

# Norway inaugurates satellite launch site

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Credit: Pixabay from Pexels

Norway on Thursday joined the race to launch satellites from the European continent by inaugurating a new spaceport on the island of Andoya, north of the Arctic Circle.

Isar Aerospace said the "Andoya Spaceport" was to "become the first

operational orbital spaceport in continental Europe to finalize the construction of the launch site."

It was inaugurated at a ceremony attended by Norway's Crown Prince Haakon nine months after the inauguration of the Esrange [spaceport](#) in neighboring Sweden.

As tensions have grown with Russia, depriving Europe of access to its cosmodromes and launchpads, the site seeks to help European countries strengthen their own capacity for putting small and medium-sized satellites into orbit.

The launch base, which eventually will have several launch pads, was built by Norwegian public company Andoya Space, on a site which until now has only been used for firing suborbital scientific experiment rockets.

Spectrum, a two-stage craft capable of carrying up to one metric ton and developed by the German start-up Isar Aerospace, is scheduled to be the first [rocket](#) to be launched from island which is located near the idyllic Lofoten archipelago.

The date of the first launch is not yet known, but Isar Aerospace says it is targeting sending a first launcher to Andoya "within this year" with a first test flight "as soon as possible".

"Over the last five years, we have built a rocket that will help to solve the most crucial bottleneck in the European space industry—sovereign and competitive access to space," Daniel Metzler, CEO of Isar Aerospace, said in a statement.

Its location in the Arctic makes the Andoya base ideal for launching small polar or sun-synchronous satellites—meaning the [satellite](#) passes

over any given point of the planet's surface at the same local solar time, a useful feature for observation and meteorology.

Numerous European projects, from the Portuguese Azores to Spain's Andalusia via the United Kingdom, have competed to be first to go into operation.

In the United Kingdom, billionaire Richard Branson's company Virgin Orbit, which used a Boeing 747 to launch rockets, ceased operations this year after an attempt to launch the first rocket into space from British soil ended in failure.

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