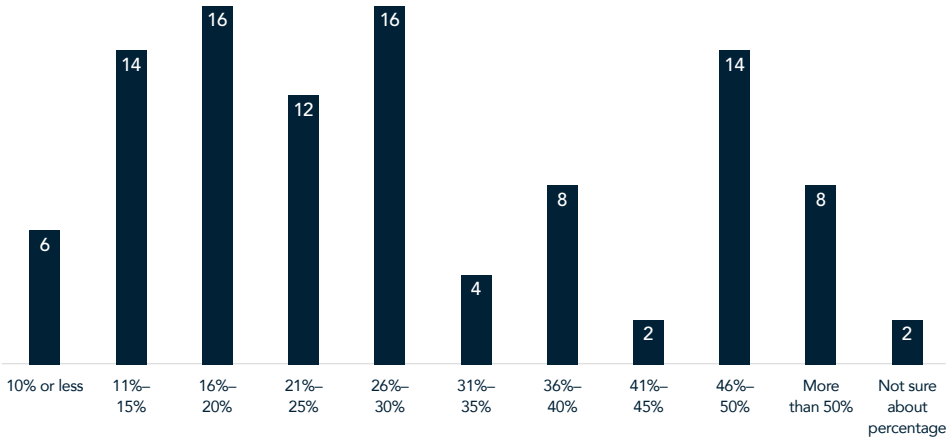
Annual incentives/bonuses (%)

Is any of your annual bonus compensation deferred?



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 300 respondents

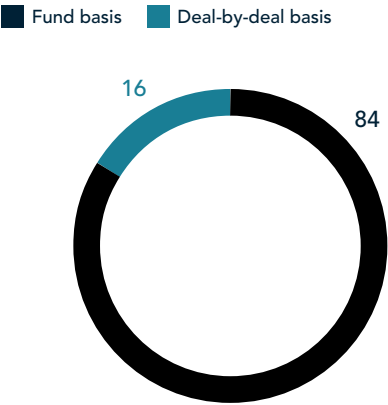
[If yes] percentage of annual bonus deferred



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 51 respondents

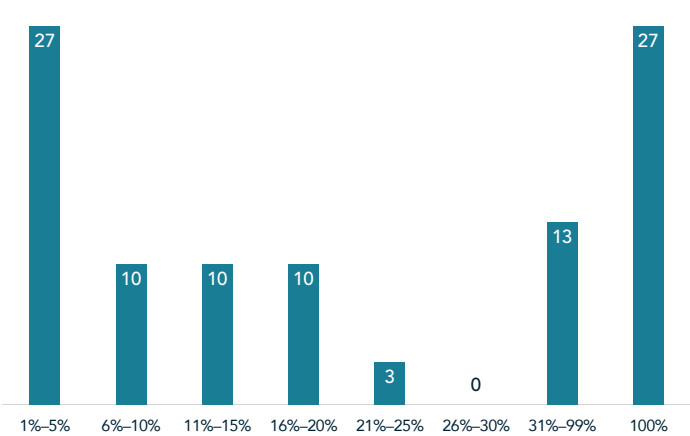
Carry

How carry vests (%)



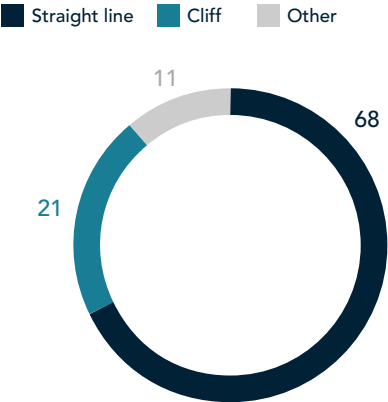
Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 257 respondents

[If deal by deal basis] percentage that vests when first deal closes (%)



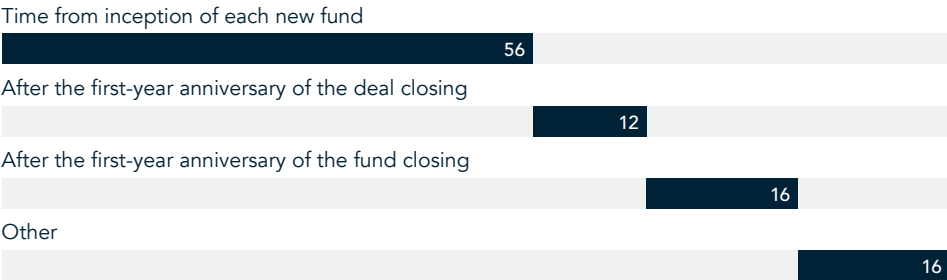
Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 30 respondents

