



GLOBAL  
EDITION

CHIEF  
COMMUNICATIONS /  
CORPORATE AFFAIRS  
OFFICER  
TURNOVER STUDY

2026



[WWW.CASA-PARTNERS.COM](http://WWW.CASA-PARTNERS.COM)

## ABOUT CASA

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CASA (the Corporate Affairs Search Alliance) is the group of like-minded Corporate Affairs search firms which comes together in support of clients and candidates. Each CASA member is the number one or number two Corporate Affairs and Communications specialist search firm in their home market. We have very similar values, ethics and

high professional standards, and we are friends who enjoy working together.

CASA members have businesses which are structured in different ways and are independent. What brings us together is our commitment to excellence in Corporate Affairs search, and the great outcomes we provide for those we work with.

All CASA member firms are dedicated to the promise of **'Making Corporate Affairs Better'** and as the name suggests, our vision is for CASA to be **'the home of Corporate Affairs'** for leaders of the profession, wherever in the world they are.

## CASA MEMBERS

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### addison

Addison (Ireland)  
addison.ie



Exeter Search (France)  
exetersearch.com



Herman Rutgers Executive & Interim Search (Netherlands)  
hermanrutgers.nl

### ITHACA

PARTNERS

Ithaca Partners (UK)  
ithacapartners.co.uk



Patino Associates (US)  
patinoassociates.com



PRCC (DACH region Germany, Austria & Switzerland)  
prcc-personal.de

# INTRODUCTION

**W**elcome to the 2026 CASA annual survey of turnover amongst the Communications and Corporate Affairs leadership within the top companies of the USA and Europe.

In this report we examine the data for 2025, a year in which the working environment for Communications and Corporate Affairs functions became if anything more challenging. Developments in technology, and communication practices among audiences and stakeholder groups, showed no signs of slowing. Stakeholder activism continued to rise, with economic, political and consumer factors all competing to shape corporate priorities. The march of technology put traditional media under further pressure for audience share against online platforms. AI brought both traditional working methods and the authority of many sources into question. Even decades-long geopolitical assumptions fell under doubt. And everywhere, news cycles shortened.

With ever-increasing expectations falling on the top communications professional, whether Chief Communications Officer (CCO) or Corporate Affairs Director, this research aims to reflect aspects of stability and change on the individuals appointed to these roles in the USA, UK and Europe.

## WHY A CASA TURNOVER STUDY?

The Corporate Affairs Search Alliance (CASA) is a multi-national group of like-minded Corporate Affairs search firms in Europe and the USA.

Each CASA member is the number one or number two Corporate Affairs specialist search firm in its home market.

As such, our members are closer than anyone to trends in the market for Corporate Affairs / CCO talent. The 'market-mapping' we undertake for our corporate clients provides insights into how changes in their needs affect their recruitment decisions. Our dialogues with director-level practitioners inform us about the factors which attract the rising stars and the established talent.

Last year we published our inaugural survey of the European market, drawing comparisons with a longer-established study of annual changes conducted by our USA-based partner in the market for Chief Communications Officers in that country. This year, in response to encouragement from clients and candidates alike, we have expanded the research base further to enable valid samples to be drawn on a national basis in all six national markets we serve.

## SCOPE

Our members gathered information from a total of 1,102 companies: the 666 members of the combined S&P 500 and Fortune 500 in the USA; the FTSE-100 in the UK; the combined CAC 40 and SBF 120 in France; the ISEQ 20 companies in Ireland; and the 56 AEX and AMX companies in The Netherlands. and a new DACH territory made up of the DAX 40, MDAX 50, major German family owned companies, and Austrian and Swiss traded indices. While this expansion has introduced some complexities in 2025-vs-2024 comparisons, we consider it worthwhile for the longer term.

