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CORPORATE GOVERNANCE HIRING IN AEROSPACE & DEFENSE

EMEA

2026 Hiring Guide



The aerospace and defence sector across EMEA experienced another year of rapid transformation and complex challenges in 2025. Despite ongoing pressures on global supply chains, skills shortages and geopolitical volatility, the region's A&D industry remains on a strong growth trajectory.

According to Eurostat and ADS Group data, European aerospace manufacturing output surpassed pre-pandemic levels in 2024, with civil aviation seeing a 9.8% rise in passenger volumes and a 12% increase in production orders year-on-year. Defence spending across Europe and the Middle East has also surged, reaching record highs as governments respond to heightened geopolitical risk and invest in domestic industrial capability.

In the Gulf, the UAE and Saudi Arabia continue to prioritise self-sufficiency in defence manufacturing and technology transfer, underpinned by ambitious national programmes such as Vision 2030 and the UAE Defence Industry Strategy. This regional diversification is reshaping the A&D talent map.

As we head into 2026, the industry is entering a new phase of technological integration and governance maturity. Artificial Intelligence, automation, and space technologies are transforming operations: but also introducing new risks. Companies are strengthening their corporate governance, compliance, and assurance frameworks to manage these evolving risks and to meet rising regulatory and stakeholder expectations.

This guide explores how these dynamics are shaping the hiring landscape across EMEA. Drawing on Leonid Group's proprietary placement data, client projects and market insights, we outline what employers are prioritising, which skill sets are most in demand, and what the future holds for governance professionals in this critical sector.



Jamie Browne

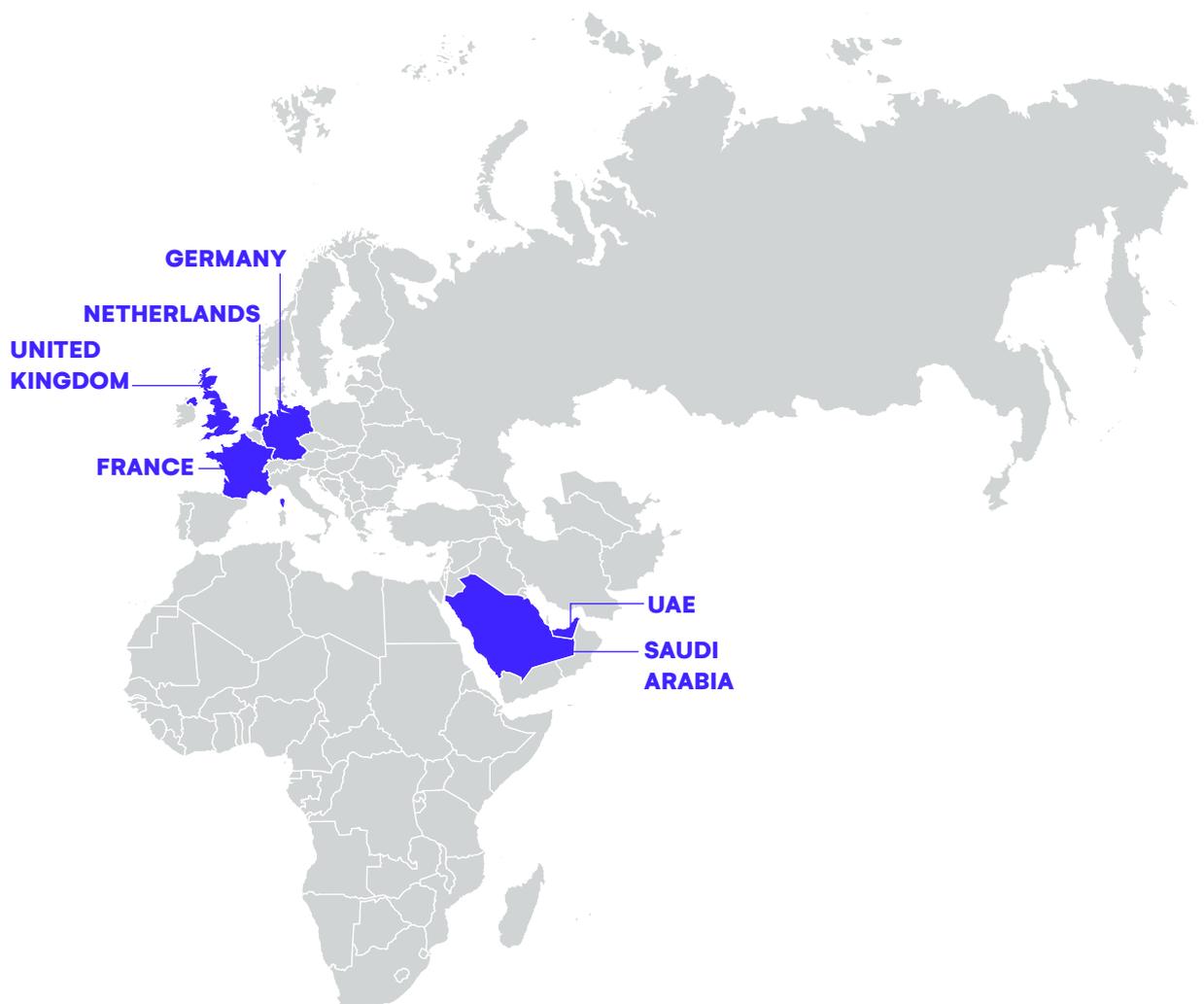
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01. INTRODUCTION:

