

Global mobile congress to return with over 30,000 people

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The Mobile World Congress, the telecom industry's biggest annual gathering, will draw over 30,000 people at a smaller edition in Barcelona next month after the pandemic derailed last year's event, organisers said Thursday.

The 2020 edition of the event—which is usually held in February—was called off at the last minute after dozens of the world's biggest technology and telecoms firm pulled out over fears of the spread of the coronavirus.

The GSMA industry association that hosts the congress scheduled it this year from June 28 to July 1, with attendance limited to 50,000 compared with a normal attendance of around 100,000.

This year's congress will include a mixture of in-person and online events.

"There is no doubt that Mobile World Congress 2021 is going to look a little different," the executive director of the GSMA, John Hoffman, told a news conference.

"How many people will attend? We really don't know, but we are very confident that 30, 40, maybe even 50,000 people will attend Mobile World Congress 2021 in person."

Organisers said there would be 600 speakers across the week, with 70

percent attending in-person.

Several major firms such as Samsung, Amazon, Cisco and Ericsson have pulled out from attending in person citing virus concerns, although some will join the event online.

Chinese telecoms giant Huawei will be the biggest firm with a [physical presence](#) at the show.

"We can't say anything, they take their decisions but we take our decisions," Hoffman said.

"But you should know that there are plenty of really, really forward-leading companies that are coming."

Despite the drop in the number of participants, organisers said they were confident the [congress](#) would still be useful for dealmaking.

"Previously, many companies sent 200 to 300 participants, now it might be five, but they are the right five," said the director general of the GSMA, Mats Granryd.

"The big numbers are not going to be there, but it's the right number. We hope that we will be able to conduct a lot of good solid business meeting anyway."

Organisers of the IFA consumer technology trade fair in Berlin on Wednesday cancelled its September event, saying the pandemic made it impossible to stage an in-person event.

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