

# Palabras de Su Majestad el Rey en la cena oficial del GSMA Mobile World Congress 2019

Barcelona, 24.02.2019

Un año más tengo la alegría de recibirles en el Mobile World Congress, un evento ligado a Barcelona desde hace ya casi tres lustros. Es la 7ª edición en la que tengo el honor de acompañarles en este foro: primero desde 2012, como Príncipe de Asturias; y a partir de mi proclamación como Rey, ya como Jefe del Estado. Sean muy bienvenidos a Barcelona, a Cataluña y a España una vez más.

I hope you are all ready for yet another exciting MWC. In my experience, it never deceives one, always full of great novelties and surprises. Apart from all the wonders this city has to offer, of course; so I am truly honoured and pleased to be here and to welcome you. Although the GSMA family could practically by now consider BCM as a “second home”. So welcome Home !!

Allow me to share with you a little bit of context, outside of the Congress and the industry: Just a couple of months ago, here in Spain, on December 6th, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of our 1978 Constitution. The broad consensus that saw its birth, —during the period commonly known as our Democratic Transition— and its final approval by the vast majority of the Spanish people, was an unprecedented political success in our country’s history.

Throughout all these years, Spain has become, in its own right, one of the world’s 20 internationally recognized full democracies; and our democracy has achieved, in real terms, the highest level of prosperity and well-being for our country in all of its history. Today Spain enjoys solid institutions, political and economic strength, it attracts more than 80 million visitors, and a large number of investors see good opportunities in most sectors of our economy. Therefore, this year too, thank you for your confidence and your participation.

Now a few words in Catalan, another of Spain’s languages of which we are all so very proud.

*Senyores i senyors.*

*El 2006, aquesta gran ciutat de Barcelona, amb tot el suport institucional —del Govern central, de la Generalitat de Catalunya i de l'Ajuntament— així com del sector mundial de les tecnologies, va assumir aquest compromís i aquesta gran responsabilitat. Sens dubte, en la seva elecció per acollir aquest congrés van tenir pes condicions materials, però, també i sobretot, la seva idoneïtat específica, doncs, com ja s'ha assenyalat, aquesta ciutat és una de les més preparades per al negoci tecnològic, de les millor valorades a l'estranger per a treballar-hi, i un important centre d'operacions d'innovació arreu d'Europa.*

Back to English !

Every year we have learned about the most cutting-edge technological innovations. Nevertheless, this event has become so much more than just a mobile communications congress: It is a forum in which governments, entrepreneurs, academics, and citizens (consumers or the public in general), have a unique opportunity to discuss both technology and the concerns about the transformations its development brings, and are taking place in our societies.

Therefore, today I would like to focus on four very specific issues that are of importance and concern to us all: the digital divide, training in technological skills, citizens' digital rights, and the quest for equality—that is also so necessary—in this new scenario.

Indeed, wherever we go, connectivity has transformed our labour relations; also how we interact in our social lives and how society provides or ensures goods and services. These changes have generated highly significant benefits, but they have also given rise to situations of division and exclusion. We must stand firm so that the digital transformation leaves no one behind, because ICT's can also bring about opportunities for growth and improved living standards to reach everyone.

Seeking to include the entire population in the new digital society is a responsibility that involves us all: public authorities, and society in general; but also and the business community, which has an even greater capacity to contribute to this end. Therefore, I applaud the fact that concerns about inclusion are very much on the debate agenda of this year's Congress.

However, for new technologies to deploy their full potential, and for their positive impact to reach all our citizens, they must acquire a sufficient level of digital skills. Undoubtedly, accessing services—healthcare, leisure, administration, or information—increasingly requires specific digital skills. Without them, part of the population would lag behind, or even be excluded.

In turn, these technological advances will also lead to new jobs also requiring new skills, and constantly evolving ones. Therefore, we must adapt our education and training systems to meet the real demands of this transformation. To do so, we need intense and close cooperation between job seekers and employers, and between industry and the public administration, as well as other social stakeholders. This collaboration will make it possible to expand the scope of these new tools, and increase the number of jobs.

Moreover, education and capacity-building in digital skills should be sufficiently flexible to adapt to new challenges, and to reach in-time those groups of people whose jobs become obsolete, whether it is due to their age or to their dated training.

In any case, we must guarantee, above all, that this great transformation takes place with full respect for citizens' rights. The need to protect these rights in the digital realm is not only a matter of principle, but also of trust. If people do not trust the new types of relations and operations in the online world, they will be reluctant to incorporate them into their daily lives, for fear of facing discrimination or abuse and violations of their privacy.

To address this challenge we must strengthen the debate on transparency, accessibility, trust, and control instruments that will ensure we fulfil the guiding principles of a fair and egalitarian society. In this regard, I want to say that the Europe to which we are committed is a pacesetter in the fight to guarantee the social values of our democracies; but in order to succeed, we must also strive for leadership and to –somehow– share the centre stage in the digital economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In addition to all of this, and after recognizing how much our society's material quality of life has improved in recent decades, we must continue fighting for equality. I am convinced that science and technology, through the ICTs, will provide us with the adequate tools in order to seize this golden opportunity to combat inequality in our societies.

We must build a future...

- where everyone can participate,
- where the advances of digital platforms and other services continue to provide value to society,
- where the internet is open, accessible, and free from hate or harassment,
- here citizens find respect for their privacy; here citizens find respect for their privacy;
- where our data is processed securely and responsibly;
- where spaces are created for innovation;
- And where dialogue and loyal collaboration lead to greater development and to a digital future at the service of citizens.

Undoubtedly, these and many more important issues for all of us and for the international tech community will be raised and discussed here these days; and the Barcelona MWC-2019 offers us the perfect opportunity to address them with experience, knowledge, and the commitment to improve our citizens' lives, in our ever more digital societies.

Therefore, I wish you every success and hope you have a great time here among us in Barcelona, Catalonia and Spain.

Welcome and thank you very much. Enjoy the evening.