THE EMEA A&D TALENT LANDSCAPE

The Aerospace & Defence (A&D) ecosystem in EMEA is defined by a complex interplay between national security interests, regulatory obligations and rapid technological advancement.

Unlike many sectors, A&D hiring is heavily influenced by government procurement cycles, export controls and defence industrial participation policies.

Key characteristics that define A&D hiring in EMEA:

Regulatory complexity:

Compliance with export control regimes such as EU Dual-Use Regulation, UK Export Control Order, BAFA (Germany) and ITAR/EAR where applicable.

Security and clearance requirements:

Many roles require NATO or national-level security clearance, narrowing talent pools.

Industrial localisation:

Gulf nations, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, are pursuing localisation mandates and knowledge transfer programmes, influencing both workforce planning and expatriate hiring.

Technological Acceleration:

The rise of AI, autonomous systems, cyber defence, and sustainable aviation is creating new categories of governance risk.

Public accountability:

ESG and ethical supply-chain practices are now board-level issues, especially in Europe, where CSRD and EU Taxonomy reporting apply.



02.

CURRENT ISSUES IMPACTING HIRING

Skills shortages and competition

A scarcity of governance professionals with sector-specific experience continues to present a recruitment challenge. Candidates with combined expertise in defence regulation, compliance and technology are particularly scarce. Competition is intense between primes, Tier-1 suppliers and New Space entrants..

Security clearance bottlenecks

Obtaining or transferring clearances across jurisdictions remains a major hiring constraint, particularly in the UK, France, and Germany. This delays onboarding and limits mobility of high-potential candidates.

Cross-sector competition

Banking, energy, and tech firms are targeting the same compliance and risk specialists, often offering higher flexibility or hybrid models. Defence employers must articulate purpose and mission to compete effectively.

Emergence of local capability in the Gulf

In the UAE and Saudi Arabia, national workforce development is a hiring priority. Firms must navigate **Emiratization** and **Saudisation** quotas, while still accessing international expertise in export control and governance systems.

Limited remote work

While hybrid working is common for corporate functions, most A&D governance roles still require on-site presence for security reasons. This limits the available candidate pool to specific regions or facilities.





03.

KEY TRENDS IN CORPORATE GOVERNANCE HIRING

Convergence of GRC functions

European primes and Gulf defence entities are integrating Governance, Risk, and Compliance

(GRC) functions to create single frameworks spanning ethics, audit, risk and legal. This demands 'T-shaped' professionals: deep in one discipline but fluent in adjacent risks.

Rise of Data Privacy and Cyber Governance

GDPR, UK GDPR and new Gulf Data Protection Laws (PDPLs) are driving intense demand for privacy officers and data governance professionals who understand both regulatory and technical controls.

Export Control and Trade Compliance surge

Geopolitical volatility has made export control expertise mission-critical. Professionals who can align ITAR/EAR, EU dual-use, and national licensing regimes are in high demand across both Europe and the Gulf.