# SNAPSHOT OF 2025

Turnover was stable in the USA, and normalised downwards in Europe

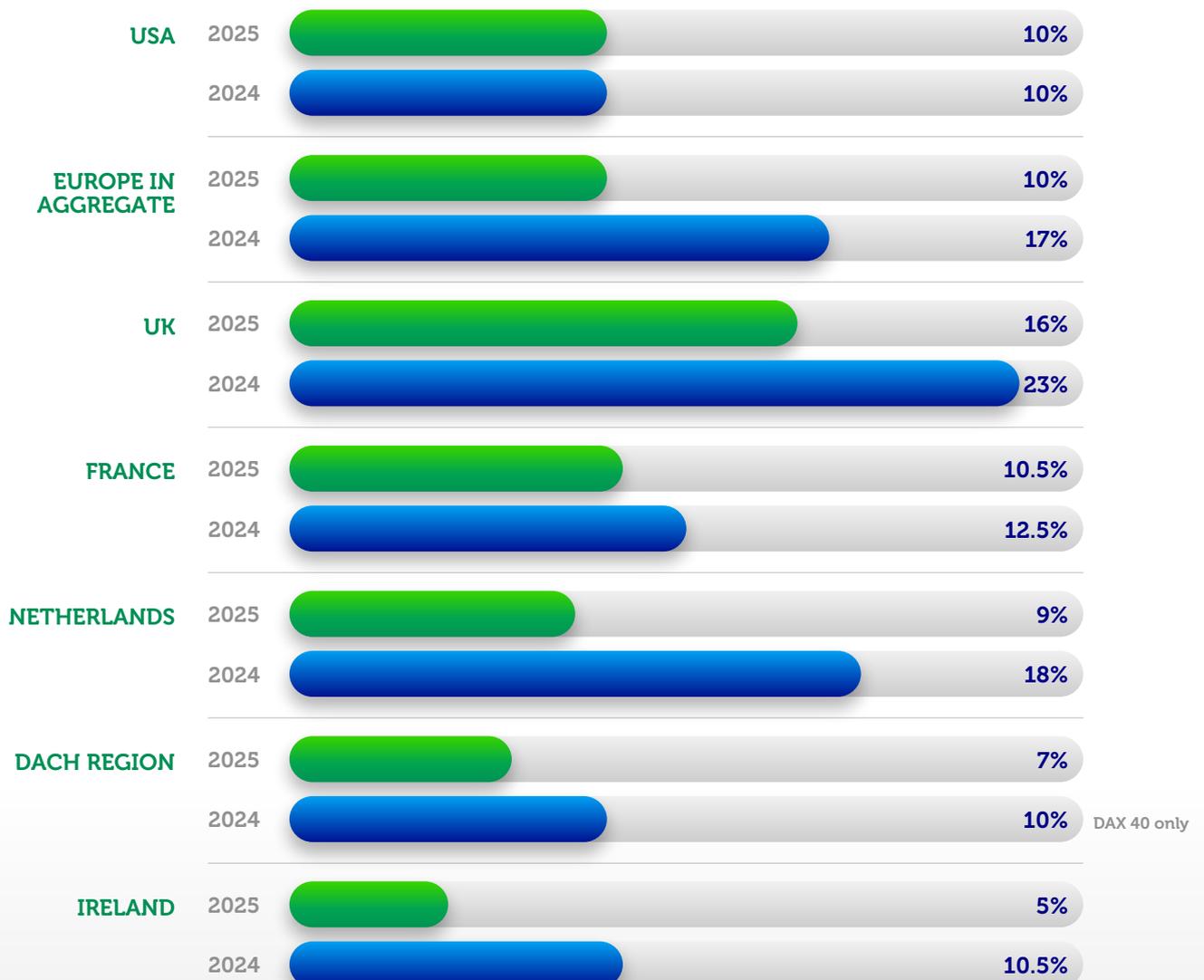
There were strong variations in turnover rates between national markets, but two features stand out in the overall picture. The largest market, the USA, showed remarkable stability with one in ten positions changing hands.

German DAX 40. This brought the aggregate turnover rate for Europe in 2025 down to 10% (44 changes from 436 companies), making the 2025 churn rate effectively the same as that of USA, compared to 17% for Europe in 2024 (37 changes from 219 companies).

