



PRESS RELEASE

Paris, September 18, 2024

Free – France’s first telco to offer 5G SA on a national scale

Having deployed France’s largest 5G network by number of base stations, Free is today announcing that it has become the country’s first telco to offer 5G 3.5 GHz SA (Standalone Access) on its public network on a national scale. By making this cutting-edge mobile communications technology widely available, which requires significant capital expenditure and industrial performance, Free is once again demonstrating its innovation capacity and technology leadership.

France’s first 5G 3.5 GHz SA network

Free currently has the largest 5G mobile network in France, with over 20,000 5G sites in service, including 6,950 **3.5 GHz** sites. Available in almost 10,500 municipalities, it already covers nearly 95% of the French population.

Today, Free is announcing that it has deployed **5G SA (Standalone Access) on the 3.5 GHz frequencies of its public network on a national scale**. By doing this, it has become **the first mobile operator in France** to offer this technology to its subscribers.

5G SA is a 5G network that uses **fully dedicated and standalone infrastructure** and does not rely on any 4G infrastructure, unlike 5G NSA (Non-Standalone Access), which is built on existing 4G core network infrastructure with 5G laid on top.

The best of 5G

5G SA is the final phase of the development of the 5G network, enabling **faster speeds, lower latency and higher reliability**.

Its large-scale deployment will allow **the full potential of 5G technology** to be realized through the massive take-up of new services and 5G applications in many domains, ranging from industry, health, education and entertainment through to smart cities.

5G SA will also enable **companies of all sizes and organizations across the public sector** to provide their teams, customers and users with a suite of services that require **powerful performance capabilities**. Its optimal latency, faster speeds and the new network use cases it offers will allow companies to create new services, which for **Free Pro** – our B2B entity – represents new growth opportunities.

True to Free's tech pioneering DNA, our teams have been working hard for many months on this ambitious project, which required the construction of a new core network and the accelerated deployment of a 5G 3.5 GHz network.

Free - the first telco to launch VoNR in France

With 5G SA, Free is also the first telco in France to launch VoNR (Voice over New Radio) – a new technology that supports voice communication over a 5G network. VoNR brings new benefits to voice communication: faster connection times, lower latency, better voice quality and less battery drain.

A range of phones compatible with 5G SA

5G SA is available as of now and at no extra cost for subscribers on the 5G Free Mobile Plan. To get it, they need to have a compatible phone and activate the option in their online Subscriber Area.

Free already offers a range of phones that are compatible with 5G SA, including Samsung phones that have been tested by Free's teams.

About Free

Free – the inventor of the world's first triple-play box – is a Fixed and Mobile Ultra-Fast Broadband operator in France, standing out for its innovative, straightforward and attractive offerings. At end-June 2024, it had 22.9 million retail subscribers (15.3 million Mobile subscribers and 7.5 million Fixed-line subscribers). Free is a subsidiary of the Iliad Group, which was created in France in the early 1990s and now also operates in Italy under the Iliad brand and in Poland under the Play brand. In March 2021, the Iliad Group launched its BtoB business in France under the Free Pro brand.

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