ESG and sustainability reporting

Europe's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) is reshaping governance hiring. ESG professionals who can manage data assurance, ethical supply chains and sustainability disclosures are highly sought after.

Predictive risk and digital compliance

AI-driven risk analytics and compliance automation are being embedded into governance. Employers seek candidates comfortable using GRC software, risk dashboards, and machine learning tools to anticipate and mitigate risks.

Board-level engagement

Boards are increasingly establishing Cyber and ESG committees, and seeking legal and compliance leaders who can brief directors in plain, strategic terms.



04.

WHAT EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING FOR IN CANDIDATES

ROLE	CORE TECHNICAL SKILLS	KEY SOFT SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES
Compliance / Export Controls	ITAR, EU Dual-Use, UK Export Control, classification, licensing, sanctions screening	Detail-oriented, calm under pressure, persuasive communicator
Risk Management	ERM frameworks, geopolitical risk, third-party assurance	Analytical mindset, influencing senior stakeholders
Internal Audit	Defence contracting audits, ISO/AS9100, procurement integrity	Objectivity, problem-solving, cross-functional communication
In-house Legal	Procurement law, offset contracts, export controls, dispute management	Pragmatic, commercially minded, bilingual (EN/FR/DE/AR)
Data Privacy	GDPR, UK DPA 2018, UAE/Saudi PDPLs	Technical fluency, ability to bridge legal and IT teams
ESG / Sustainability	CSRD, GRI, TCFD, EU Taxonomy	Strategic, stakeholder-oriented, values-driven

Universal Desirables:

- **Security clearance eligibility**
- **Cross-border regulatory experience**
- **Commercial acumen** — ability to balance compliance with business delivery
- **Adaptability and learning agility**

05.

WHAT CANDIDATES IN A&D REALLY WANT

Across EMEA, candidates in governance roles tell us they are increasingly motivated by:

- **Purpose and impact:** working on national security or sustainability missions.
- **Purpose and impact:** access to certifications (CIPP/E, ICA, ACCA, CISM).
- **Leadership visibility:** direct access to decision-makers.
- **Competitive reward:** strong base pay, long-term incentives, relocation packages.
- **Work-life balance:** flexible working patterns and remote or hybrid options.



06.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

As we head into 2026, we expect to see a sustained demand for talent.

Defence budgets across Europe and the Middle East remain on a growth trajectory, ensuring continued investment in compliance, risk, and ESG capabilities.

AI governance and cybersecurity are also fast becoming strategic board concerns. We therefore expect to see a rise in **hybrid legal-tech and compliance-tech roles**.

In the Gulf, **nationalisation policies** will drive training and mentoring programmes to build local governance talent pipelines.

There are new specialisms emerging across the EMEA region, too, such as:

- AI Ethics Counsel
- Supply Chain Transparency Manager
- ESG Assurance Lead
- Data Governance Architect



07.

REGIONAL GUIDES AND SALARY TABLES UNITED KINGDOM

The UK remains one of the most mature and strategically important defence markets in EMEA. It is home to global primes, major systems integrators, and a vibrant ecosystem of SMEs and technology innovators that support both civil aerospace and defence programmes. The post-Brexit regulatory environment has created unique challenges, particularly around export controls, trade compliance, and supply chain risk management.

Security clearance requirements (DV, SC) continue to limit mobility. Meanwhile, the UK's tight labour market and strong competition from the financial services and tech sectors are driving salary inflation.

Jamie Browne
Managing Director
Leonid Group



ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (GBP)
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE MANAGER	£70,000 — £120,000
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE COUNSEL	£90,000 — £150,000
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE DIRECTOR	£100,000 — £180,000
CHIEF ETHICS & COMPLIANCE OFFICER	£150,000 — £300,000+

TRADE COMPLIANCE

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (GBP)
TRADE COMPLIANCE ANALYST / SPECIALIST	£55,000 — £90,000
TRADE COMPLIANCE MANAGER	£70,000 — £120,000
TRADE COMPLIANCE DIRECTOR / REGIONAL HEAD	£100,000 — £150,000+
HEAD OF TRADE COMPLIANCE	£150,000 — £230,000+

