

## COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE) Venice International University

### Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

From: December 2023 To: December 2025



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

*December 01, 2023*

*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 different stakeholders, including the business sector. VIU also 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 Sustainable Development, Cultural heritage, 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 2021-2023:
  - *Preserving and Safeguarding the Beauty of Cultural Heritage*
  - *Cities and Water in a Time of Climate Change*



- *Practicing New Imaginaries: 'Re-presencing' Venice in the Time of Climate Change*
- *Improving Research Practice and Transversal Skills for Young*
- *Organizing for Sustainable Futures: Micro and Macro-Institutional Conditions of Transformation*
- *The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in old age*
- *Ethics and Health Care*
- *Advanced Transportation, Logistics, and Supply Chain Management*
- *Science Diplomacy in the age of Climate Change*
- *Migration and Gender: Legal, Sociolinguistic and Literary Perspectives*
- *Digital Citizenship: Exploring the Opportunities and Challenges of a Digitalized Society*
- *The State of the Art of Area Studies*
- *Science Communication Today: Challenges and Opportunities in the SDGs Era*
- *Defining the Human in Environmental Humanities*
- *Cities and Water in a Time of Climate Change*
- *What is a People? Social, Political, and Legal Controversies*
- *Learning from Geoenvironmental Data: Tools for a Changing Planet*
- *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 in relation to key societal challenges, and currently they focus on sustainable development, communication of research results and AI. In particular, the following projects are in line with GC Principles, as follow:

- Coordinated Opportunities for Advanced Leadership and Engagement in Science Communication in Europe (COALESCE): 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 building the EU Competence Centre on Science Communication to provide



- recommendations, tools and guidelines for improving effectiveness in the dialogue between science and the different 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](#))
  - [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 for Comorian policy makers and civil servants ([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: 2022, 2023): 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](#)).
- 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](#))
- Since 2022 VIU is part of the [Venice Sustainability Foundation / Fondazione Venezia Capitale Mondiale della Sostenibilità](#) (VSE). VSE pursues the objective of creating an integrated model (environmental, economic, social) of sustainable development for the City of Venice and its metropolitan territory, that can revitalize the local socio-economy while ensuring the protection and preservation of the environmental, historical and cultural heritage, as well as the strengthening and cohesion of the local community. The Foundation becomes the tool through which the Members intend to cooperate to make the City of Venice a reference for the quality of urban life that can be an

inspiration for other national and foreign realities, in this sense World Sustainability Capital. (Principles 1 to 10).

### **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.



### **Incorporate the GC principles into internal operations**

- In 2014 VIU adopted 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". (Principle 10)
  - In 2014 VIU adopted its Ethics code, that includes principles of business ethics and rules of conduct that VIU recognizes as its own and that its corporate bodies and employees must observe. At art. 1 it covers specifically the Rejection of all forms of unfair discrimination. (Principles 1-6 and 10)
  - In 2022 VIU adopted its Gender Equality Plan to monitor and contribute to the elimination of any gender discrimination. (Principle 6)
  - VIU contributes 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)
  - 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).
  - 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).
  - 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 recent objectives, actions and plans are:



#### Concerning ENERGY

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

VIU is promoting the same approach with San Servolo Servizi Metropolitani srl, the service provider of San Servolo Island, also facilitating the exchanges with consultant companies.

As a result of this cooperation, photovoltaic panels have been installed in 2023, both at ground level and on covered walkways in the park, for the generation of electricity. Also, a progressive replacement of traditional lightbulbs with low emission led bulbs is ongoing, both in the park and inside the main buildings.

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

- 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

- o VIU promotes the separate collection asking to the cleaning company to introduce separate bins in different areas (since 2019);
- o 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

- o 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);
- o 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 in 2020 program course has been introduced in 2020.

### Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

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:

2022 > **51** courses

2023 > **52** courses

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

2022 > **190** beneficiaries (int. students)

2023 > **199** beneficiaries (int. students)

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

2 experts > VIU Dean Member and Executive director of the VIU TEN Program on Sustainability participating regularly in the Assembly, annual Forum and the different activities

Joint representation VIU-Ca' Foscari in the Executive Board