What is the vesting structure? (%)



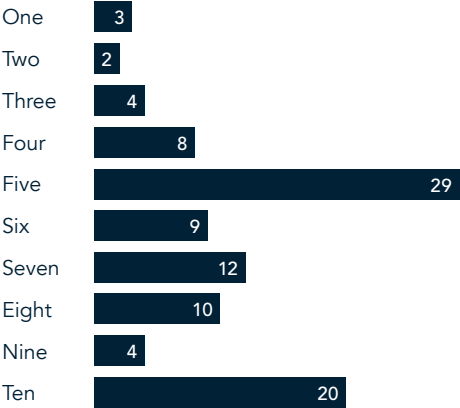
Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 257 respondents

On what basis does carried interest vest? (%)



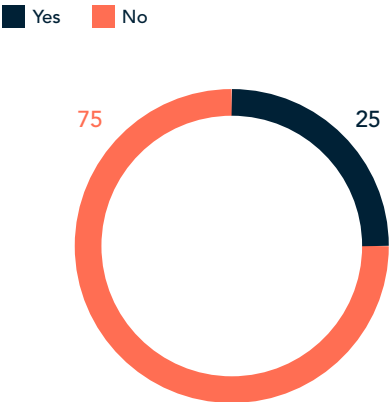
Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 251 respondents

How long does the max amount of carry take to vest? (Years)



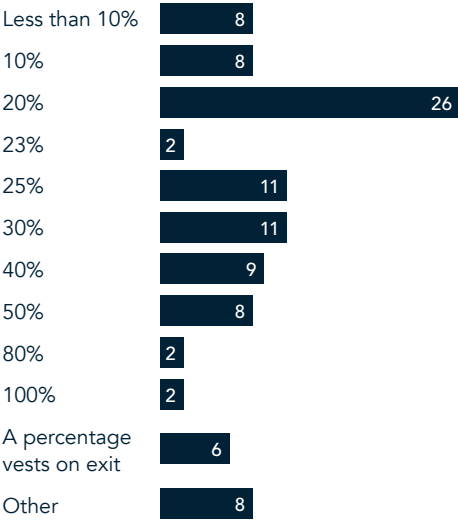
Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 250 respondents

Is there a portion that never vests? (%)



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 248 respondents

If yes, how much? (%)



Source: Heidrick & Struggles’ Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 53 respondents

Investment professionals' compensation

For investment professionals, partners and principals have seen steady gains in average cash compensation since 2023, while managing partners' cash compensation has remained relatively stagnant. In fact, in 2025, partners had both a larger average cash base and a larger average cash bonus than managing partners. However, managing partners still earn the highest average total compensation once carry is included.

As expected, compensation generally rises across all titles as respondents' most recent fund size increases. The main exception is managing partners with most recent funds between 500 million and 1 billion, who substantially outearned their peers in cash bonus and carry. Similarly, total compensation tends to increase with overall AUM, although managing partners with a total AUM greater than 5 billion earned less than expected.

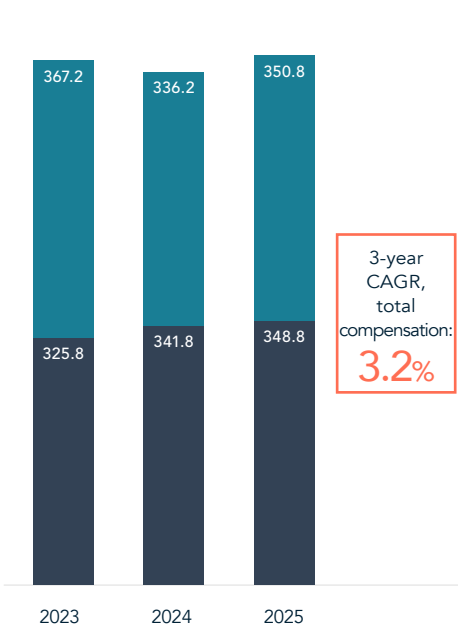
By investment strategy, venture capital professionals earned the lowest total compensation for both managing partners and partners. Among partners, those in buyout earned the highest total compensation.

