

US Demand for AI Talent to Narrow the Eastern European Tech Pay Gap By 8 Points By 2028

New analysis finds growing international demand for AI, cyber and cloud talent is reshaping global salary expectations

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, July 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Rising demand from US businesses for AI, cyber and cloud talent is expected to accelerate salary growth across emerging tech markets over the next three years, according to [new research](#) from global talent solutions partner Robert Walters and Native Teams, the global work payments platform.

Based on the forecast by the Robert Walters [Market Intelligence](#) team and Native Teams, increased cross-border hiring by US firms could narrow salary gaps between the US and Eastern Europe for tech roles from 54% to 46% by 2028, as organisations compete globally for scarce digital expertise.

What's more, salaries for AI, cloud and cyber professionals in Eastern Europe are expected to see stronger annual salary growth than equivalent roles in the US over the next three years.

Indeed, average base salaries for mid-level software developers in Eastern Europe are projected to rise from \$48,000 today to more than \$60,000 by 2028. Over the same period, equivalent salaries in the US are forecast to increase from \$104,000 to around \$112,000.



Image 1. Phill Brown, Global Head of Market Intelligence - Robert Walters



Image 2. Jack Thorogood, Founder & CEO - Native Teams.

Phill Brown, Global Head of Market Intelligence at Robert Walters, says, “The US technology market is increasingly exporting salary pressure internationally as businesses race to secure specialist AI capability.

“What stands out in the data is the speed at which demand for AI, cloud and cyber talent is now influencing salary growth outside traditional markets. That is typically a sign that demand is moving faster than local talent pipelines can realistically scale.

“For US multinational employers, access to specialist digital expertise is becoming a strategic growth issue linked directly to how quickly organisations can deploy AI and build competitive advantage.”

The shift is also contributing to the expansion of regional technology hubs across Eastern Europe, as multinational employers continue to invest in internationally distributed teams and digital capability.

Jack Thorogood, Founder and CEO of Native Teams, comments, “Five years ago, many businesses still viewed global hiring as operationally complex. Today, the infrastructure supporting remote work (global payroll, work payments, and compliance systems) is widely more mature, making distributed teams far easier to operate at scale.”

“Companies in the US are becoming more comfortable hiring globally for specialised technical roles in AI, cloud, and cyber. Over time, that naturally increases competition for talent, shifts salary expectations upward, and strengthens the long-term development of regional technology markets.”

The findings follow a recent forecast by the Robert Walters Market Intelligence team and Native Teams that one in two AI roles could go unfilled across the US, as the country is expected to face a shortage of more than 800,000 AI professionals by 2028. Expanding AI hiring outside of domestic labour markets could help lift US productivity growth by between 0.5 and 1.5 percentage points annually by helping organisations scale AI capability more quickly and reduce deployment delays linked to talent shortages.

The research forms part of a wider report from Robert Walters and Native Teams exploring how [global hiring corridors](#) are reshaping workforce strategies, salary expectations and access to specialist talent across international markets.

Phill adds, “The organisations moving fastest in AI are often those able to access specialist talent quickly, regardless of geography. They are now competing on how quickly they can build the technical capability needed to turn AI investment into operational results.”

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Methodology

Figures are based on 2026 mid-level software developer base salary benchmarks projected to 2028 using market-specific annual growth rates across the US and Eastern Europe. Then applied each market independently cited annual salary growth rate forward to 2028 using compound growth factoring AI, Cloud and Cyber growth rates at conservative level. And measured the closing gap as the percentage difference between Western and Eastern European salaries at each point in time.

About Robert Walters

With more than 2,900 people in 29 countries, Robert Walters delivers recruitment consultancy, staffing, recruitment process outsourcing and managed services across the globe. From traditional recruitment and staffing to end-to-end talent management, our consultants are experts at matching highly skilled people to permanent, contract and interim roles across all professional disciplines. <https://www.robertwalters.us/>

About Native Teams

Native Teams is a global work payments platform designed to support both businesses and their teams. By combining payroll, compliance, and work operations, it enables companies to employ, pay, and manage teams in 95+ countries through one unified system.

From gig and contractor payments to global payroll and broader workflows, Native Teams

supports the full scope of global work. It provides the structure behind every payment, ensuring compliance, reducing administrative overhead, and enabling smooth cross-border operations. Trusted by 3000+ businesses, Native Teams helps companies scale efficiently while empowering teams with financial stability and flexibility. <https://nativeteams.com/>

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