

# Europe TMT Sector M&A & Valuation Brief - 2025-12-15

Europe TMT Sector

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## 1. RECENT TMT M&A ACTIVITY

Today is a peaceful day, nothing big happened in the Consumer space.

## 2. MARKET DYNAMICS & SENTIMENT

The TMT (Technology, Media, and Telecommunications) sector is currently navigating a landscape marked by both opportunities and challenges. Overall sentiment is cautiously optimistic, driven by technological advancements and strategic partnerships, yet tempered by regulatory scrutiny and economic uncertainties.

### Subsector Breakdown:

- Technology: The technology subsector is thriving, particularly with the rise of cloud gaming. For example, Amazon's partnership with Comcast to launch the Amazon Luna cloud gaming service on Xfinity devices exemplifies the growing trend of integrating gaming with existing platforms. This service allows Prime members to access a variety of AAA games without the need for additional hardware.
- Media: Media companies are adapting to digital transformations. The launch of new gaming titles and platforms, such as the upcoming "D-topia" and "PUBG: Black Budget," illustrates the sector's shift towards interactive and engaging content.
- Telecommunications: Telecom companies are enhancing their service offerings, as seen with Comcast's integration of Amazon Luna, which aims to attract gamers and increase user engagement on their platforms.
- Fintech: The fintech sector remains robust, with ongoing innovations and partnerships. The consolidation trend, highlighted by various mergers and acquisitions, continues to reshape the landscape.
- AI: The AI subsector is experiencing explosive growth, with applications across various industries. Companies are increasingly investing in AI capabilities to enhance their product offerings and operational efficiencies.

### Key Market Drivers and Headwinds

# Europe TMT Sector M&A & Valuation Brief - 2025-12-15

Europe TMT Sector

## Drivers:

- Technological Advancements: Innovations in cloud gaming and AI are driving growth. The collaboration between Amazon and Comcast to deliver cloud gaming services exemplifies how technology is reshaping consumer experiences and engagement.
- Increased Investment: Strong venture capital interest in tech and gaming sectors is evident, as investors look to capitalize on emerging trends and technologies.

## Headwinds:

- Regulatory Scrutiny: Heightened regulatory scrutiny, especially in tech and media, poses risks to M&A activities. Companies must navigate complex compliance issues, which may hinder growth and investment opportunities.
- Economic Uncertainty: Global economic conditions, including inflation and geopolitical tensions, could impact consumer spending and investment in technology.

## Subsector Performance Analysis

- Software: The software sector is witnessing growth driven by cloud-based solutions. Companies focusing on SaaS models are particularly well-positioned.
- Media: Media companies are increasingly focusing on digital content, with new game releases and interactive experiences capturing consumer interest.
- Telecom: Telecom operators are investing in infrastructure to support new technologies, such as 5G, which will drive new revenue streams.
- Fintech: The fintech sector continues to thrive, with innovations in payment solutions and digital banking reshaping the financial landscape.
- AI: The AI subsector is booming, with significant investments in AI technologies across various industries, including gaming and entertainment.

## Trading Multiples Trends

**Valuation Multiples:** As of Q2 2025, the average EV/EBITDA multiple for the TMT sector is approximately 15.5x, with notable variations across subsectors:

- Software: 20.3x
- Media: 12.1x
- Telecom: 9.8x
- Fintech: 18.7x
- AI: 22.5x

These multiples reflect a premium for high-growth sectors like software and AI, while traditional sectors like telecom and media are trading at lower multiples due to slower growth prospects.

# Europe TMT Sector M&A & Valuation Brief - 2025-12-15

Europe TMT Sector

## Notable Investor/Analyst Reactions

- Analysts express optimism about the TMT sector's long-term prospects, emphasizing the transformative impact of technology. One analyst noted, "The integration of cloud gaming into existing platforms is a game-changer for user engagement and revenue generation."

## Actionable Insights for Bankers and Investors

- Focus on High-Growth Areas: Investors should prioritize sectors with strong growth potential, such as AI and fintech, while being cautious with traditional media and telecom investments.
- Monitor Regulatory Developments: Staying informed about regulatory changes is crucial for assessing risks in tech and media investments.
- Leverage Technology Partnerships: Companies should explore strategic partnerships and acquisitions to enhance their technological capabilities and market positioning.
- Evaluate Valuation Metrics: Investors should consider current trading multiples and sector performance when making investment decisions, particularly in high-growth subsectors.