Across all investment professional titles, average total compensation increased as years of experience in private capital increased—except for a decline among those with more than 20 years of experience, which may reflect a shift in focus toward mentorship, advisory roles, or other indirect contributions.

Average base and bonus (EUR thousands)

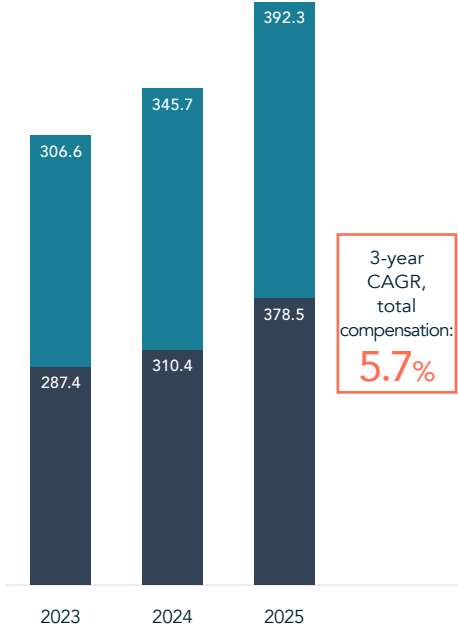
■ Base ■ Bonus

Managing partner



Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 44 respondents

Partner



Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 80 respondents

Principal

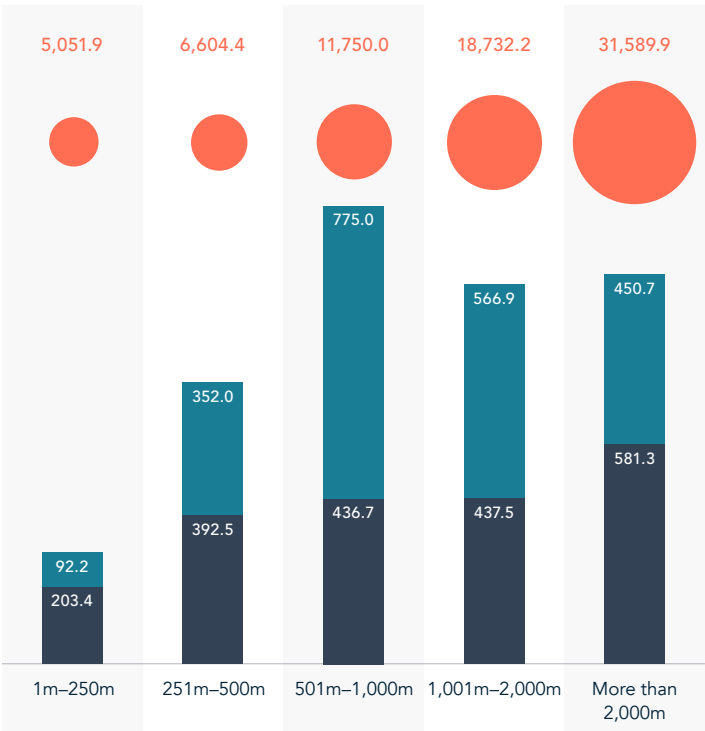


Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 110 respondents

Average base and bonus, by most recent fund size (EUR thousands)

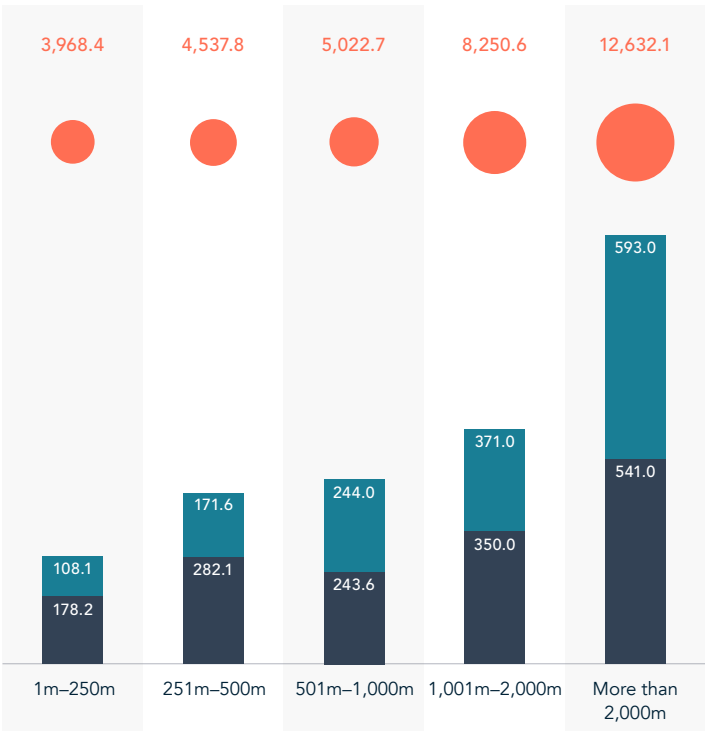
Cash base Cash bonus Carry, most recent fund

