Virtual Innovation Consortium

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Virtual Innovation Consortium

Newsletter ::::::::::::
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Advancing Europe's Digital Skills through AI, XR and Immersive Innovation

The summer and autumn months of 2026 have marked an important period of growth and visibility for the VIC – Virtual Innovation Consortium. Through educational developments, international media engagement, public outreach and participation in European digital skills initiatives, VIC has continued to strengthen its mission of connecting higher education, research and industry in the fields of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Extended Reality (XR) and cybersecurity.

From the accreditation of a new Master's degree programme at the University of International Studies of Rome (UNINT) to interactive technology demonstrations in Milan and engagement with European policymakers and digital skills stakeholders, VIC has continued to create opportunities for learning, collaboration and innovation across Europe.

July 2026 – VIC Master's Programme Presented at UNINT Open Day

On 9 July 2026, the University of International Studies of Rome (UNINT) welcomed prospective students to its Open Day, offering an in-depth introduction to the Master's Degree Programme in Immersive Technologies and Artificial Intelligence, developed within the framework of the VIC project.

The event was chaired by Professor Marco Romano and featured a keynote contribution from Gabriele Randelli, AI Customer Engineer at Google, who shared insights into the evolving role of artificial intelligence across industry and innovation.

Participants had the opportunity to explore the programme through practical workshops covering Immersive Technologies, Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity. These hands-on activities provided an insight into the interdisciplinary and practice-oriented approach at the heart of the VIC educational model.

The Open Day also offered prospective students the opportunity to meet representatives from UNINT's student support services, including orientation, career placement and internships, international mobility and student administration, as well as to discover the university campus.

The event represented another important step in connecting innovative academic programmes with the next generation of European digital talent.

July 2026 – VIC in the Media: Interview with Associate Professor Cecilia Bolognesi

VIC's activities and achievements received further international visibility through an interview with Associate Professor Cecilia Bolognesi of Politecnico di Milano, published by the Bulgarian media outlet FAKTI.

The interview explored the role of Artificial Intelligence and Extended Reality in strengthening Europe's technological sovereignty and addressing the growing demand for advanced digital skills.

Professor Bolognesi highlighted VIC's educational mission, which combines three Master's degree pro-

grammes delivered by partner universities in Italy, Spain and Portugal, an online Advanced Training Programme and an international Summer School.

A key focus was the importance of strengthening cooperation between universities and industry. Through its VIC4Industry activities, the project is developing relationships with companies across different sectors, including manufacturing, mechanical engineering, pharmaceuticals and cultural and creative industries, creating opportunities for internships and practical professional experience.

The interview also highlighted the potential of XR technologies in fields such as architecture, real estate, environmental assessment and sustainable construction, demonstrating how immersive technologies can support real-world decision-making and innovation.

Her contribution reinforced an important message: Europe's digital transformation requires not only technological investment but also highly qualified professionals, strong industrial partnerships and a sustainable vision of innovation.

August 2026 – Professor Marco Romano on the Future of AI and Human-Centred Innovation

The importance of keeping people at the centre of technological progress was also highlighted in a new interview with Professor Marco Romano of UNINT, published by FAKTI.

Entitled *"The Greatest Challenge in Artificial Intelligence Is Ensuring That Humans Are Not Left Behind"*, the interview addressed the opportunities and challenges associated with the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence, immersive technologies and cybersecurity.

Professor Romano emphasised that technological progress must go hand in hand with an understanding of its ethical, legal, social and psychological implications.

This philosophy is reflected in VIC's educational approach. The consortium's programmes combine technical knowledge with subjects such as ethics, law, economics and the social impact of innovation, encouraging collaboration between students from different academic backgrounds.

The interview also highlighted the importance of practical learning. Through access to immersive devices, AI technologies and robotics platforms, students gain experience with technologies that are already transforming industry and shaping the future of human-computer interaction.

Professor Romano's message to the next generation of digital professionals was simple but meaningful: never stop studying. In a rapidly evolving technological environment, continuous learning and critical thinking are essential to ensuring that innovation remains beneficial to society.

August 2026 – Major Milestone: UNINT Master's Degree Officially Accredited

An important milestone was achieved in August with the official accreditation of UNINT's Master's Degree in Computer Engineering for Immersive Technologies and Artificial Intelli-

gence (LM-32).

Developed within the framework of the VIC project, the programme represents a significant contribution to advanced European education in artificial intelligence, immersive technologies and cybersecurity.

A distinctive feature of the programme is its specialisation in Immersive and Secure Technologies, addressing the growing need for expertise in cybersecurity for emerging digital environments, including metaverse security, cyber-risk management and the protection of data, systems and users.

The curriculum combines advanced training in Extended Reality and Artificial Intelligence with specialised education in information security, cyber-intelligence and digital infrastructure protection. It also integrates international law, ethics, technology regulation, cybercrime prevention and risk management, ensuring a multidisciplinary approach to technological innovation.

The two-year programme offers open admission, subject to verification of entry requirements, and is available both on campus and through live online attendance via the UNINT Everywhere platform.

