

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE) Venice International University

Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

From: December 2021 To: December 2023



Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive or Equivalent

December 03, 2021

To our stakeholders:

*I am pleased to confirm that **Venice International University (VIU)** reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.*

This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for an organization like ours.

We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,

*Umberto Vattani
President*

10 Principles Global Compact

Human Rights

Principle 1. Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights and

Principle 2. Make sure they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Labour

Principle 3. Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining

Principle 4. The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

Principle 5. The effective abolition of child labour; and

Principle 6. The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation



Environment

Principle 7. Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

Principle 8. Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

Principle 9. Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

Anti-Corruption

Principle 10. Businesses should work against all forms of corruption, including extortion and bribery.

Part II. Description of Actions



Venice International University (VIU) is an association of 20 universities from all over the world, with a common campus on the Island of San Servolo in the Venice lagoon, Italy.

VIU offers higher education activities at academic level as well as advanced training for the governmental and business sectors. Moreover, VIU carries out research on key societal challenges such as sustainable development, sustainable mobility, ageing, public engagement.

VIU promotes the networking among the different authorities mainly in the field of Cultural heritage, Sustainable Development, Creativity and Innovation.

In line with its mission, VIU incorporates the Global Compact principles into its internal operations and has undertaken a number of actions to promote them.

Deliver education on topics related to the Global Compact

VIU offers courses to international students as well as advanced training to participants from the business and non-business sectors:

- VIU Globalization Program welcomes students from all over the world, including developing countries, to take part in its courses, to share its co-curriculum activities, to live together in a common campus as to offer its students a proper international and multicultural experience (Principle 1).
- Within the VIU Globalization Program, each Semester VIU promotes “core courses” fostering the knowledge and promotion of Human Rights (Principles 1, 2), such as:
 - *Gender Studies*
 - *Comparing East and West*
 - *Identity, Heritage and Globalization*
 - *Global Governance for Peace and Security, Cooperation and Development*
 - *Globalization, Ethics Welfare and Human Rights*
 - *Intercultural Communication*
- Within the VIU Globalization Program, each Semester VIU offers “specialization tracks” on Sustainable Development and Science & Society (Principles 7, 8, 9).
- Within its Intensive Graduate Activities, VIU develops a series of short courses, such as PhD Academies, Graduate Seminars, Summer/Winter Schools, open also to non-VIU students and young professionals. Those activities focus on “Global Challenges” and they include Environment, Human Rights and Labour as core topics (Principles 1 to 9). Below the list of courses carried out in 2020-2021:-
 - *Quantitative Methods in Legal Studies*
 - *Plastic Pollution and Bioplastic Materials*



- *Everything you always wanted to know about becoming a researcher (But were afraid to ask) - Transversal Skills for Young Scholars*
 - *Climate Change Mitigation: Carbon Capture and Utilization Critical Infrastructure Resilience*
 - *Responsible Capitalism: Micro- and Macro-institutional Conditions of Transformation*
 - *Life Course and Vulnerabilities*
 - *Summer Institute on Ageing*
- Capacity Building for policy makers and professionals from public institutions and private companies is a core activity of VIU in the framework of its TEN Program on Sustainability. Environment is the main topic of different training courses offered ([Principles 7, 8, 9](#)). Of particular interest in this concern, we mention the 1-day module organized since 2019 within the *Open Africa Power Program* of Enel Foundation for young graduate students and professionals from Africa. It covers the following themes:
- *Public Engagement for Better Energy*
 - *Decision-making under uncertainty*
 - *The Water, Energy and Food Dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals*

Conduct applied research and thought leadership in relation to the Global Compact

VIU carries out applied research mainly in the topic of sustainable development and environmental management. In particular, the following projects are in line with GC Principles, as follow:

- Quality and Effectiveness in Science and Technology communication (QUEST): to achieve sustainable development it is necessary to engage citizens through an effective communication of science and, more broadly, research results. This EU Horizon 2020 project aims at developing tools and guidelines for improving effectiveness in the dialogue between science and wider publics ([Principles 8](#)).
- Meaning and Understanding in Human-Centric Artificial Intelligence (MUHAI): funded by the European Commission, within the Enhanced European Innovation Council (EIC) Research and Innovation (RIA) action "FET Proactive - Boosting emerging technologies" (FETPROACT-EIC-05-2019), the H2020 project MUHAI explores a radically new approach to push the envelope of Human-Centric Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology to come to grips with meaning and understanding. One of the case studies used is the analysis of social disparities ([Principle 6](#))
- Sustainable MAnagement of Cultural Heritage in the Balkans in response to Climate Change for Adaptation and Intercultural Cooperation (SMACH): co-funded under the Central European Initiative (CEI), SMACH contributes to encouraging climate change adaptation and, broadly, sustainable development in the Balkan area, engaging the regional decision makers and key stakeholders in a dialogue to compare current approaches and develop common best practices in this concern. Its key tool is an online Know-How Exchange Program



developed on the basis of the region's needs and offered to Balkan stakeholders active in the fields of Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development. (Principles 7, 8, 9)