Managing partner



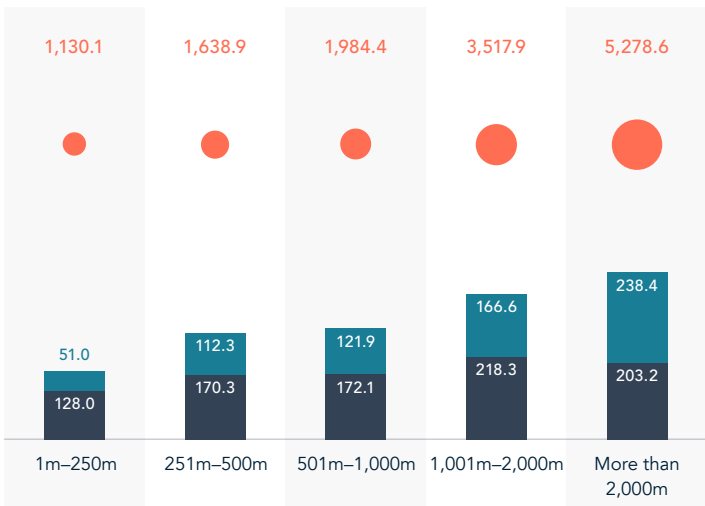
Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 43 respondents

Partner



Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 77 respondents

Principal

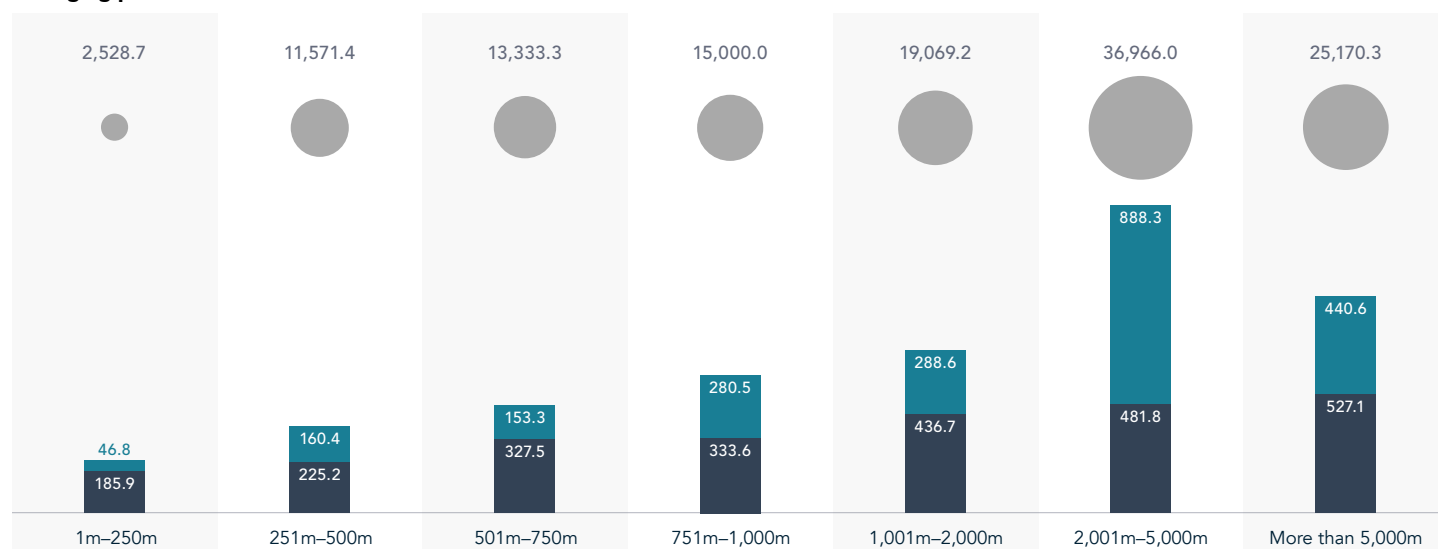


Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 107 respondents

Average base and bonus, by AUM across all funds (EUR thousands)

