

AUTOMOTIVE

Geneva Motor Show organizers not too happy Swiss government forced sudden cancellation

February 28, 2020



Crowds at the Geneva International Motor Show last year. This year's show was cancelled at the last minute because of the coronavirus outbreak in Switzerland, causing the country's government to ban events of more than 1,000 people Feb. 28 through March 15. Image credit: Geneva International Motor Show

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

The organizers of the 2020 Geneva International Motor Show are seemingly cross that the Swiss government forced the cancellation of the event only three days before opening the exhibition to the media.

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Cautious after discovering one case of Covid-19 in Switzerland, the Swiss authorities have banned events with more than 1,000 consumers in attendance from taking place Feb. 28 through March 15. That jeopardized the Geneva Motor Show's 90th edition, open to public March 5-15 at Palexpo, with major financial and market-launch ramifications for all involved.

"We regret this situation, but the health of all participants is our and our exhibitors' top priority," said Maurice Turretini, president of the Geneva International Motor Show and chairman of the exhibition's foundation board, in a statement from Geneva.

"This is a case of force majeure and a tremendous loss for the manufacturers who have invested massively in their presence in Geneva," he said. "However, we are convinced that they will understand this decision."

The decision to cancel the **Geneva Motor Show** comes a day after another Swiss exhibition, Watches & Wonders Geneva (formerly SIHH) announced it was cancelling its April 25-29 show ([see story](#)). It also follows the cancellation of Mobile World Congress scheduled for earlier this month in Barcelona, Spain, an event that attracts an estimated 100,000 visitors.

Brakes on

The Geneva Motor Show was expected to attract 600,000 visitors to check out a display of more than 900 cars, including 150-plus European and global world premieres of new models.

Launches of new models to media and potential buyers is a key highlight of one of the most prestigious auto shows

worldwide.

A casualty this year will be Bentley Motors, which was set March 3 to unveil its Bentley Mulliner Bacalar that is the British automaker's first two-seater car since 1930.

Bentley was also scheduled to showcase its new Continental GT Mulliner Convertible announced last week, along with "the foundation of both the Bacalar's design DNA and its ethically-sourced materials Bentley's centenary concept car, the EXP 100 GT."

Like other automakers, Bentley may opt to display these models closer to home and push out to social and digital media.



Britain's Bentley Motors was set to unveil its first two-seater car, the Bentley Mulliner Bacalar, on March 3 at the now-cancelled Geneva International Motor Show. Image credit: Bentley Motors

WHILE THANKING all those involved with the organization of the 2020 edition of the show, the organizers of the Geneva Motor Show did get across their point of view in view of the massive dislocation.

"A few days before the opening of the event, the construction of the stands was very nearly complete," the organizers said in a statement.

"A week ago, during the press conferences announcing the 2020 edition, there was nothing to suggest that such a measure was necessary.

"The situation changed with the appearance of the first confirmed coronavirus diseases in Switzerland and the injunction of the Federal Council on 28.02.2020 [Feb. 28]. The event is cancelled due to this decision.

"In the meantime, the dismantling of the event will now have to be organized.

"The financial consequences for all those involved in the event are significant and will need to be assessed over the coming weeks.

"One thing is certain: tickets already purchased for the event will be refunded. The organizers will communicate about this as soon as possible, via their Web site: <https://www.gims.swiss/>."

Countdown to the Geneva International Motor Show 2020

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