In Europe, overall churn in 2025 was much lower than in 2024, with considerable reductions except in the

Within Europe, though, we once again saw wide variations between countries.

## CCO Turnover Rate



Rounded to nearest 0.5%

## VARIATIONS IN TENURE BROADLY REFLECT TURNOVER RATES

The UK continued to produce the highest turnover rate, with changes at nearly one in six CCO positions, twice the rate of some other national markets, though much lower than in 2024. While The Netherlands was superficially the second most volatile country in 2024 with an 18% turnover rate, a small sample size made that figure less statistically reliable than the 9% recorded on the expanded sample for 2025.

In Germany the largest DAX 40 companies were volatile, with: 10 of 40 companies showing a change in 2025 (25%) - a sharp step up versus the 10% turnover the DAX 40 in 2024. But stability in smaller companies meant that the broader German market was one of the most stable.

Put together, the overall reduction in turnover across all European countries is directionally unmistakable.

### Average CCO Tenure 2024-2025



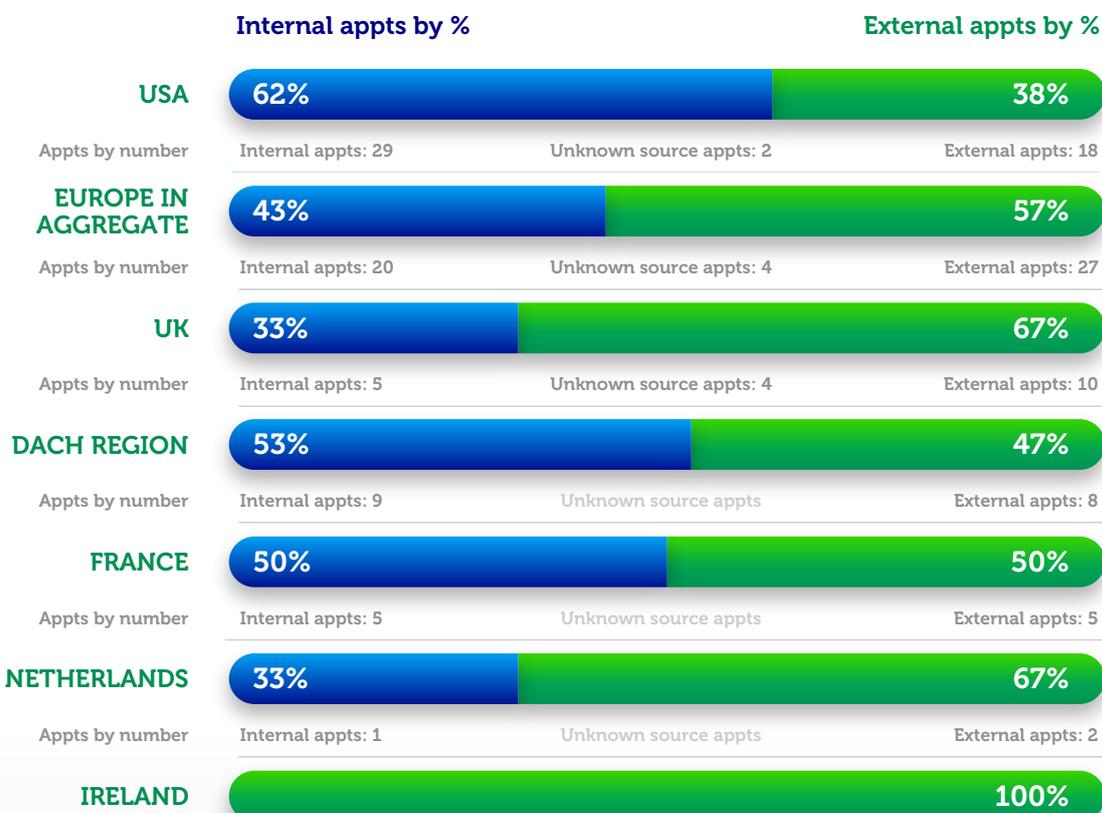
## WHO IS BEING HIRED?