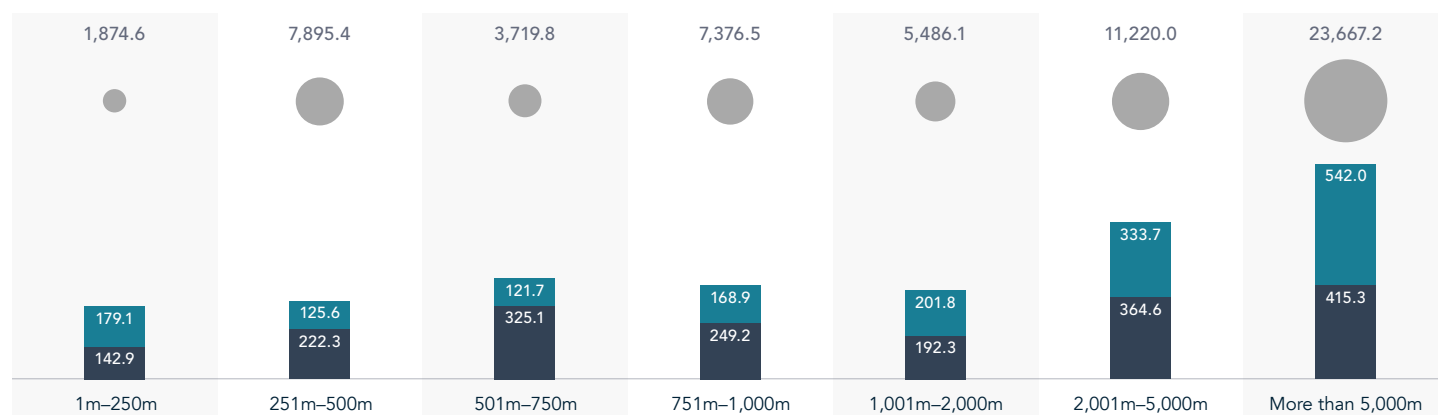
■ Cash base ■ Cash bonus ● Carry, all funds

Managing partner



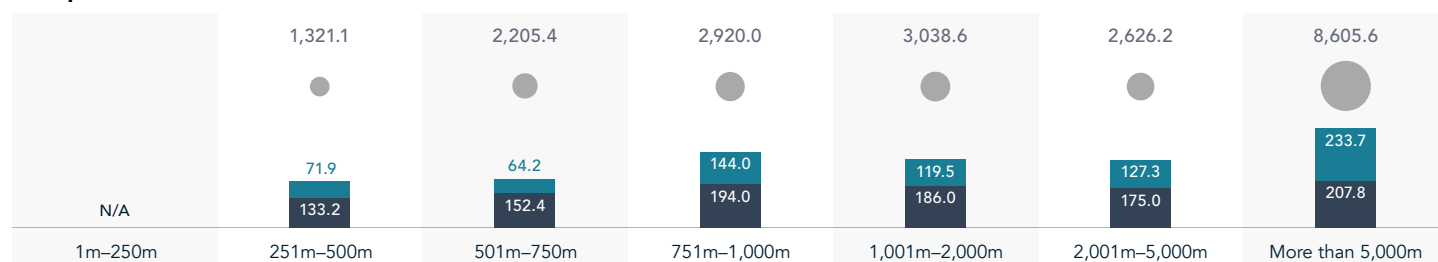
Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 43 respondents

