

Gartner: Smartphone Sales to Further Fall in 2019

Written by Marco Attard
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According to Gartner, global smartphone sales are to total 1.5 billion units in 2019, a -2.5% decline-- but the market should return to growth in 2020, thanks to the broader availability of 5G models and related service packages.

Table 1:

Worldwide Smartphone Sales to End Users by Region, Worldwide 2018-2020 (Thousands of Units)

Region	2018	2019	2020
Eastern Europe	47,054	45,043	43,911
Emerging Asia/Pacific	357,208	352,168	382,439
Eurasia	49,083	49,695	51,519
Greater China	423,411	411,095	424,501
Latin America	128,664	125,675	118,268
Mature Asia/Pacific	31,176	30,062	30,863
Middle East and North Africa	75,607	76,336	77,864
North America	174,219	166,510	164,853
Sub-Saharan Africa	88,753	90,104	91,917
Western Europe	147,179	139,421	142,924
Japan	33,914	31,722	31,794
Grand Total	1,556,269	1,517,830	1,560,853

Owing to rounding, figures for 2018 and 2019 do not add up precisely to the grand totals shown.

Source: Gartner (August 2019)

W. Europe is to see the second worst decline (-5.3%) in smartphone sales, following Japan (-6.5%). All mature markets face an oversupplied and commoditised smartphone market, with higher ASPs and no compelling utility or experiences for users to upgrade to. While high-end smartphone ASP increases have slowed down recently, vendors relying on replacement smartphone sales are still facing tough times.

The analyst expects Apple to launch the first 5G iPhone in 2020, enticing iPhone owners to upgrade, while various communications service providers (CSPs) all over the world promote 5G

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service packages. That said, 5G smartphones sales will remain small in 2019, and will only ramp up in H2 2020 as coverage and availability of 5G hardware services improve. Thus, Gartner forecasts 5G smartphone sales will top 15 million in 2019, less than 1% of total smartphones for the year.

Gartner predicts H2 2019 to continue on the trend of decline seen in H1 2019, even if the (partially lifted) ban on Huawei should create at least some opportunities in the W. European market. However the situation remains unclear for the company, leading to challenges in EMEA, even if Huawei should remain the leader in its home Chinese market.

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