The programme's accreditation is an important achievement for VIC and further strengthens the project's contribution to Europe's strategic technological priorities. VIC has also been awarded the European Commission's STEP (Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform) quality seal, recognising its relevance to the development of critical technologies in Europe.

September 2026 – Step into the Future of XR: VIC at the Engineering Festival in Milan

On 20 September 2026, VIC brought the future of Extended Reality, immersive technologies and social robotics to the Engineering Festival at the Leonardo Campus of Politecnico di Milano.

Designed as an interactive innovation playground, the VIC exhibition invited visitors of different ages and backgrounds to explore emerging technologies through hands-on demonstrations and immersive experiences.

The programme featured several engaging activities:

- **Build Brunelleschi's Dome:** Visitors experienced the construction of one of the world's most iconic architectural masterpieces through an immersive digital journey.
- **Share a Metaverse:** Participants explored shared virtual environments, took part in an augmented reality treasure hunt and experimented with designing and furnishing a kitchen in virtual space.
- **Train for Industry 4.0:** Demonstrations showed how virtual reality can transform professional training, industrial processes and skills development through simulation-based applications.
- **Meet Social Robots:** Visitors discovered pet-bots and humanoid robots and explored

their potential role in supporting human relationships and personal well-being.

Beyond showcasing innovative technologies, VIC's participation demonstrated the importance of connecting research, education and industry to accelerate digital innovation and develop the skills required by tomorrow's workforce.

The Engineering Festival provided an excellent opportunity to bring European research and innovation closer to the public, encouraging curiosity, experimentation and dialogue around the technologies shaping our future.

June 2026 – VIC at Digital Skills EU Days – Brussels

VIC was also invited among the leading European consortia in the field of digital skills to exchange ideas on the future of ICT skills development and contribute to discussions on European policy shaping at the Digital Skills EU Days in Brussels 30 June–1 July 2026.

Representing the consortium, Cecilia Bolognesi of Politecnico di Milano and Maria Mateeva-Kazakova, of the Research, Analysis and Strategy Institute, contributed to the exchange of perspectives on the challenges and opportunities facing Europe's digital skills ecosystem.

This invitation reflects VIC's growing recognition within the European digital skills community and the relevance of its work in connecting education, research and industry.

By bringing together academic expertise and practical experience from the industrial ecosystem, VIC aims to contribute to the development of future-ready skills and support Europe's technological competitiveness.

October 2026 – VIC Engages with Europe's Digital Skills Community

October brought further opportunities for VIC to strengthen its European network and contribute to discussions on the future of digital skills development.

Digital Talent EU Days 2026 – Dublin

On 16 October, VIC participated in Digital Talent EU Days 2026 in Dublin, an important European event organised by the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and Trinity College Dublin.

The event brought together more than 300 stakeholders from across the EU27 to address Europe's digital talent and skills challenges.

For VIC, participation provided an opportunity to engage with industry leaders, policymakers, education and training providers and research institutions. Through discussions, knowledge exchange and networking, the consortium strengthened existing connections and explored new opportunities for collaboration.

The event reinforced the importance of coordinated European efforts to develop a digitally skilled, inclusive and competitive Europe, while highlighting the role of initiatives such as VIC in connecting advanced education with the evolving needs of the labour market.

October 2026 – Exploring Real-Life Applications of Virtual Reality

VIC's October activities also included a webinar dedicated to the practical applications of Virtual Reality across different industries.

Organised by VIC partner Khora, the online webinar, entitled *"Real-Life Applications of Virtual Reality"*, was scheduled for 29 October 2026 and presented by Trine Tuxøe, Project Manager at Khora.

The session was designed to introduce participants to the diverse ways in which Virtual Reality is being used in professional and industrial environments, demonstrating how immersive technologies are moving beyond entertainment to become valuable tools for innovation, training and problem-solving.

By showcasing real-world applications, the webinar aimed to provide participants with a better understanding of where and how VR can create value across sectors.

The initiative reflects VIC's commitment to making emerging technologies accessible and demonstrating their practical relevance to businesses, professionals, students and the wider community.

Looking Ahead

The period from July to October 2026 has demonstrated the continued development and growing European visibility of the Virtual Innovation Consortium.

From the accreditation of new educational pathways and the promotion of interdisciplinary digital skills to public technology demonstrations, media engagement and participation in European policy discussions, VIC continues to strengthen its contribution to Europe's digital transformation.

The consortium remains committed to building bridges between universities, research organisations, industry partners and policymakers, ensuring that education and innovation respond to the real needs of the European economy and society.

As Artificial Intelligence, Extended Reality and cybersecurity continue to reshape the technological landscape, VIC will keep working towards its central ambition: preparing a new generation of highly skilled professionals who can develop, apply and responsibly shape the technologies of tomorrow.

We would like to thank all our partners, universities, researchers, industry representatives, speakers, students and participants for their continued commitment and contribution to the project.

Together, we are shaping the future of digital skills and immersive innovation in Europe.


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Trinity
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Author: Research, Analysis and Strategy Institute

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