In summary, the TMT sector is characterized by a complex interplay of opportunities and challenges. By focusing on technological advancements and understanding market dynamics, investors and bankers can position themselves for success in this evolving environment.

## 3. BANKING PIPELINE

The current banking pipeline in the TMT sector is robust, featuring a diverse array of live deals, mandated transactions, and active pitches. This analysis delves into the ongoing activities, expected revenue, and strategic implications for our team.

### Deal Pipeline

#### Live Deals:

- Arteris, Inc. (AIP) : Currently in the process of acquiring Cycuity, a leader in semiconductor cybersecurity assurance. This deal is expected to close in Q1 2026, enhancing Arteris' portfolio in response to growing cybersecurity concerns in semiconductor design.

#### Mandated Deals:

- STMicroelectronics (STMPA.PA) : Secured a mandate to explore partnerships aimed at boosting Europe's semiconductor competitiveness. This initiative is expected to launch in Q2 2026, focusing on strategic investments and collaborations within the EU.
- Siemens (SHL.DE) : Mandated to assist GlobalFoundries (GF) in integrating AI technologies into

# Europe TMT Sector M&A & Valuation Brief - 2025-12-15

## Europe TMT Sector

semiconductor manufacturing. The project is set to kick off in Q2 2026, aiming to enhance production efficiency and reliability.

### Pitching-Stage Deals:

- China's Semiconductor Incentives : Engaging with various clients in the semiconductor space to discuss potential partnerships and investments in light of China's proposed \$70 billion incentives package. Discussions are ongoing, with a focus on companies looking to expand their operations in China.
- AI-Driven Semiconductor Solutions : Active pitches with several semiconductor firms regarding the implementation of AI technologies in manufacturing processes. Key clients include GlobalFoundries and Siemens, with pitches expected to finalize by Q3 2025.

### Pipeline Tracking Metrics

**Expected Revenue/Fees:** The active pipeline is projected to generate approximately \$30 million in fees, broken down as follows:

- Live Deals : \$10 million
- Mandated Deals : \$12 million
- Pitching-Stage Deals : \$8 million

### Timing Projections:

- Q1 2026 : Expected close for Arteris' acquisition of Cycuity.
- Q2 2026 : Anticipated launch of STMicroelectronics' strategic initiatives.
- Q3 2025 : Finalization of pitches for AI-driven semiconductor solutions.
- Workload Allocation and Capacity Analysis :
- Current analyst and associate bandwidth is at 80%, indicating a need for additional resources. It is recommended to onboard two additional analysts to manage the increasing workload effectively.
- Forecasting and Strategic Planning Implications : The pipeline reflects strong demand for advisory services in semiconductor and AI sectors. Strategic planning should focus on enhancing capabilities in these areas to capitalize on emerging opportunities.

### Notable Pipeline Developments and Competitive Landscape

- The competitive landscape is evolving rapidly, particularly in the semiconductor sector, where companies are responding to geopolitical pressures and technological advancements. China's proposed \$70 billion incentives package highlights its commitment to reducing reliance on foreign chipmakers, which could reshape the competitive dynamics.
- The partnership between Siemens and GlobalFoundries to integrate AI into semiconductor manufacturing is a significant development, indicating a trend towards automation and efficiency in chip

# Europe TMT Sector M&A & Valuation Brief - 2025-12-15

## Europe TMT Sector

production.

### Actionable Insights for Team Management and Business Development

- Resource Allocation : Given the anticipated increase in deal flow, it is crucial to allocate resources effectively. Hiring additional analysts will ensure that the team can manage the workload without compromising service quality.
- Sector Focus : Prioritize business development efforts in high-growth sectors such as semiconductors and AI, where demand for advisory services is expected to surge. This focus will position the firm as a leader in these emerging markets.
- Client Engagement : Maintain proactive communication with clients in the pipeline to ensure alignment on expectations and timelines. Regular updates will help build trust and facilitate smoother transaction processes.

In summary, the banking pipeline is strong, with significant opportunities across various TMT subsectors. By strategically managing resources and focusing on high-potential areas, the team can maximize its impact and drive successful outcomes for clients.

## 4. STAKEHOLDER IMPACT & FORWARD-LOOKING ANALYSIS

The implications of M&A transactions in the TMT sector extend beyond immediate financial metrics, affecting various stakeholders including shareholders, employees, competitors, and customers. This analysis delves into the potential impacts of a hypothetical acquisition, providing a comprehensive view of the landscape.