2025 was a very different year from 2024 in terms of candidate selection. Both Europe and the USA produced unexpected results, with markets moving in different directions on each side of the Atlantic.

For Europe, in 2025 the overall balance moved in favour of external hires, from the broad internal / external equilibrium we noted in the 2024 data. The UK market in particular showed a strong preference for external candidates, with 10 external hires versus five internal, up from a mild preference in 2024 (11 external vs 9 internal). Of those 10 external hires, seven came from different industries. Further change was evident in France, with the CAC 40 showing an even balance between internal and external candidates, whereas in 2024 only one of the open CAC 40 CCO roles had gone to an external hire. In Germany, however, the 2025 figures showed a balanced picture in contrast to the 2024 ‘clean sweep’ for external candidates.

In the USA, by sharp contrast to Europe, internal hires took the lion’s share (62%) of vacant posts in 2025. This was a significant reversal from 2024 in which 66% of hires during the year were external. A year ago we provisionally noted external hiring as a rising trend, but clearly that trend is now interrupted, with internal hiring rising strongly. Last year we deduced that as the CCO post had become elevated in seniority in the USA, many companies found it more difficult to bridge the capability gap between the person leaving and the credible internal candidates. Markets have a natural tendency to correct, and we believe the higher level of internal promotions reflects a corporate desire to strengthen development and retention of talent pipelines. More than half of internal hires were to newly-created CCO positions, suggesting that some companies are recognising that the right person may already exist, but that the communications effort has been held back by not having the elevation it deserves within the corporate structure.

