



ASTRA 1P OPERATIONAL AT 19.2° EAST

Satellite operator SES has announced that Astra 1P has completed rigorous testing and is now fully operational at its orbital position of 19.2° East. Following successful in-orbit raising and performance evaluations, Astra 1P will begin serving public and commercial broadcasters, sports organizations, and content owners.

The satellite, equipped with 80 transponders, can support hundreds of HD TV channels for key European markets. “With Astra 1P now fully operational, we are setting a new standard for satellite broadcasting in Europe,” said SES CTO Milton Torres. He emphasized the satellite’s role in delivering premium content to 118 million TV households, particularly for sports and event coverage.

Built by Thales Alenia Space, Astra 1P was launched on June 20, 2024, via SpaceX’s Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida. The next addition to the Astra fleet, Astra 1Q, is scheduled for launch in 2027, with plans for both satellites to replace existing infrastructure at 19.2° East by 2028.

VODAFONE ITALIA ACQUISITION

Swisscom finalized its acquisition of Vodafone Italia on December 31, 2024, creating a converged telecom player under the new corporate brand Fastweb + Vodafone. Combining Fastweb’s fixed infrastructure with Vodafone Italia’s mobile network will unlock synergies of approximately €600 million annually and strengthen investments in Italy’s telecom market.



“This merger marks a new era in Italian telecommunications,” said Walter Renna, CEO of Fastweb + Vodafone. Swisscom CEO Christoph Aeschlimann added, “The improved positioning in Italy creates long-term value for all stakeholders while maintaining our commitment to the Swiss market.”

Integration costs of up to €200 million will impact Swisscom’s 2024 financials, with revised EBITDA guidance set at CHF 4.3-4.4 billion. Existing commercial brands—Fastweb, Vodafone, and ho.—will continue for now as the integration process begins.

DAZN COMPLETES FOXTEL ACQUISITION

Sports streaming service DAZN has announced the acquisition of Australian pay-TV leader Foxtel for \$2.2 billion from News Corp and Telstra. The deal, subject to regulatory approval, will expand



DAZN’s operations in Australia, increasing its pro-forma revenues to \$6 billion.

News Corp and Telstra will retain minority stakes of 6% and 3%, respectively, with News Corp gaining a seat on DAZN’s board. “Australians watch more sport than any other country, making this deal a pivotal step in our strategy to become the global home of sport,” said DAZN CEO Shay Segev.

Foxtel CEO Patrick Delany highlighted DAZN’s expertise in sports media, stating the acquisition aligns with Foxtel’s evolution into a digital and streaming leader. The deal represents DAZN’s entry into the traditional pay-TV market, a strategic shift that may influence legacy operators globally.

END OF PAY-TV ON SWEDEN’S TERRESTRIAL PLATFORM

Sweden’s digital terrestrial platform has ceased offering pay-TV services as of January 2, 2025. While free-to-air channels such as SVT’s four stations, TV4, and TV Finland remain unaffected, Tele2 AB decided not to renew its broadcast agreement with Teracom AB.

At its peak in 2012, Boxer, now owned by Tele2, had 1.2 million subscribers. However, Boxer has transitioned customers to Tele2’s internet-connected TV-Hub Mini device over the past year, marking the end of its pay-TV services via terrestrial networks. ■