AUDIT

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (GBP)
SENIOR INTERNAL AUDITOR	£65,000 — £85,000
INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGER	£80,000 — £105,000
INTERNAL AUDIT DIRECTOR	£105,000 — £145,000+
CHIEF AUDIT EXECUTIVE (CAE)	£140,000 — £200,000+

LEGAL

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (GBP)
SENIOR LEGAL COUNSEL (4—10 PQE)	£100,000 — £190,000
HEAD OF LEGAL (10+ PQE)	£140,000 — £245,000
DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL (10+ PQE)	£175,000 — £270,000
GENERAL COUNSEL / CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER	£225,000 — £440,000+

DATA PRIVACY

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (GBP)
DATA PRIVACY ANALYST	£55,000 — £85,000
DATA PROTECTION OFFICER (DPO)	£85,000 — £125,000
SENIOR PRIVACY COUNSEL / MANAGER	£100,000 — £170,000
HEAD OF DATA PRIVACY	£160,000 — £240,000+

RISK

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (GBP)
RISK ANALYST	£55,000 — £80,000
RISK MANAGER	£75,000 — £115,000
RISK DIRECTOR	£120,000 — £180,000
CHIEF RISK OFFICER (CRO)	£180,000 — £320,000+

SUSTAINABILITY

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (GBP)
CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER / EVP / SVP	£160,000 – £250,000
HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY (VP)	£100,000 – £160,000
SENIOR ESG / SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER	£60,000 – £90,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER	£45,000 – £62,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER	£40,000 – £55,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY ANALYST	£35,000 – £50,000

HUMAN RIGHTS

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (GBP)
HEAD OF HUMAN RIGHTS (VP)	£90,000 – £150,000
HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIALIST / OFFICER / MANAGER	£45,000 – £80,000

ESG

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (GBP)
HEAD OF ESG REPORTING (VP)	£100,000 – £160,000
ESG REPORTING MANAGER	£60,000 – £90,000
ESG REPORTING OFFICER	£45,000 – £70,000

FRANCE

France has a well-established defence and aerospace ecosystem centred around Toulouse, Paris, and Bordeaux, hosting global leaders in aircraft manufacturing, space systems, and defence electronics. The French government's emphasis on strategic autonomy and European defence collaboration (via initiatives such as PESCO and EDF) has amplified demand for legal, compliance and governance professionals. Bilingual compliance and legal professionals (FR/EN) capable of navigating both French and EU regulatory landscapes are particularly sought-after right now.

France's leadership role in European defence and its growing focus on space sovereignty have increased demand for governance professionals who understand dual-use technology controls.

Jamie Browne
Managing Director
Leonid Group



ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE MANAGER	€60,000 — €100,000
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE COUNSEL	€90,000 — €140,000
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE DIRECTOR	€110,000 — €150,000+
CHIEF ETHICS & COMPLIANCE OFFICER	€150,000 — €250,000+

TRADE COMPLIANCE

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
TRADE COMPLIANCE ANALYST / SPECIALIST	€50,000 — €80,000
TRADE COMPLIANCE MANAGER	€65,000 — €95,000
TRADE COMPLIANCE DIRECTOR / REGIONAL HEAD	€110,000 — €170,000+
HEAD OF TRADE COMPLIANCE	€150,000 — €240,000+

AUDIT

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
SENIOR INTERNAL AUDITOR	€60,000 — €78,000
INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGER	€80,000 — €105,000
INTERNAL AUDIT DIRECTOR	€105,000 — €140,000+
CHIEF AUDIT EXECUTIVE (CAE)	€135,000 — €180,000+

LEGAL

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
SENIOR LEGAL COUNSEL (4—10 PQE)	€90,000 — €165,000
HEAD OF LEGAL (10+ PQE)	€125,000 — €195,000
DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL (10+ PQE)	€165,000 — €230,000
GENERAL COUNSEL / CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER	€175,000 — €360,000+

DATA PRIVACY

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
DATA PRIVACY ANALYST	€50,000 — €75,000
DATA PROTECTION OFFICER (DPO)	€70,000 — €110,000
SENIOR PRIVACY COUNSEL / MANAGER	€90,000 — €145,000
HEAD OF DATA PRIVACY	€140,000 — €210,000+