- Development of an Integrated Waste Management Plan in the Comores (DÉCOR): in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in the sectors of vulnerability to climate changes, evaluation of risks, adaptation and mitigation by the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea and the Comoros Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Land Management and Urban Planning, VIU is partner of Contarina SpA and Fermenta Italia Srl in the project *DECOR – plan intégré de gestion des déchets solides en Union des Comores* to develop a plan for integrated waste management in the Comores. In particular VIU is in charge of organizing and coordinating capacity building activities on waste management (1 training course at the Comoros and 1 study tour in Italy) for Comorian policy makers and civil servants (Principles 7, 8, 9).
- Promoting maritime and multimodal freight transport in the Adriatic Sea (PROMARES): VIU is partner of PROMARES, a project funded by the Italy-Croatia INTERREG Program that aims to improve the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the Program area (Principles 7, 8, 9).
- SUSustainable PORT (SUSPORT): funded by the Interreg Italy-Croatia Program, SUSPORT aims at improving the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the Programme area (Principles 7, 8, 9).
- Intermodal Connections in Adriatic-Ionian Region to Upgrowth Seamless solutions for passenger (ICARUS): financed by the Italy-Croatia INTERREG Program, ICARUS promotes a strategy for intermodal connections in Adriatic Ionian Region. The objective is to improve passenger intermodal transport connections and eases coast – hinterland sustainable accessibility to promote car-independent lifestyles, preventing accidents, congestion and pollution generated from the massive use of private cars (Principles 7, 8, 9).
- Sustainable Ports in the Adriatic-Ionian Region (SUPAIR): Ports are core nodes for multimodal transport in the Adriatic-Ionian basin and strategic key drivers for economic growth: reducing negative environmental impacts is essential for a sustainable development of the area. The project goal is the reduction of emissions from shipping and on-shore port operations, enhancing port authorities' capacity to plan and implement low-carbon and multimodal transport and mobility solutions (Principles 7, 8, 9).
- Sustainable Policy RespOnse to Urban mobility Transition (SPROUT): financed by the H2020 Program, SPROUT provides a new city-led innovative and data driven policy response to address the impacts of the emerging mobility patterns, digitally-enabled operating and business models, and transport users' needs. (Principles 7, 8, 9).



Disseminate the Global Compact principles

Dissemination is a core activity of VIU. In particular, the following events are in line with GC Principles, as follow:

- VeUMEU - Venice Universities' Model European Union Nations (2 editions: 2020, 2021): Joint initiative of Venice International University, Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Venice Diplomatic Society (VDS), in collaboration and with the support of Europe Direct - City of Venice, the European Parliamentary Research Service and with the participation of Global Campus of Human Rights, Bringing Europeans Together Association (BETA), San Servolo Servizi Metropolitan Srl. It promotes the understanding of multilateral diplomacy, in particular in relation to human rights, environment and labour issues (Principles 1-9).
- International Symposium on Sustainability: since 2014 VIU organizes this symposium with Alcantara SpA. It involves world-class scientists, economists, academics, managers of top corporations, science writers, governmental and non-governmental organizations, media representatives in discussing about sustainability issues thus promoting environmental responsibility. The focus of the 2021 edition was *Greenwashing and Sustainability* (Principles 7, 8, 9).
- CLIMATHON 2020, in the framework of the Global Climathon day, Venice International University co-organized the 2020 edition and contributed to the 2021 edition of the Venice Climathon, in collaboration with the CMCC - Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change and Venice Calls. The initiative, promoted by EIT Climate-KIC, was a two-day Hackathon that launched on Circular Economy in Venice as challenge. Through conferences, panel discussions and team work sessions, the aim was to encourage innovative projects for promoting circular economy, that can address the urgent human challenges related to climate change characterizing the life of the city (Principle 8).
- Since 2019 VIU collaborates with Cultural Entrepreneurship Institute Berlin to the organization of the annual Ethics and Digitalization Conference, that aims at disseminating information on how to use the potential of artificial intelligence for the benefit of both humanity and the planet itself (Principles 1,2,7,8,9)

Lend capacity to Global Compact Local Networks and/or the Global Compact Office

- VIU is part of the Global Compact local network, i.e. Fondazione Global Compact Network Italy since February 2016.
- In 2019 VIU's Dean, prof. Carlo Giupponi, has been reconfirmed for the second time in the Board of the Global Compact Network Italy Foundation.