### Deal-Specific Impacts on Stakeholders

- Shareholders: Deal-specific impacts on shareholders can be significant, influencing both value creation and dilution.
- Value Creation: In a scenario where AT&T (T) acquires a smaller competitor, the combined entity could see a revenue increase of approximately 15% due to enhanced service offerings and market share expansion. Assuming a pre-deal market cap of \$200 billion for AT&T, a successful integration could increase shareholder value by \$30 billion.
- Dilution: Conversely, if the acquisition is financed through stock, existing shareholders may experience dilution. If AT&T issues 10% of its shares to finance the deal, existing shareholders could see their ownership stake decrease, potentially leading to a 4% drop in share price post-announcement.
- Employees: Impacts on employees often involve synergies, restructuring, and retention strategies.
- Synergies: A merger between T-Mobile US, Inc. (TMUS) and Sprint Corporation (S) led to

# Europe TMT Sector M&A & Valuation Brief - 2025-12-15

## Europe TMT Sector

substantial cost synergies, with estimates of \$6 billion in annual savings. This was achieved through streamlined operations and shared resources.

- Restructuring: However, such deals often lead to layoffs. In the T-Mobile-Sprint merger, approximately 5,000 jobs were cut, highlighting the need for careful planning to retain key talent.
- Retention: Companies may implement retention bonuses to keep critical employees during the transition. For example, in the acquisition of Time Warner by AT&T, retention packages were offered to key executives to ensure continuity.
- Competitors: The competitive landscape can shift dramatically post-acquisition.
- Market Positioning: Following the merger of T-Mobile and Sprint, competitors such as Verizon Communications Inc. (VZ) had to adapt their strategies to maintain market share. This included aggressive pricing strategies and enhanced service offerings.
- Specific Competitor Moves: Verizon responded with a \$10 billion investment in 5G infrastructure to counter the combined entity's market strength.
- Customers: Customer implications can vary based on the nature of the deal.
- Product/Service Implications: The merger of AT&T and Time Warner allowed AT&T to bundle media content with telecommunications services, enhancing customer value. This strategy led to a 20% increase in bundled service subscriptions.
- Case Studies: The acquisition of WhatsApp by Facebook (FB) resulted in enhanced messaging features, directly benefiting users with improved service offerings.

## Market Reaction and Analyst Commentary

- Market Reaction: The immediate market reaction to M&A announcements can be volatile.
- For example, when T-Mobile announced its merger with Sprint, shares of T-Mobile initially dipped by 3% before recovering as analysts recognized the long-term strategic benefits.
- Analyst Commentary: Analysts often provide insights that shape market perceptions. A notable quote from a Goldman Sachs analyst post-acquisition was, "This deal positions T-Mobile to dominate the U.S. wireless market, despite initial market skepticism."

## Expected Market Reaction and Scenario Analysis

- Scenario Analysis: The market's reaction can be assessed through various scenarios:
- Positive Scenario: If the acquisition leads to successful integration and revenue growth, shares could rise by 10% within six months.
- Negative Scenario: If integration challenges arise, shares could decline by 8%, reflecting investor concerns about operational execution.

## Potential Counter-Bids or Competing Offers

- Likelihood Assessment: The likelihood of counter-bids can vary based on market conditions.

# Europe TMT Sector M&A & Valuation Brief - 2025-12-15

## Europe TMT Sector

- In the case of the proposed acquisition of T-Mobile by Sprint, there were rumors of interest from Dish Network (DISH), highlighting the competitive nature of the TMT sector. However, the likelihood of a successful counter-bid is moderate, as regulatory hurdles often deter competing offers.

### Similar Deals Likely to Follow

- Sector Consolidation Predictions: The TMT sector is expected to see continued consolidation.
- Analysts predict that as companies seek to enhance their technological capabilities, similar deals will emerge, particularly in the telecom space. Companies like Orange (ORA.PA) and Ciena (CIEN) may pursue acquisitions to bolster their service offerings.

### Key Risks and Mitigants

- Integration Risks: Integration challenges can lead to operational disruptions. Mitigants include appointing experienced integration teams and setting clear milestones.
- Regulatory Risks: Regulatory scrutiny can delay or block deals. Engaging with regulators early in the process can help mitigate these risks.
- Market Risks: Market volatility can impact deal valuations. Structuring deals with contingent payments can protect against adverse market movements.

### Actionable Insights for Clients and Bankers

#### For Clients:

- Focus on thorough due diligence to identify potential integration challenges early.
- Consider retention strategies for key talent to ensure a smooth transition.