RISK

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
RISK ANALYST	€50,000 — €75,000
RISK MANAGER	€70,000 — €105,000
RISK DIRECTOR	€110,000 — €155,000
CHIEF RISK OFFICER (CRO)	€160,000 — €260,000+

SUSTAINABILITY

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER / EVP / SVP	€170,000 – €260,000
HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY (VP)	€110,000 – €160,000
SENIOR ESG / SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER	€90,000 – €120,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER	€81,000 – €104,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER	€65,000 – €90,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY ANALYST	€50,000 – €80,000

HUMAN RIGHTS

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
HEAD OF HUMAN RIGHTS (VP)	€120,000 – €180,000
HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIALIST / OFFICER / MANAGER	€60,000 – €100,000

ESG

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
HEAD OF ESG REPORTING (VP)	€100,000 – €160,000
ESG REPORTING MANAGER	€70,000 – €110,000
ESG REPORTING OFFICER	€50,000 – €90,000

GERMANY

Germany's defence and aerospace sector is undergoing a transformation. Following the "Zeitenwende" policy shift and increased defence budget allocations, the country has renewed focus on military modernisation and industrial capacity expansion. This surge has driven significant hiring in compliance, export control and risk roles.

The market is constrained by a shortage of mid-level compliance professionals fluent in both German and English. Clearance requirements and the bureaucratic complexity of export licensing processes do tend to extend recruitment timelines.

Jamie Browne

Managing Director
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ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE MANAGER	€65,000 — €110,000
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE COUNSEL	€90,000 — €140,000
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE DIRECTOR	€120,000 — €200,000+
CHIEF ETHICS & COMPLIANCE OFFICER	€200,000 — €350,000+

TRADE COMPLIANCE

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
TRADE COMPLIANCE ANALYST / SPECIALIST	€55,000 — €85,000
TRADE COMPLIANCE MANAGER	€85,000 — €145,000
TRADE COMPLIANCE DIRECTOR / REGIONAL HEAD	€140,000 — €210,000+
HEAD OF TRADE COMPLIANCE	€200,000 — €260,000+

AUDIT

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
SENIOR INTERNAL AUDITOR	€55,000 — €100,000
INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGER	€85,000 — €130,000
INTERNAL AUDIT DIRECTOR	€130,000 — €195,000+
CHIEF AUDIT EXECUTIVE (CAE)	€175,000 — €300,000+

LEGAL

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
SENIOR LEGAL COUNSEL (4—10 PQE)	€110,000 — €180,000
HEAD OF LEGAL (10+ PQE)	€160,000 — €250,000
DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL (10+ PQE)	€195,000 — €330,000
GENERAL COUNSEL / CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER	€285,000 — €425,000+

DATA PRIVACY

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
DATA PRIVACY ANALYST	€70,000 — €105,000
DATA PROTECTION OFFICER (DPO)	€97,500 — €145,000
SENIOR PRIVACY COUNSEL / MANAGER	€110,000 — €170,000
HEAD OF DATA PRIVACY	€175,000 — €260,000+

RISK

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
RISK ANALYST	€55,000 — €80,000
RISK MANAGER	€80,000 — €130,000
RISK DIRECTOR	€130,000 — €190,000
CHIEF RISK OFFICER (CRO)	€190,000 — €280,000+

SUSTAINABILITY

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER / EVP / SVP	€180,000 – €300,000
HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY (VP)	€110,000 – €180,000
SENIOR ESG / SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER	€80,000 – €110,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER	€53,000 – €80,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER	€60,000 – €90,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY ANALYST	€45,000 – €70,000

HUMAN RIGHTS

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
HEAD OF HUMAN RIGHTS (VP)	€120,000 – €225,000
HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIALIST / OFFICER / MANAGER	€55,000 – €120,000

ESG

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
HEAD OF ESG REPORTING (VP)	€100,000 – €170,000
ESG REPORTING MANAGER	€70,000 – €110,000
ESG REPORTING OFFICER	€50,000 – €90,000

NETHERLANDS:

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The Netherlands serves as a hub for European aerospace innovation and sustainability. With a high concentration of R&D activity and logistics infrastructure, it has become a focal point for governance professionals involved in ESG, supply chain compliance, and dual-use trade regulation.