Partner



Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 77 respondents

Principal

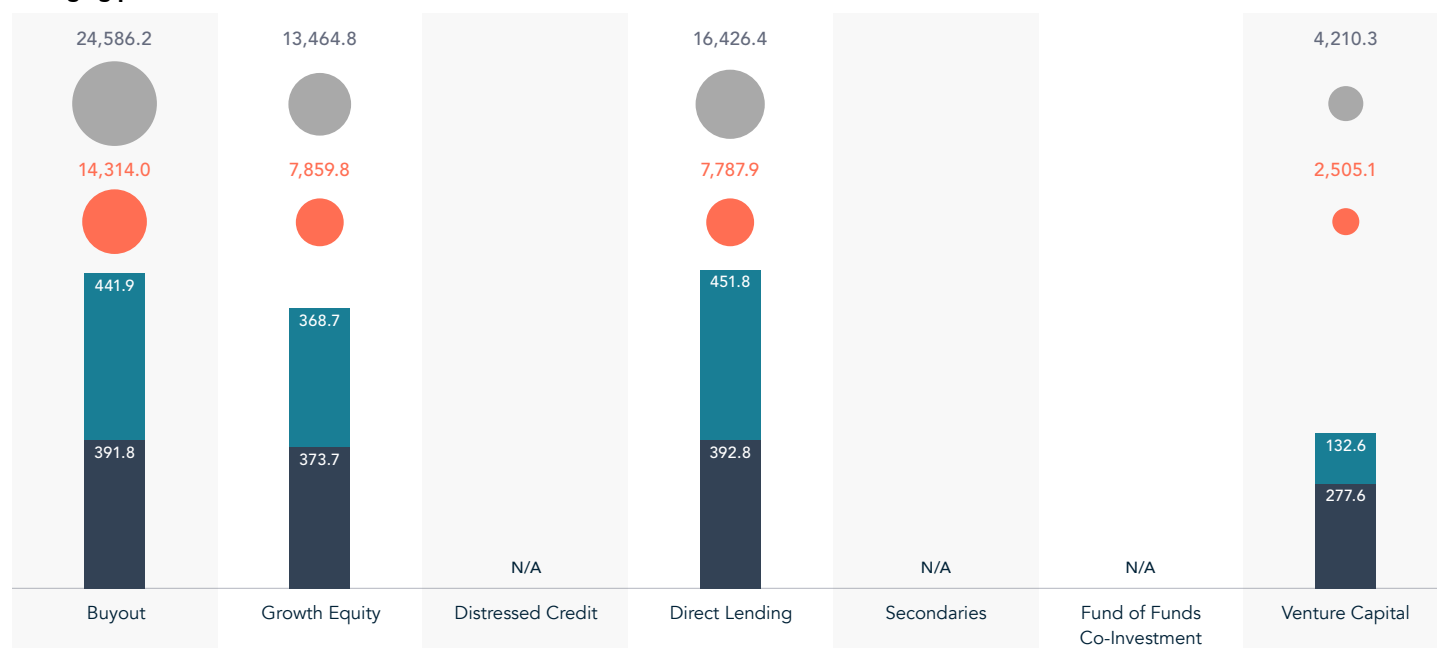


Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 107 respondents

Average base and bonus, by investment strategy (EUR thousands)

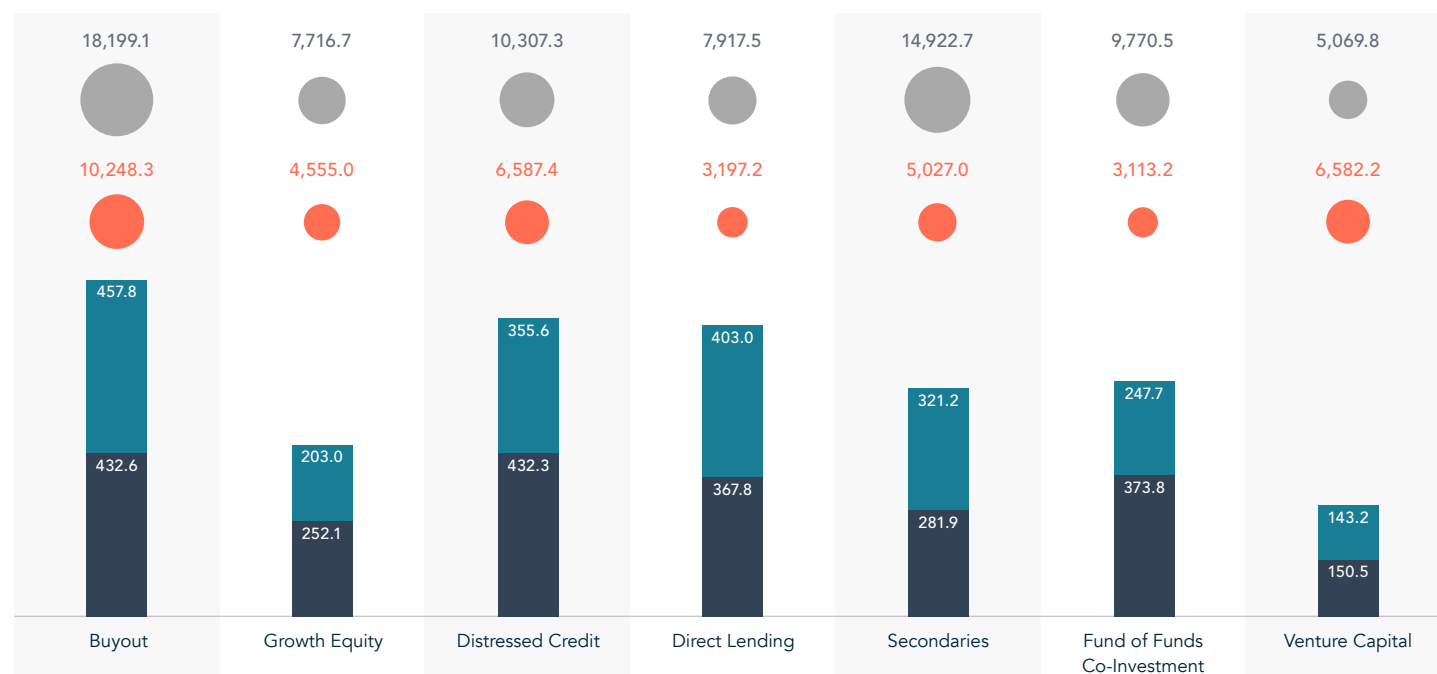
■ Cash base ■ Cash bonus ● Carry, most recent fund ● Carry, all funds

