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## **Interview with the President of the Venice International University (VIU) Ambassador Umberto Vattani**



The Press Office for the Global Campus of Human Rights had the opportunity to ask the President of the Venice International University (VIU) Ambassador Umberto Vattani to share his impressions on the

current relations between our institutions and how to extend our cooperation with all the academic networks of the territory.

**The Global Campus of Human Rights has been collaborating with the Venice International University (VIU) for few years since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in 2017. What are some of the best results of this cooperation so far? How do you see the relations between both institutions, other universities in Veneto and the City of Venice? And especially how it can develop in terms of promoting education, human rights and democracy?**

It has been a wonderful cooperation, and we are most grateful to the EIUC/Global Campus for Human Rights for having helped us to organise in April 2014 a very interesting workshop with the Countries of the Maghreb Region - Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia - entitled “Académie de Formation pour Jeunes Professionnels de la Région du Sud de la Méditerranée sur la Gouvernance Démocratique”. The aim of this project was to raise awareness among citizens of these countries, who are already involved in the civil service, public administration and NGOs, of the principles of human rights and democracy by underlining the many values we share and exchanging views in order to increase mutual understanding. This initiative was carried out in collaboration with the Council of Europe and with the support of the European Union. We were all involved in teaching the classes about theory but also in the sometimes lively discussions that followed. This was a winning formula, and the participants were all very eager that the workshop could be organised again.

In 2018, Manfred Nowak and I travelled to Brussels to try and find funds for further editions, but unfortunately it was not to be.

**An important part of the citizens of Venice is made up of students who come to Venice every year to study. How our academic institutions could do more for them and eventually make them stay? Should there be consultations with the academic institutions to create a coordinated strategy with the authorities in the long term? What can we do to improve the quality of the activities and events of the city to position Venice as one of the top places for education, innovation and research?**

Certainly, more can be done to guarantee favorable conditions to encourage students to stay longer, study and carry out their research projects in Venice. The presence of the Global Campus for Human Rights, Venice International University, Ca' Foscari, IUAV, the *Conservatorio*, the *Accademia delle Belle Arti* and all the other cultural institutions create an ideal setting for finding new stimuli that are conducive to encouraging education, innovation and research. The City of Venice has shown that the local authorities are fully committed to facilitating the presence of the student body and have organised a number of round tables on this subject to create a synergy involving all academic institutions by pooling our different resources for the benefit of all.

**Given the 1600th anniversary of the birth of Venice, what are the main challenges for the future of Venice in terms of youth education? What do we ask of our young people regarding the promotion of human rights and democratization? How important is the ability to relate internationally in a globalized world and generate good opportunities on the working level?**

In terms of neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean, the European Union could have done much more, along the lines of its policy in the Balkans. If we really want to make progress and accelerate steps in political, economic and social fields, the EU must deliver, and that means more real dialogue, more understanding of the issues, holding annual debates at ministerial level to share the analysis and to allow real participation. This was the spirit of the workshop with the MENA countries which we organised in San Servolo in 2013, and I believe that together with the Global Campus for Human Rights we could relaunch this very promising initiative.

## **Can you leave us with a message for professors, experts, alumni, students and staff of the Global Campus of Human Rights?**

Venice should be an inspiration for all of us, in particular its history, its system of governance through the ages. The sense of working towards the common good was the most remarkable aspect of the Council of Ten. Even the citizens themselves, especially when travelling and trading, never lost sight of the most important objective: the good of the Republic of the *Serenissima*. I hope that students and professors who spend time in Venice studying or teaching at the Global Campus of Human Rights, at Venice International University, at Ca' Foscari or IUAV, at the *Conservatorio* or at the *Accademia delle Belle Arti*, will learn this important lesson and use the fruits of their experience in Venice for the common good by giving something back to the City that has welcomed them for their studies and to the world at large if they decide to move on from here.

For more information contact our [Press Office](#)

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