### CCO External & Internal Appointments

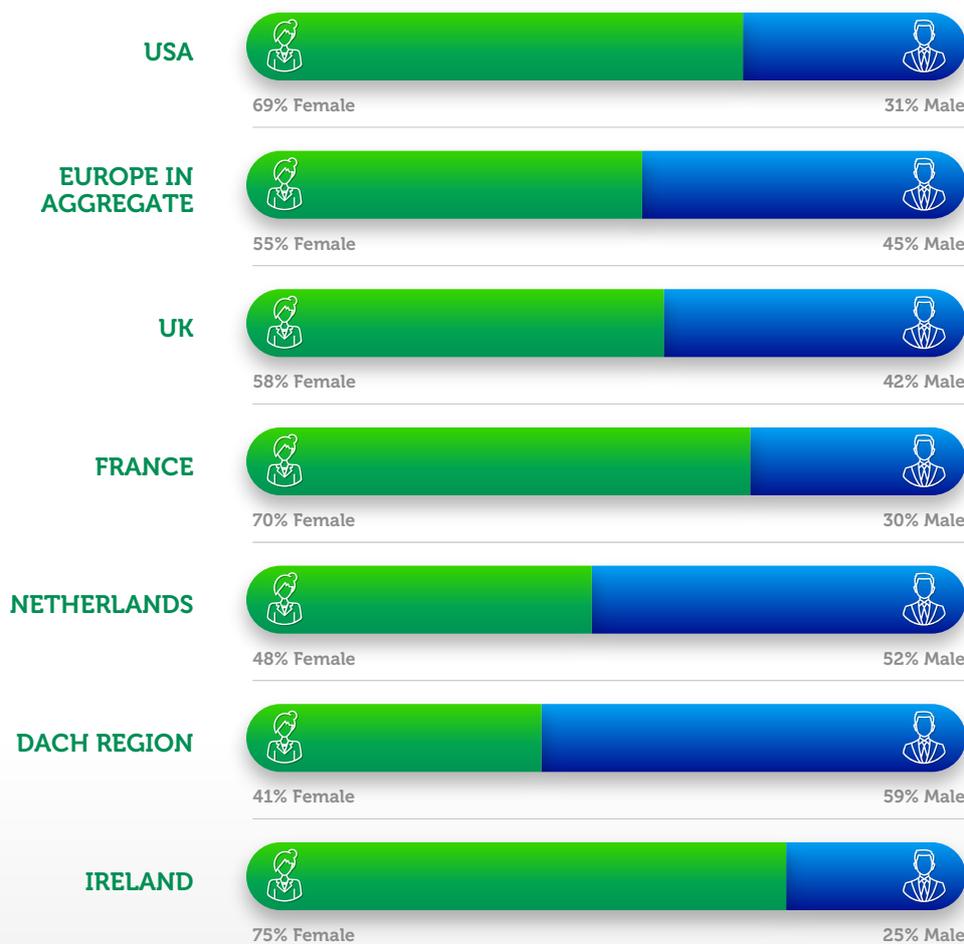


External / Internal splits are shown as percentages of “where known”, not of the job move total

## GENDER BALANCE IN EVIDENCE

The communications profession continues to be prominent in developing diversity in its ranks at all levels, and the effects are noticeable in Europe and the USA’s most senior positions.