The Dutch market is relatively small and highly international, with fierce competition for bilingual professionals (EN/NL) who can navigate EU and global frameworks. Hybrid working is more accepted here than in most defence markets, but clearance requirements can restrict flexibility.

Jamie Browne
Managing Director
Leonid Group



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ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE MANAGER	€70,000 — €120,000
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE COUNSEL	€100,000 — €150,000
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE DIRECTOR	€130,000 — €200,000+
CHIEF ETHICS & COMPLIANCE OFFICER	€200,000 — €300,000+

TRADE COMPLIANCE

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
TRADE COMPLIANCE ANALYST / SPECIALIST	€55,000 — €90,000
TRADE COMPLIANCE MANAGER	€85,000 — €140,000
TRADE COMPLIANCE DIRECTOR / REGIONAL HEAD	€135,000 — €230,000+
HEAD OF TRADE COMPLIANCE	€210,000 — €310,000+

AUDIT

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
SENIOR INTERNAL AUDITOR	€55,000 — €80,000
INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGER	€80,000 — €120,000
INTERNAL AUDIT DIRECTOR	€120,000 — €165,000+
CHIEF AUDIT EXECUTIVE (CAE)	€165,000 — €240,000+

LEGAL

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
SENIOR LEGAL COUNSEL (4—10 PQE)	€97,500 — €175,000
HEAD OF LEGAL (10+ PQE)	€150,000 — €225,000
DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL (10+ PQE)	€185,000 — €260,000
GENERAL COUNSEL / CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER	€220,000 — €390,000+

DATA PRIVACY

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
DATA PRIVACY ANALYST	€50,000 — €80,000
DATA PROTECTION OFFICER (DPO)	€80,000 — €125,000
SENIOR PRIVACY COUNSEL / MANAGER	€105,000 — €150,000
HEAD OF DATA PRIVACY	€150,000 — €225,000+

RISK

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
RISK ANALYST	€55,000 — €80,000
RISK MANAGER	€80,000 — €125,000
RISK DIRECTOR	€110,000 — €150,000
CHIEF RISK OFFICER (CRO)	€150,000 — €240,000+

SUSTAINABILITY

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER / EVP / SVP	€160,000 – €300,000
HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY (VP)	€120,000 – €200,000
SENIOR ESG / SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER	€90,000 – €130,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER	€75,000 – €97,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER	€65,000 – €90,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY ANALYST	€43,000 – €64,000

HUMAN RIGHTS

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
HEAD OF HUMAN RIGHTS (VP)	€130,000 – €200,000
HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIALIST / OFFICER / MANAGER	€60,000 – €110,000

ESG

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
HEAD OF ESG REPORTING (VP)	€120,000 – €200,000
ESG REPORTING MANAGER	€80,000 – €130,000
ESG REPORTING OFFICER	€50,000 – €90,000

UAE

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The Netherlands serves as a hub for European aerospace innovation and sustainability. With a high concentration of R&D activity and logistics infrastructure, it has become a focal point for governance professionals involved in ESG, supply chain compliance, and dual-use trade regulation.

The Dutch market is relatively small and highly international, with fierce competition for bilingual professionals (EN/NL) who can navigate EU and global frameworks. Hybrid working is more accepted here than in most defence markets, but clearance requirements can restrict flexibility.

Jamie Browne
Managing Director
Leonid Group



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ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (AED)
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE MANAGER	AED 300,000 — AED 450,000
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE COUNSEL	AED 400,000 — AED 600,000
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE DIRECTOR	AED 550,000 — AED 900,000+
CHIEF ETHICS & COMPLIANCE OFFICER	AED 900,000 — AED 1,500,000+

TRADE COMPLIANCE

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (AED)
TRADE COMPLIANCE ANALYST / SPECIALIST	AED 200,000 — AED 330,000
TRADE COMPLIANCE MANAGER	AED 330,000 — AED 550,000
TRADE COMPLIANCE DIRECTOR / REGIONAL HEAD	AED 550,000 — AED 900,000+
HEAD OF TRADE COMPLIANCE	AED 900,000 — AED 1,350,000+

