# Vodafone and AST SpaceMobile launch SatCo to deliver direct-to-device satellite broadband across Europe



Vodafone and AST SpaceMobile are advancing their collaborative venture, SatCo, to provide direct-to-device satellite broadband connectivity across Europe, an initiative strongly aligned with boosting the continent's digital sovereignty. Announced in March 2025, SatCo is strategically headquartered in Luxembourg, chosen for its advanced digital infrastructure and prime location within Europe. This base serves as the nerve centre for distributing AST SpaceMobile’s satellite services exclusively to European mobile operators through a unified wholesale framework.

The joint venture’s mission is to extend mobile broadband coverage to areas historically underserved by terrestrial networks, including remote mountainous regions and offshore locations. This effort aims to complement existing 4G and 5G services, ensuring uninterrupted connectivity for citizens, businesses, and governments. As a wholesale network, SatCo has already attracted interest from operators across 21 EU member states and wider European markets, with commercial service launches anticipated in 2026.

Vodafone’s Group CEO, Margherita Della Valle, has highlighted the venture's critical role in enabling customers to stay connected "wherever they are," supported by a turnkey service model that integrates Vodafone’s network engineering expertise with AST SpaceMobile’s pioneering satellite ‘antennas in the sky.’ Similarly, AST SpaceMobile’s founder and CEO, Abel Avellan, emphasised that SatCo fortifies Europe’s position as a leader in space-based mobile broadband and directly supports the EU’s aspirations for digital independence.

The Luxembourg government is also a key partner, working closely with Vodafone and AST SpaceMobile to cultivate a cohesive European space strategy. Luxembourg's Minister of the Economy, Lex Delles, welcomed SatCo’s establishment in the country, underscoring Luxembourg’s growing reputation as a hub for innovative digital solutions serving the entire EU single market. The venture will operate a hybrid network combining satellite ground stations with terrestrial 4G and 5G infrastructure to allow seamless switching and continuous connectivity regardless of location.

This initiative builds upon significant technical milestones already achieved. In early 2025, Vodafone conducted the world’s first satellite video call via an unmodified standard smartphone from a remote Welsh location, showcasing the practical capabilities of AST SpaceMobile’s technology. This included 4G and 5G data transmissions with speeds exceeding 20 Mbps on modest bandwidth and anticipated peak speeds of up to 120 Mbps with upcoming satellites slated for launch in 2025.

The joint venture’s broader goal is ambitious: delivering 100% geographic coverage across Europe by bringing secure, space-based cellular broadband directly to users’ existing mobile devices via partnerships with mobile network operators under a single, comprehensive service arrangement. This approach not only promises to connect underserved regions but also to enhance the resilience and security of Europe’s digital infrastructure by integrating satellite and terrestrial networks.

Vodafone’s expansive global presence, including its IoT platform supporting over 200 million connections, is expected to underpin SatCo’s operational scalability and commercial rollout. The partnership with AST SpaceMobile, which extends to a comprehensive agreement covering more than 20 countries across Europe and parts of Africa, represents a significant step forward in satellite communications, with the potential to transform how broadband coverage challenges are addressed continent-wide.

