

Ariane 5's first liftoff of 2013

February 8 2013



The first Ariane 5 heavy-lift mission of the year has delivered the Azerspace/Africasat-1a and Amazonas-3 telecom satellites into orbit. Credit: ESA/CNES/Arianespace/Optique Video du CSG

(Phys.org)—The first Ariane 5 heavy-lift mission of the year has delivered the Azerspace/Africasat-1a and Amazonas-3 telecom satellites into their planned transfer orbits.

Liftoff of flight VA212 from Europe's Spaceport in [French Guiana](#)

came at 21:36 GMT (22:36 CET; 18:36 French Guiana) right at the opening of the [launch window](#). The target injection orbit had a perigee altitude of 246.9 km, an apogee altitude of 35 895 km with an inclination of 6°.

Both satellites were accurately injected into their [transfer orbits](#) 27 and 36 minutes after launch, respectively.

Amazonas-3 is the first high-power telecom satellite to offer services in Ka-band over Latin America. It will provide telecommunications and broadband connectivity in Europe, as well as America and North Africa, from its geostationary position over 61°W.

Azerspace/Africasat will provide a wide range of telecommunications services for Azerbaijan, Central Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa from 46°E.

Payload mass for Ariane's 68th launch was 10 350 kg, including the auxiliary payload adaptors, which is a new record for Ariane 5 GTO missions.

Flight VA212 was [Ariane 5](#)'s 54th successful launch in a row since December 2002.

Provided by European Space Agency

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