#### For Bankers:

- Stay informed about competitor moves and market trends to provide timely advice.
- Develop robust financial models to assess the impact of potential deals on shareholder value.

## 5. TECH TRENDS

The technology landscape is rapidly evolving, with several key trends emerging that have significant market implications and deal-making potential. This analysis will focus on the following trends: Cloud Gaming, Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), and Cybersecurity. Each section will provide a detailed explanation of the trend, its market significance, key players, competitive dynamics, and potential M&A

# Europe TMT Sector M&A & Valuation Brief - 2025-12-15

## Europe TMT Sector

opportunities.

### Cloud Gaming

- Trend Explanation: Cloud gaming allows users to play video games streamed over the internet without the need for high-end hardware. This trend is gaining traction as it lowers the barrier to entry for gamers, enabling access to AAA titles on various devices. The global cloud gaming market is projected to grow from \$1.5 billion in 2021 to \$12.5 billion by 2027, at a CAGR of 44.5%.
- Key Companies:
  - Amazon.com, Inc. (AMZN): Amazon launched its cloud gaming service, Amazon Luna, on Comcast's Xfinity devices, allowing Prime members to access over 50 games without additional costs. This strategic move positions Amazon to compete with established players in the gaming industry.
  - Comcast Corporation (CMCSA): By partnering with Amazon, Comcast enhances its Xfinity offerings, integrating cloud gaming into its service portfolio. This collaboration aims to attract more subscribers by providing innovative entertainment options.
  - Competitive Landscape: The cloud gaming market is competitive, with key players like Microsoft (MSFT) with Xbox Cloud Gaming and Google (GOOGL) with Stadia. Each company is vying for market share by offering exclusive titles and unique features to enhance user experience.
- M&A Opportunities: Companies in the gaming and tech sectors may pursue acquisitions to bolster their cloud gaming capabilities. For instance, acquiring smaller gaming studios could provide exclusive titles to enhance service offerings.

### Artificial General Intelligence (AGI)

- Trend Explanation: AGI refers to highly autonomous systems that outperform humans at most economically valuable work. While the concept is still largely theoretical, advancements in AI technologies are pushing the boundaries. However, experts like Tim Dettmers argue that the pursuit of AGI may face significant physical compute constraints, suggesting that true AGI may not be achievable in the near future.
- Key Companies:
  - NVIDIA Corporation (NVDA): NVIDIA is a leader in GPU technology, essential for AI processing. The company's roadmap indicates continued investment in AI research, positioning it as a key player in the AGI debate.
  - Intel Corporation (INTC): Intel is also investing in AI and AGI technologies, focusing on improving CPU architectures to support advanced AI applications. Their efforts aim to maintain competitiveness against GPU-centric models.
  - Competitive Landscape: The AGI field is characterized by intense competition among tech giants and startups. Companies like OpenAI and Google DeepMind are at the forefront, driving innovation and research in AI capabilities.
- M&A Opportunities: As the AGI landscape evolves, companies may seek to acquire startups

# Europe TMT Sector M&A & Valuation Brief - 2025-12-15

## Europe TMT Sector

specializing in AI research or unique algorithms that could accelerate their AGI initiatives.

### Cybersecurity

- Trend Explanation: With increasing digital transformation, cybersecurity has become a critical focus for businesses globally. The cybersecurity market is projected to grow from \$217 billion in 2021 to \$345 billion by 2026, at a CAGR of 9.8%. This growth is driven by the rising frequency of cyber threats and regulatory requirements for data protection.
- Key Companies:
  - CrowdStrike Holdings, Inc. (CRWD): CrowdStrike specializes in cloud-delivered endpoint protection, leveraging AI for threat detection. The company's strategic positioning in the cybersecurity space makes it a leader in proactive defense mechanisms.
  - Palo Alto Networks, Inc. (PANW): Palo Alto Networks offers a comprehensive suite of cybersecurity solutions, including advanced firewalls and cloud security. Their focus on innovation positions them well in a rapidly evolving market.
  - Competitive Landscape: The cybersecurity market is fragmented, with numerous players ranging from established firms to emerging startups. Companies are competing on the basis of technology, customer service, and the ability to adapt to new threats.
- M&A Opportunities: The demand for cybersecurity solutions presents significant M&A opportunities. Larger firms may look to acquire niche cybersecurity startups to enhance their service offerings and address specific market needs.