Managing partner



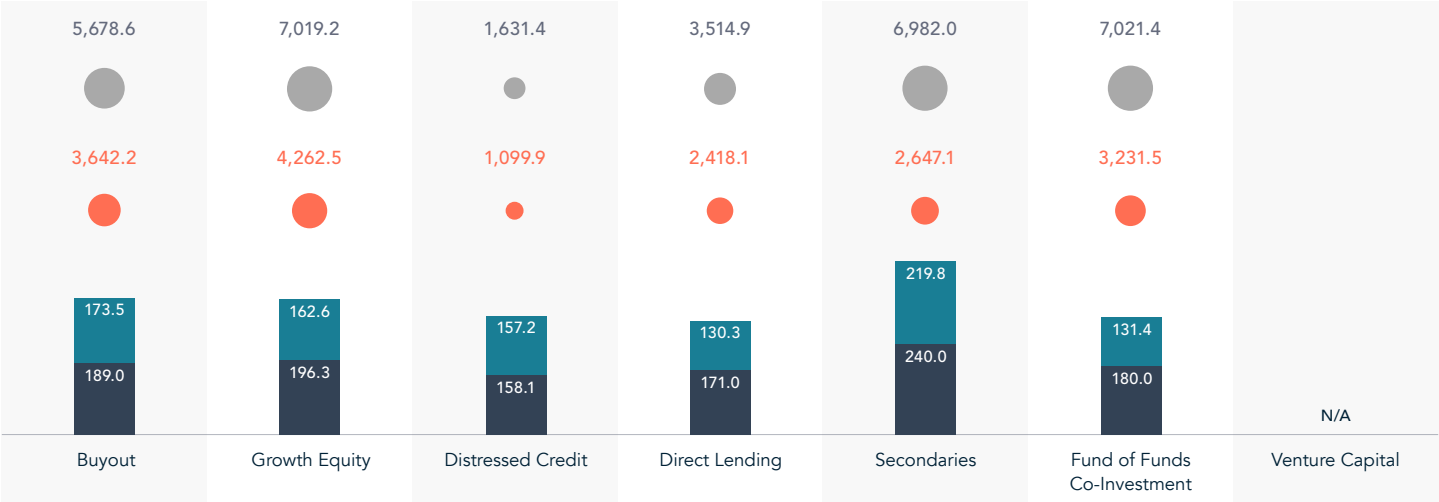
Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 43 respondents