### Female vs Male CCO Role Holders 2025

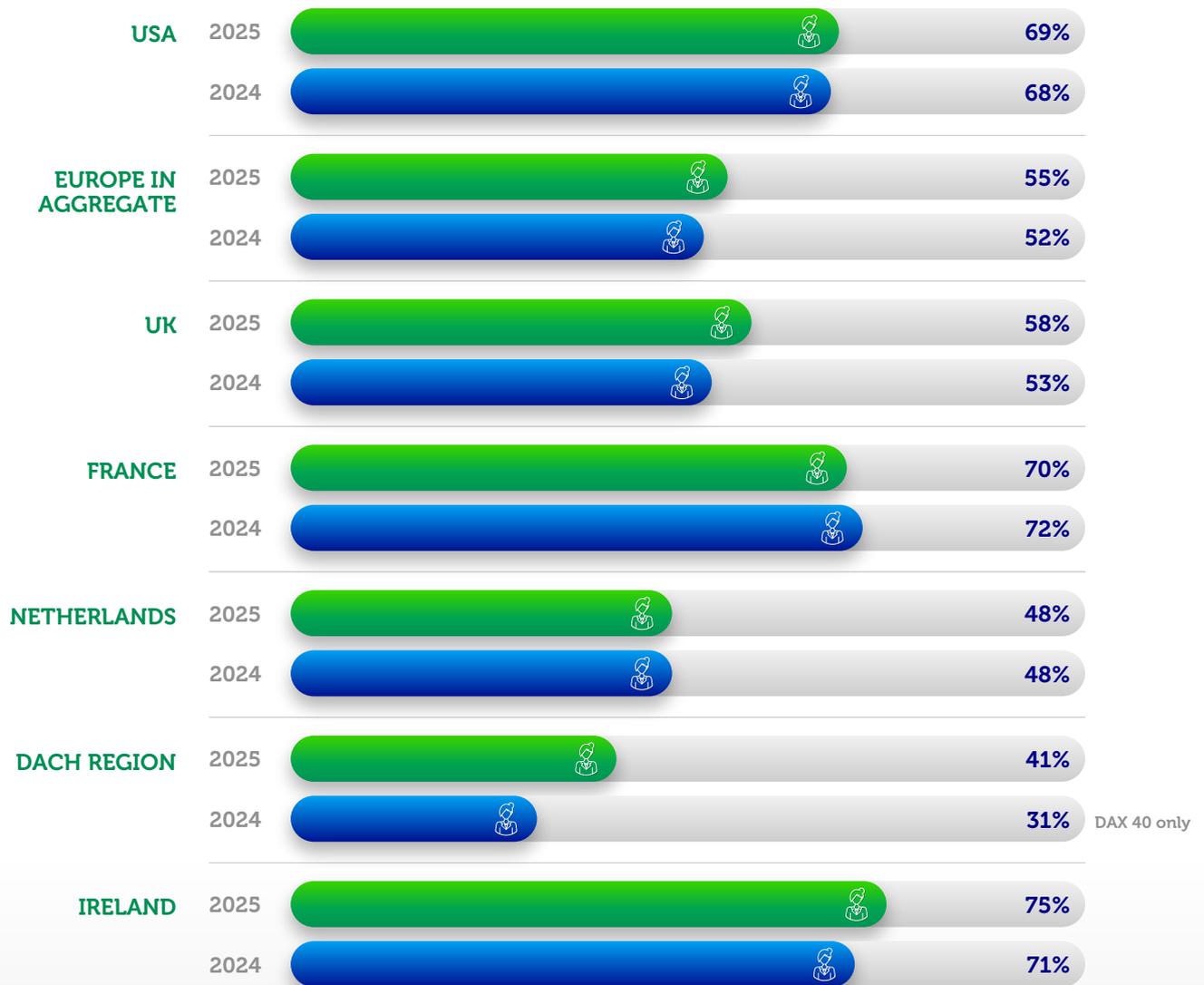


Rounded to nearest 1%

The overall gender balance of CCO post holders in the USA and Europe has changed only slightly, with 2025 and 2024 data showing only minor changes, some of which were attributable to larger data sets in France and The Netherlands, and enlarging from the German DAX 40 to the wider DACH region.

In Germany, widening our coverage from the DAX 40 revealed that female CCO representation is higher in the broader sample. Two-thirds of DAX 40 CCOs were male in 2025, while the MDAX showed an even male/female split, resulting in a combined 41% female representation.

### Female CCO Role Holders 2024-2025



Rounded to nearest 1%

As we saw last year, gender dynamics overall are more evenly balanced in Europe, where women now occupy 55% of CCO positions, than in the USA, where women occupy 69% of CCO positions.

In 2024 we noted that men were installed in the CCO role at a higher rate than women despite women occupying more CCO roles. We were keen to see if the 2024 intake would

prove to be an outlier – and in 2025 it did not recur. Even excluding countries where we have a larger data set in 2025, the slight increases in female representation show that men were not selected at a higher rate than women in the 2025 intake. In the USA in 2025, women were much more likely than men to be selected for internal promotions to CCO level, outweighing successful male internal candidates by 23 to six.

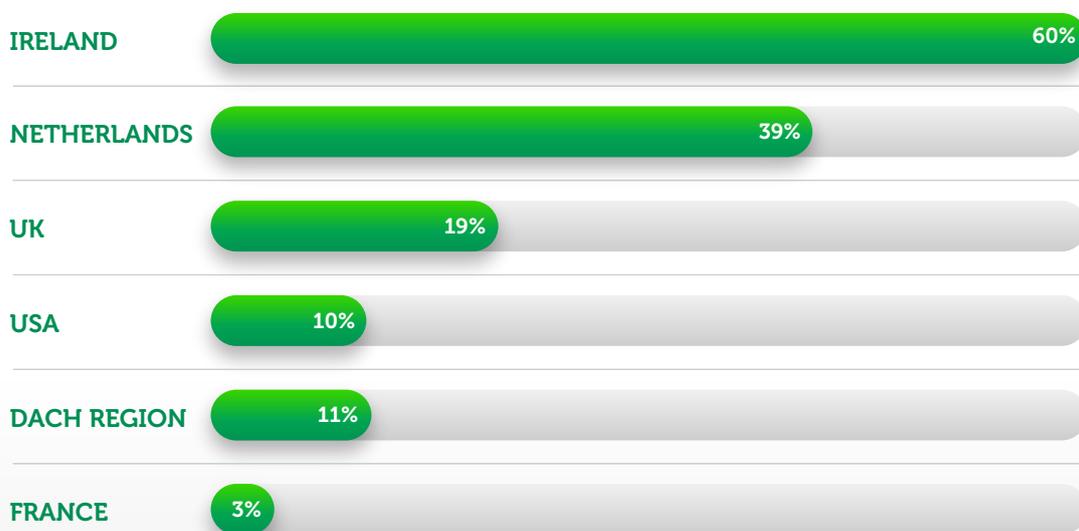
## COMMUNICATIONS OUTSOURCING, OPEN VACANCIES, AND THE “NO CCO” OPTION

Not every large company has an in-house full-time communications leader, with several alternative approaches evident in different markets.