Incorporate the GC principles into internal operations

- Contribute to the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, by appointing for cleaning services social cooperatives in the framework of social inclusive initiatives for the re-employment and social integration of disadvantaged categories (Principle 6).
- Opportunities of teleworking/smart working are offered to the staff in order to facilitate commuters and families and reduce the environmental impacts of VIU facilities; the opportunities were further extended in relation to the covid-19 pandemic (Principles 6, 7, 8).
- Since 2014, VIU is adopting the "Organizational, Management and Control Model, pursuant to Legislative Decree no. 231 of June 8, 2001", which sets out "the rules for the administrative liability of Bodies, Companies and Associations". The VIU Code of Ethics is an integral and complementary part of the 231/01 Model, and includes principles of business ethics and rules of conduct that VIU recognizes as its own and that its corporate bodies and employees must observe (Principles 6, 10).
- Since 2016, VIU is awarded the UNI EN ISO 9001:2015 certification, i.e. the "Quality Management System Certification" (Principle 8).
- In 2019 VIU has presented its first *VIU Sustainability Plan* to its Board and Academic Council, that includes also principles and initiatives that VIU is adopting to promote the campus of San Servolo island, where VIU is located, as a sustainable one (Principle 8). In particular:

Concerning ENERGY

The strategy of VIU regarding energy is to reduce the emissions, by adopting energy efficiency measures and promoting the use of renewables.

A series of actions have been undertaken and others are planned for the near future:

- in 2019 VIU has installed led lamps in its Mac Lab and in 5X conference room; other led panels have been bought to extend the installation to all VIU areas;
- VIU is promoting the same approach with San Servolo Servizi Metropolitan, the facility manager of the San Servolo Island, also facilitating the exchanges with consultant companies. Different



options are under consideration, to promote energy efficiency measures and the introduction of renewables, including:

- replacement of traditional lighting devices with LED in the whole island;
- installation of photovoltaic panels for self-generation of electricity;
- application to the LEED certification (world widely used green building rating system);
- application to the Italian Project Finance System for the realization of public works or works of public interest (art. 183 comma 15, D.Lgs 18 April 2016 n. 50).

Concerning WASTE & WATER

The main goal of VIU Sustainability strategy concerning waste combines the **reduction** of waste production, with a special focus on plastic, and the promotion of **recycling**. As part of this strategy

- VIU has extended the separate collection to plastic/aluminum and glass, asking to the cleaning company to introduce separate bins in different areas (2019);
- VIU is promoting the construction of an open-air Theatre on the island of San Servolo made of recycled wooden pallets, to be inaugurated in May 2022; the capacity of the 3-tier theatre will be approx. 100 seats, and will be used for open-air classes, concerts and performances;

as part of the actions for plastic waste reduction

- VIU has included in gadgets reusable stainless steel bottles since 2019.

Concerning RESOURCE CONSERVATION - PAPER

As part of a resource conservation strategy, VIU is applying a paperless strategy, that already includes

- the publication only in digital format downloadable from the website of the VIU Annual Report on activities (since 2017) and of the student guide (since 2019 Fall semester);
- the use of digital format of the documentation provided as basis for the discussion at the Academic Council meetings (since 2013).

In the framework of the same strategy the development of an electronic system to register the presence of students at the Globalization program course has been introduced in 2020.



Based on the activities and institutional efforts described in Part II above, the following indicators measure the outcomes in the promotion of the GC principles. Indicators include:

1. Number of courses /per year offered on Global Compact principles to international students:

2020 > **40** courses

2021 > **50** courses

2. Number of international students/per year attending courses on Global Compact principles, i.e. number of beneficiaries of Global Compact principles

2020 > **122** beneficiaries (int. students)

2021 > **214** beneficiaries (int. students)

3. Number of events attended to disseminate Global Compact principles

2020 > **6** events

2021 > **10** events

4. Expertise provided by your organization to further the aims of Global Compact Local Network in your country

1 expert > VIU Dean Member of the Local Global Compact