AUDIT

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (AED)
SENIOR INTERNAL AUDITOR	AED 300,000 — AED 450,000
INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGER	AED 450,000 — AED 700,000
INTERNAL AUDIT DIRECTOR	AED 700,000 — AED 1,050,000+
CHIEF AUDIT EXECUTIVE (CAE)	AED 1,050,000 — AED 1,550,000+

LEGAL

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (AED)
SENIOR LEGAL COUNSEL (4—10 PQE)	AED 480,000 — AED 850,000
HEAD OF LEGAL (10+ PQE)	AED 750,000 — AED 1,160,000
DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL (10+ PQE)	AED 860,000 — AED 1,150,000
GENERAL COUNSEL / CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER	AED 1,050,000 — AED 1,700,000+

DATA PRIVACY

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (AED)
DATA PRIVACY ANALYST	AED 250,000 — AED 380,000
DATA PROTECTION OFFICER (DPO)	AED 400,000 — AED 650,000
SENIOR PRIVACY COUNSEL / MANAGER	AED 600,000 — AED 850,000
HEAD OF DATA PRIVACY	AED 900,000 — AED 1,300,000+

RISK

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (AED)
RISK ANALYST	AED 250,000 — AED 400,000
RISK MANAGER	AED 400,000 — AED 600,000
RISK DIRECTOR	AED 600,000 — AED 900,000
CHIEF RISK OFFICER (CRO)	AED 900,000 — AED 1,400,000+

SUSTAINABILITY

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (AED)
CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER / EVP / SVP	AED 450,000 — AED 900,000
HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY (VP)	AED 300,000 — AED 600,000
SENIOR ESG / SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER	AED 240,000 — AED 450,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER	AED 216,000 — AED 348,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER	AED 180,000 — AED 300,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY ANALYST	AED 150,000 — AED 250,000

HUMAN RIGHTS

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (AED)
HEAD OF HUMAN RIGHTS (VP)	AED 350,000 — AED 600,000
HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIALIST / OFFICER / MANAGER	AED 180,000 — AED 400,000

ESG

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (AED)
HEAD OF ESG REPORTING (VP)	AED 300,000 — AED 550,000
ESG REPORTING MANAGER	AED 200,000 — AED 400,000
ESG REPORTING OFFICER	AED 150,000 — AED 300,000

SAUDI ARABIA

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Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 programme is reshaping the defence sector, aiming for 50% local defence expenditure to be domestic by 2030. Under the governance of GAMI (General Authority for Military Industries) and SAMI (Saudi Arabian Military Industries), the focus is now firmly on localisation, joint ventures, and technology transfer – all of which require robust governance frameworks.

While compensation levels are highly competitive, the candidate pool remains narrow, particularly for mid-to-senior expatriate roles. “Saudisation” policies require structured succession and knowledge-transfer plans.

Jamie Browne
Managing Director
Leonid Group



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ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (SAR)
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE MANAGER	SAR 270,000 — SAR 450,000
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE COUNSEL	SAR 360,000 — SAR 600,000
ETHICS & COMPLIANCE DIRECTOR	SAR 500,000 — SAR 800,000+
CHIEF ETHICS & COMPLIANCE OFFICER	SAR 800,000 — SAR 1,200,000+

TRADE COMPLIANCE

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (SAR)
TRADE COMPLIANCE ANALYST / SPECIALIST	SAR 180,000 — SAR 300,000
TRADE COMPLIANCE MANAGER	SAR 300,000 — SAR 500,000
TRADE COMPLIANCE DIRECTOR / REGIONAL HEAD	SAR 500,000 — SAR 800,000+
HEAD OF TRADE COMPLIANCE	SAR 800,000 — SAR 1,200,000+

AUDIT

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (SAR)
SENIOR INTERNAL AUDITOR	SAR 270,000 — SAR 400,000
INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGER	SAR 400,000 — SAR 620,000
INTERNAL AUDIT DIRECTOR	SAR 620,000 — SAR 930,000+
CHIEF AUDIT EXECUTIVE (CAE)	SAR 930,000 — SAR 1,370,000+