Outsourcing the communications leadership role to external consultancies, and insourcing it to an adjacent specialist in-house department, are minority practices which are unevenly distributed by country. A different approach is not to

have a CCO at all, distributing the traditional responsibilities among more junior communications staff reporting into commercial management, or in some cases going without specialised communications roles altogether. The CASA view is that many companies without integrated communications leadership could have a great deal to gain by evaluating it properly, a process we are happy to help with.

Proportion of roles Distributed / Outsourced / Insourced



\* excludes positions vacant at time of survey

At the top end of this table, Ireland’s high percentage of outsourced Communications leadership roles relates to a significant number of international holding companies in the ISEQ 20 who place their main communications efforts in territories where they have more customers.

In the Netherlands, we found the expansion of our survey population to include the smaller AMX companies alongside the AEX significantly raised the proportion of “no CCO” companies.

At the other end of the scale, France continues to have a highly methodical and institutionalised approach to communications.

## NATIONAL MARKET INSIGHTS



*“In the USA the CCO function has been on the front line. Expectations have elevated, even as companies are still evolving what they need from their communications leaders. But it has been a year of success, with manageable turnover, increasing tenure and demographic diversity we don’t see in other C-suite positions. The CCOs who thrived in 2025 weren’t just good communicators. They delivered on three critical factors: speaking the language of business, evolving their function to meet changing needs, and serving as calm and open collaborators. The role isn’t standardizing. It’s being customized around the needs of the business and, in particular, the strengths and weaknesses of the CEO and their executive team.”*

**Michael Patino**  
Patino Associates, USA



*“While Corporate Affairs is typically a function with the instinct to innovate, business conditions in France favoured a degree of caution in 2025. The effect was most prominently seen in vacancies being filled through internal promotion, ensuring retention of knowledge and experience of the business. Women continued to hold a substantial majority of CCO roles, much more than the European and US averages. Political uncertainty and the potential impacts of AI limited the appetite in 2025 for investment in the function, but we see early signs of that activity coming through in 2026.”*

**Kim Johnson**  
Exeter Search, France





*“UK corporates favour new blood. External hires outnumber internal promotions by two to one. It has long been the Ithaca view that if you are good in the UK, then you’ve proven yourself in one of the toughest, if not the toughest market, for Corporate Affairs. The stakeholders in the UK (particularly the British media) are more aggressive than almost anywhere else, so when you’re recognisably at the top of your game here, it means you’re transferable at a high level in most commercial sectors, and many different territories. The natural advantages we have here – in the middle timezone of the world, where we are native English speakers, and where media titles like the Financial Times and the BBC get to influential business audiences globally - all help to make the talent here very versatile. Sector knowledge is of course valuable, but the Corporate Affairs Directors who are most sought-after are those with outstanding commercial acumen as well as best of breed corporate affairs craft skills – and that makes them very transferable between sectors.”*

**Alex Gordon Shute**  
Ithaca Partners, UK



*“For many companies in The Netherlands, 2025 was a year of caution, with both political instability at home, and uncertain trade conditions affecting internationally-focused companies. Within the smaller AMX companies there are many opportunities to promote commercial objectives by improving the position of communications. Throughout the corporate sector we are aware of increasing ambitions to upgrade CCO roles and restructure the function. The CCOs who moved in 2025 are in many cases finding their roles more intense, broader and more challenging, with higher expectations. For those ready for a career move in 2026, we expect 2026 to bring advantageous opportunities for career moves.”*