In summary, SatCo stands as a flagship European initiative driving space-based mobile broadband innovation. Through close collaboration with governmental and industry stakeholders, Vodafone and AST SpaceMobile aim to deliver continuous, high-quality connectivity across all geographic areas, fostering greater digital inclusion and contributing to Europe's strategic digital sovereignty objectives.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.rcrwireless.com/20250630/carriers/vodafone-ast-spacemobile-3), [[4]](https://www.computerweekly.com/news/366619961/Vodafone-AST-Space-Mobile-form-European-satellite-comms-service), [[6]](https://chronicle.lu/category/telecomms/55596-vodafone-ast-spacemobile-choose-luxembourg-as-satco-hq-to-drive-satellite-mobile-broadband-coverage)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.rcrwireless.com/20250630/carriers/vodafone-ast-spacemobile-3), [[2]](https://www.vodafone.com/news/corporate-and-financial/vodafone-and-ast-space-mobile-sign-agreement-to-create-european-direct-to-device-satellite-service-provider), [[4]](https://www.computerweekly.com/news/366619961/Vodafone-AST-Space-Mobile-form-European-satellite-comms-service), [[5]](https://www.advanced-television.com/2025/03/04/ast-vodafone-european-d2d-deal/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.rcrwireless.com/20250630/carriers/vodafone-ast-spacemobile-3), [[4]](https://www.computerweekly.com/news/366619961/Vodafone-AST-Space-Mobile-form-European-satellite-comms-service)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.rcrwireless.com/20250630/carriers/vodafone-ast-spacemobile-3), [[6]](https://chronicle.lu/category/telecomms/55596-vodafone-ast-spacemobile-choose-luxembourg-as-satco-hq-to-drive-satellite-mobile-broadband-coverage)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.rcrwireless.com/20250630/carriers/vodafone-ast-spacemobile-3), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/vodafone-makes-worlds-first-satellite-video-call-using-standard-smartphone-2025-01-29/), [[7]](https://www.vodafone.com/news/technology/vodafone-ast-spacemobile-world-first-space-based-5g-call-conventional-smartphone)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.rcrwireless.com/20250630/carriers/vodafone-ast-spacemobile-3), [[2]](https://www.vodafone.com/news/corporate-and-financial/vodafone-and-ast-space-mobile-sign-agreement-to-create-european-direct-to-device-satellite-service-provider), [[4]](https://www.computerweekly.com/news/366619961/Vodafone-AST-Space-Mobile-form-European-satellite-comms-service), [[5]](https://www.advanced-television.com/2025/03/04/ast-vodafone-european-d2d-deal/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.rcrwireless.com/20250630/carriers/vodafone-ast-spacemobile-3), [[5]](https://www.advanced-television.com/2025/03/04/ast-vodafone-european-d2d-deal/), [[6]](https://chronicle.lu/category/telecomms/55596-vodafone-ast-spacemobile-choose-luxembourg-as-satco-hq-to-drive-satellite-mobile-broadband-coverage)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.rcrwireless.com/20250630/carriers/vodafone-ast-spacemobile-3), [[5]](https://www.advanced-television.com/2025/03/04/ast-vodafone-european-d2d-deal/), [[6]](https://chronicle.lu/category/telecomms/55596-vodafone-ast-spacemobile-choose-luxembourg-as-satco-hq-to-drive-satellite-mobile-broadband-coverage)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.rcrwireless.com/20250630/carriers/vodafone-ast-spacemobile-3> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.vodafone.com/news/corporate-and-financial/vodafone-and-ast-space-mobile-sign-agreement-to-create-european-direct-to-device-satellite-service-provider> - In March 2025, Vodafone and AST SpaceMobile announced the formation of SatCo, a joint venture aimed at providing direct-to-device satellite broadband across Europe. The venture seeks to offer 100% geographic coverage, enabling consumers and businesses to access secure space-based cellular broadband via their mobile network operators. SatCo will exclusively distribute AST SpaceMobile's satellite services to European MNOs under a single turnkey arrangement, supported by a full network management and operations centre based in Europe, leveraging Vodafone's engineering expertise. The initiative aligns with European digital sovereignty goals, with commercial services expected to launch in 2026.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/vodafone-makes-worlds-first-satellite-video-call-using-standard-smartphone-2025-01-29/> - In January 2025, Vodafone achieved a significant milestone by conducting the world's first satellite video call using a standard smartphone. The call was made from a remote location in the Welsh mountains, demonstrating the capabilities of AST SpaceMobile's satellites to provide full mobile services, including voice, text, and video data transmission at speeds up to 120 megabits per second. This breakthrough is part of Vodafone's broader initiative to extend mobile coverage to underserved areas and is expected to be rolled out to European customers later in 2025 and into 2026.
4. <https://www.computerweekly.com/news/366619961/Vodafone-AST-Space-Mobile-form-European-satellite-comms-service> - In March 2025, Vodafone and AST SpaceMobile announced the creation of a jointly owned European satellite service business named SatCo. The venture aims to provide 100% geographic coverage across Europe, offering consumers and businesses access to secure space-based cellular broadband connectivity via their mobile network operators. SatCo will exclusively distribute AST SpaceMobile's satellite services to European MNOs under a single turnkey arrangement, supported by a full network management and operations centre based in Europe, leveraging Vodafone's engineering expertise. The initiative aligns with European digital sovereignty goals, with commercial services expected to launch in 2026.
5. <https://www.advanced-television.com/2025/03/04/ast-vodafone-european-d2d-deal/> - In March 2025, AST SpaceMobile and Vodafone announced a definitive commercial agreement through 2034 to offer SpaceMobile service in over 20 countries across Europe and Africa. The agreement includes the formation of a European distribution entity, jointly owned with Vodafone, to accelerate commercialization across the continent. The service aims to provide direct-to-device satellite connectivity, enabling businesses and consumers to access mobile broadband in areas without existing coverage, with a goal of achieving 100% geographic coverage across Europe.
6. <https://chronicle.lu/category/telecomms/55596-vodafone-ast-spacemobile-choose-luxembourg-as-satco-hq-to-drive-satellite-mobile-broadband-coverage> - In June 2025, Vodafone and AST SpaceMobile announced the decision to headquarter their joint venture satellite company, SatCo, in Luxembourg. The choice leverages Luxembourg's advanced digital infrastructure and strategic location to exclusively distribute AST SpaceMobile's satellite services to European mobile network operators under a unified wholesale model. SatCo's wholesale offering of direct-to-device mobile broadband satellite services has attracted interest from network operators in 21 EU member states and other European markets, with commercial services expected to begin in 2026.
7. <https://www.vodafone.com/news/technology/vodafone-ast-spacemobile-world-first-space-based-5g-call-conventional-smartphone> - In September 2023, Vodafone and AST SpaceMobile completed the world's first space-based 5G voice call using a conventional smartphone. The call, made from Hawaii to a Vodafone engineer in Spain, was conducted using an unmodified Samsung Galaxy S22 smartphone and AST SpaceMobile's BlueWalker 3 test satellite. This advancement demonstrates the potential of satellite technology to provide mobile broadband directly to standard 4G and 5G smartphones without the need for specialized devices or software updates, seamlessly integrating with Vodafone's terrestrial networks.