

Venice International University 30th Anniversary Celebrations

Guiding Transitions International Conference

November 27-28, 2025

Human history has always alternated between slow, steady progress and sudden leaps that have redefined entire civilizations. Wars, epidemics, discoveries, and innovations have sparked rapid transformations in culture, knowledge, and society.

Today, transitions are no longer rare: they occur with increasing speed and complexity, shaping multiple stages of our lives and creating a new condition of constant change. Their unpredictability challenges our capacity to guide them toward positive outcomes, making it more urgent than ever to study, understand, and actively shape the transitions of our time.

VIU's international conference Guiding Transitions opens a forum for reflection and case-based analysis, exploring how Higher Education Institutions can equip students with the skills and competencies to navigate these changes.

The conference is open to scholars, higher education experts and practitioners both from member institutions of Venice International University, and beyond, encouraging a collaborative exploration of today's most pressing transitions.

Thursday, November 27

13.30 *Registration and Welcome Coffee*

14.00 Welcome Remarks, Ambassador Vattani, VIU President

14.15 Conference Opening Remarks and Institutional Greetings

Prof. Avv. Anna Maria Bernini, Italian Minister of Universities and Research (tbc)

14.45 Introduction to the Conference, Carmelo Marabello, VIU Dean

Session 1: Transition in Higher Education and Artificial Intelligence

Chair: Li Li, University of Exeter

15.00 Keynote: AI and Society

15.15 Keynote: AI Frontiers - Ece Kamar, Sabanci Univ

15.30 Open discussion

16.15 *Coffee Break*

Session 2: Structural Inequalities Within and Across Societies

Chair: Marina Calloni, University of Milano-Bicocca

- 16.45 Keynote: Children's Rights - Manfred Nowak, Global Campus of Human Rights
- 17.00 Keynote: Social Justice - C. Shawn McGuffey, Boston College
- 17.15 Open Discussion

19.30 30th Anniversary Alumni & Friends of VIU Dinner

with music performed by UNIPD Big Band, the Jazz Orchestra of the University of Padova

Friday, November 28

Session 3: Ecology and the Environment

Chair: Shuming Liu, Tsinghua University

- 9.15 Keynote: Environmental Transition in the EU
- 9.30 Keynote: Sustainability Transition - Rika Preiser, Stellenbosch University
- 9.45 Open Discussion followed by *Coffee Break*
- 10.30 Remarks by Hon. Nello Musumeci, Italian Minister for Civil Protection and Marine Policies

Session 4: Cities in Transition

Chair: Laurent Servant, University of Bordeaux

- 11.00 Keynote: Urban Transition and Resilience – Nicola Tollin, UNESCO Chair on Urban Resilience, University of Southern Denmark
- 11.15 Keynote: Francesco Musco, Università Iuav di Venezia
- 11.30 Open discussion
- 12.15 *Closing remarks*
- 13:00 *Lunch*

Conversation on Energy, Environment and the Sea

- 14.30 Prof. Dott. Pichetto Fratin, Italian Minister for the Environment and Energy Security
Moderated by Amb. Umberto Vattani, VIU President