LEGAL

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (SAR)
SENIOR LEGAL COUNSEL (4—10 PQE)	SAR 300,000 — SAR 600,000
HEAD OF LEGAL (10+ PQE)	SAR 550,000 — SAR 1,100,000
DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL (10+ PQE)	SAR 700,000 — SAR 1,200,000
GENERAL COUNSEL / CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER	SAR 900,000 — SAR 1,650,000+

DATA PRIVACY

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (SAR)
DATA PRIVACY ANALYST	SAR 230,000 — SAR 350,000
DATA PROTECTION OFFICER (DPO)	SAR 350,000 — SAR 550,000
SENIOR PRIVACY COUNSEL / MANAGER	SAR 500,000 — SAR 750,000
HEAD OF DATA PRIVACY	SAR 700,000 — SAR 1,200,000+

RISK

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (SAR)
RISK ANALYST	SAR 230,000 — SAR 360,000
RISK MANAGER	SAR 360,000 — SAR 540,000
RISK DIRECTOR	SAR 540,000 — SAR 820,000
CHIEF RISK OFFICER (CRO)	SAR 820,000 — SAR 1,300,000+

SUSTAINABILITY

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (SAR)
CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER / EVP / SVP	SAR 900,000 – 1,800,000
HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY (VP)	SAR 600,000 – 1,200,000
SENIOR ESG / SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER	SAR 450,000 – 900,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER	SAR 180,000 – 444,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER	SAR 150,000 – 360,000
ESG / SUSTAINABILITY ANALYST	SAR 120,000 – 300,000

HUMAN RIGHTS

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (SAR)
HEAD OF HUMAN RIGHTS (VP)	SAR 600,000 – 1,200,000
HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIALIST / OFFICER / MANAGER	SAR 300,000 – 700,000

ESG

ROLE	SALARY RANGE (SAR)
HEAD OF ESG REPORTING (VP)	SAR 600,000 – 1,200,000
ESG REPORTING MANAGER	SAR 450,000 – 900,000
ESG REPORTING OFFICER	SAR 300,000 – 700,000



08.

CONCLUSION

Across EMEA, the Aerospace & Defence (A&D) sector is experiencing one of the most significant periods of transformation in decades. Amid geopolitical uncertainty, supply chain disruption, and the dual pressures of technological acceleration and sustainability mandates, corporate governance functions have clearly shifted from being support functions to strategic imperatives.

Leonid's analysis of hiring data across the region shows that demand for governance, risk, and compliance professionals increased by approximately 22% year-on-year in 2024, outpacing overall A&D headcount growth. The most dramatic increases were seen in **data privacy (+38%), ESG governance (+31%), and trade compliance (+27%)** roles – all driven by regulatory change, export control scrutiny, and the operationalisation of AI and cybersecurity frameworks within supply chains.

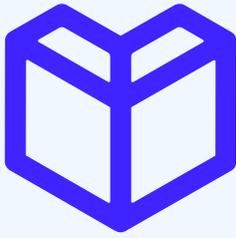
Defence primes and aerospace OEMs are now embedding governance professionals earlier in programme lifecycles, particularly in areas such as AI assurance, dual-use technology licensing, and sustainability reporting.

Companies that integrate compliance and ethics into strategic decision-making are reporting measurable benefits: anecdotally, we hear of faster supplier onboardings, reduced audit findings and improved bid success rates.

For candidates, this sector offers unparalleled opportunity to influence how the next generation of aerospace and defence companies operate. While the lack of flexible working options may deter some, the sector continues to offer highly attractive salary packages and future career growth.

If you would like bespoke salary benchmarking or a talent intelligence report for your organisation, please contact:

Jamie Browne, Managing Director at Leonid Group
jamie@leonid-group.com



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Ready to get in touch with us?

Leonid is a leading, international recruiter in trade compliance and all areas of corporate governance.

If you are looking to bolster your team, we can proactively seek out the best candidates and have them ready to join you within 30 days of instruction.

To find out more about Leonid's service, please visit our website:
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Or, to request a meeting with our Managing Director Jamie Browne, please email him directly:

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