**Petra Herman**  
Herman Rutgers, Netherlands





*“The 2025 Turnover Study paints a fundamentally different picture for Germany than in the previous year: significantly more changes in the DAX40, mostly internal appointments compared to external-only in the year before, a higher proportion of women among the new CCOs. This year, we also looked at the MDAX and the largest family-owned companies for the first time. That brought useful insights into the opportunities available to smaller companies, where we see more variation in whether companies maintain an identifiable top communications seat in the way that the largest firms overwhelmingly do. We are aware that many smaller and family-owned businesses are examining the business benefits of investment in the professionalism and stature of their communications efforts. These businesses can provide excellent career opportunities for CCO candidates prepared to look wider than the DAX 40.”*

**Philip Müller**  
PRCC, Germany



*“Ireland is a point of contrast against the larger European markets. Highly decentralised and with no dominant model for Corporate Affairs, we have less consensus on the title than other countries and in some cases, the job is often ‘Corporate Affairs Plus’ with additional responsibilities, including marketing. The Corporate Affairs approach is a great support in bringing those activities together coherently to drive results for the business. Recently we have seen a real priority on policy skills because that world has changed. It’s no longer just domestic regulators you know well, and the EU where things happen predictably through formal channels. When someone can send a tweet and change the regulatory world, it’s a way broader Corporate Affairs mindset you need to bring to the game.”*

**Susie Farrell**  
Addison, Ireland



# CONCLUSION

Few would argue that in 2025 the stakeholder universe in both the USA and Europe became more dramatic, faster-changing and less predictable. Yet if anything, the trends we see in recruitment for CCO roles appear to show a gradual harmonisation and growing maturity in the profession, with the weight and influence of CCO / Corporate Affairs roles consolidating at the high level they have achieved in recent years.

All our members have found continuing strong demand for highly capable CCOs who can navigate a complex stakeholder universe with pace and sure-footedness. Within top management, this is the role most connected to the responsibility for understanding the impact of changes in the outside environment and helping the company stay in touch. Anecdotally, we find that strong commercial instincts and skills are increasingly sought-after in CCO candidates. This may be a factor in the rising support for internal promotions in 2025 selections, giving companies the reassurance of a candidate's greater familiarity with their business model and specific commercial challenges.

Nevertheless, transfers between organisations, and between industries continue to have a valuable place in the ecosystem. Against a background of rapid technological change, with constant challenge to the orthodoxies of economic, social and geopolitical tradition, CCO practitioners keep having to lead adaptation and the acquisition of new skills. We therefore expect companies to continue to refresh the balances of skills and experience in their corporate affairs leadership.

# METHODOLOGY

The 2026 European CCO Turnover Study measures the turnover of the most senior Communications and Corporate Affairs executives while also evaluating the types of candidates coming to occupy these increasingly critical roles within an executive team. The member firms of the Corporate Affairs Search Alliance (CASA) examined 1102 companies in the USA, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, noting personnel and organizational changes within Communications/Corporate Affairs roles and structures.

Leveraging the proprietary databases of CASA-members firms, as well as publicly available information, we sought to quantitatively ascertain the following:

- Whether a company had changed its CCO during the calendar year of 2025. In each case, a change meant that a new individual occupied the most senior role. “Internal Hires” as discussed in the report are not the same person being promoted (e.g. VP, Communications to SVP, Communications)
- Whether the incoming CCO was an internal promotion or an external hire
- If the current role was either newly created or substantially different structurally (with either greater or lesser responsibility) than that of the predecessor
- If the incoming CCO had previously served in a comparable CCO role as the head of corporate communications or corporate affairs for either a publicly traded or private company
- Whether the incoming CCO previously worked in the industry of his/ her current employer
- Rates of change amongst the above criteria by industry.

This data was then discussed among CASA member company principals, clients, and various executives within the profession. These conversations informed our qualitative commentary and insight included throughout the study. The 2025 CCO Turnover Study contains data through to December 31, 2025.



## CCO TURNOVER STUDY 2026

Reports that build on last year's research, with richer insight due to over 1,000 companies analyzed across France, Ireland, Netherlands, the UK and the US, and the DACH region of Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

To request a copy of any edition of these reports, contact CASA at [info@casa-partners.com](mailto:info@casa-partners.com), and we'll be happy to share them with you.