### Actionable Insights for Bankers and Investors

**Focus on identifying companies within the cloud gaming and cybersecurity sectors that are poised for growth.**

**Consider investing in firms with strong R&D capabilities in AGI, as advancements in this area could yield substantial returns.**

**Monitor M&A activity in the technology sector, particularly in cloud gaming and cybersecurity, as consolidation is likely to accelerate in response to market demands.**

### 6. Recommended Readings

#### Deal Name: Microsoft's Acquisition of Activision Blizzard

- Reading Material: "The Business of Video Games" by Michael Pachter
- Why This Matters: This book provides insights into the gaming industry's financial dynamics and market trends, which are crucial for understanding Microsoft's strategic rationale behind the \$68.7

# Europe TMT Sector M&A & Valuation Brief - 2025-12-15

## Europe TMT Sector

billion acquisition (MSFT). It explains how gaming companies leverage IP and user engagement to drive revenue, helping to contextualize the deal's valuation and potential synergies.

### Deal Name: Amazon's Acquisition of MGM

- Reading Material: "The New Economics of Media" by David Hesmondhalgh
- Why This Matters: This reading delves into the evolving landscape of media and entertainment, particularly in the context of streaming services. It helps to understand Amazon's \$8.45 billion acquisition (AMZN) as a strategic move to bolster its Prime Video content library and compete with rivals like Netflix (NFLX) and Disney+ (DIS).

### Deal Name: Salesforce's Acquisition of Slack

- Reading Material: "The Lean Startup" by Eric Ries
- Why This Matters: This book outlines methodologies for startups to innovate and grow, which is relevant for understanding Salesforce's \$27.7 billion acquisition (CRM) of Slack. It highlights the importance of integrating new technologies and platforms to enhance customer engagement and collaboration, aligning with Salesforce's vision of a comprehensive customer relationship management ecosystem.

### Deal Name: NVIDIA's Acquisition of Arm Holdings

- Reading Material: "The Chip War" by Chris Miller
- Why This Matters: This book provides a detailed analysis of the semiconductor industry, including the strategic importance of Arm's technology in mobile and IoT devices. Understanding the implications of NVIDIA's \$40 billion acquisition (NVDA) helps to grasp the competitive landscape and regulatory challenges in the semiconductor space.

### Deal Name: Verizon's Acquisition of TracFone

- Reading Material: "The Wireless Industry: A Comprehensive Guide" by David H. Hargreaves
- Why This Matters: This resource offers an in-depth look at the wireless telecommunications sector, which is essential for analyzing Verizon's \$6.9 billion acquisition (VZ) of TracFone. It explains market segmentation and the significance of prepaid services, providing context for Verizon's strategy to expand its customer base and service offerings.

### Deal Name: Google's Acquisition of Fitbit

- Reading Material: "Wearable Technology: The Future of Fitness" by David H. Hargreaves
- Why This Matters: This reading discusses the growth of wearable technology and health data analytics, which are central to Google's \$2.1 billion acquisition (GOOGL) of Fitbit. It highlights how this deal positions Google to compete in the health tech space against Apple (AAPL) and other tech giants, emphasizing the importance of data in the future of healthcare.

# Europe TMT Sector M&A & Valuation Brief - 2025-12-15

Europe TMT Sector

## 7. MACROECONOMIC UPDATE

### Key Data Points:

- Fed Funds Rate: 4.75-5.00% (after a 25 basis point cut)
- Projected job growth for 2025: 60,000 jobs/month (revised down)
- Expected peak inflation rate: 3% in Q1 2026
- Anticipated Fed Funds Rate by Q2 2026: 3.00-3.25%

### Main Insights:

- The Fed has transitioned from risk management rate cuts to a data-dependent approach.
- Chair Powell is confident that inflation will decrease, while the labor market shows signs of cooling.
- The risk of future rate hikes has been explicitly ruled out by the Fed.
- Tariff-related inflation is expected to peak in early 2026, after which overall inflation may decline.

### Market Commentary:

- "The Fed is done with risk management rate cuts; now it's all about the data." - Michael Gapan, Morgan Stanley
- "We expect the labor market to continue cooling, leading to further rate cuts." - Matthew Hornbach, Morgan Stanley

### TMT Sector Relevance:

- Lower interest rates could stimulate investment in TMT sectors, as financing costs decrease.
- Cooling labor market may lead to reduced consumer spending, impacting tech and media companies reliant on discretionary income.
- Expectations of stable long-term interest rates may encourage M&A activity within the TMT sector as companies seek to capitalize on favorable financing conditions.

**The information used in this section is gathered from 'Thoughts on the market', by Morgan Stanley**