Partner



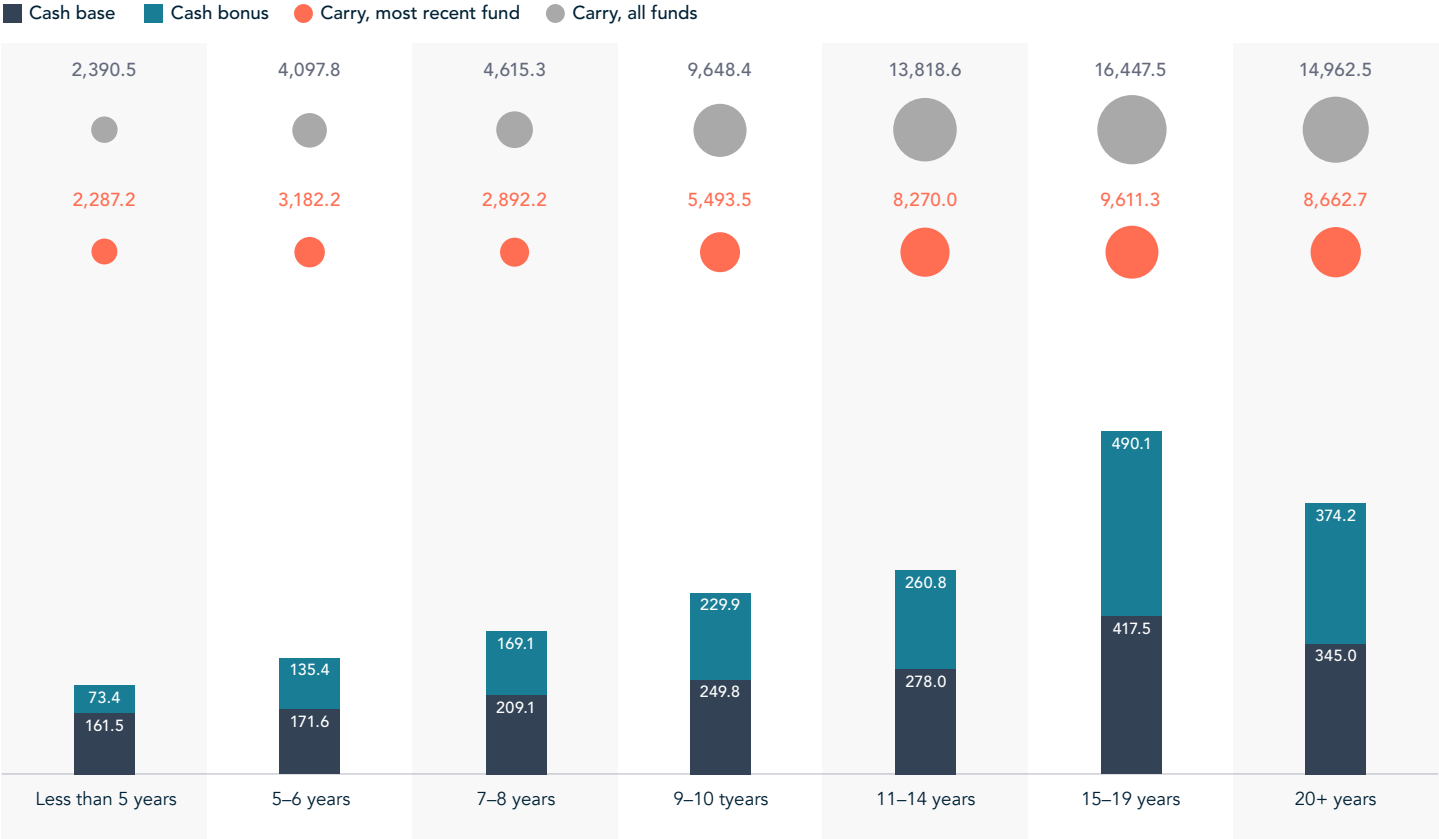
Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 79 respondents

Principal



Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 109 respondents

Average base and bonus, by years of private capital experience on the buy side (EUR thousands)



Source: Heidrick & Struggles' Europe private capital compensation survey, 2025, n = 232 respondents

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Private Capital Practice

Heidrick & Struggles' global Private Capital Practice combines a deep understanding of private capital markets with world-class expertise across all major industries and functions to provide a broad range of value-adding services.

With more than 80 consultants in 50 offices around the world, our expertise shadows the private capital life cycle from pre-deal due-diligence support to pre- and post-acquisition executive search, leadership assessment, proactive introductions, and the construction of advisory boards for both private equity firms and their portfolio companies.

We pride ourselves on our work with private capital-backed portfolio companies to secure the leadership needed to deliver on tomorrow's strategies. Our consulting services enable us to develop long-term strategic partnerships that build winning leadership teams and create substantial value.

In addition, we are the leader in finding top private capital management talent by recruiting investment professionals, operating partners, and other essential senior managers who support financial growth.

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