Venice, a laboratory city. Since its origins, the city of Venice has worked to develop a system of coexistence and adaptation to a particular and, at times, hostile natural environment. Centuries of ingenuity, of inventiveness but also of calculations, of studies as well as of listening and observing natural phenomena, have led the inhabitants of the islands of the lagoon to find a balance between respect for nature and development.

A dynamic, often conflictual relationship, that of the city with water but always and in any case essential and vital. After major interventions such as the construction of breakwaters, along the shores between the lagoon and the sea, and the diversion of some rivers outside the lagoon, Venice has long studied a system for the defence against high waters that has led to the construction of the MOSE project that has allowed, in recent years, to be protected in cases of exceptional high waters.

But research cannot and must not stop here. The challenges that climate change is posing to us are immense, rapid and on such a large scale that the knowledge accumulated to date will be of little use. Venice and all coastal cities will be at the forefront of exposure to the risk of rising sea levels.

So, if it is true that everything that will happen on this front will happen in Venice as the first frontier, then it explains the flourishing of activities and research centres that have developed in the area in recent years.

The latest among these is the Venice Climate Week initiative that has animated the city with high-level discussions and debates involving various institutions in the city. A sort of call to action from Venice. Since after a decade of promises, ten years after the Paris Agreement, the prophetic words of *Laudato Sì*, and the global launch of the Sustainable Development Goals, humanity still stands at a crossroads.

The 2030 Agenda is only five years away and the Venice Climate Week can act as a lighthouse for collective awakening and where dialogue can become the most radical act of regeneration. An international forum dedicated to thought leadership

and strategic action for the future of the planet. Born out of the urgency of climate action, it brings together pioneers, institutions and communities to rewrite the ecological transition with new narratives, concrete goals and systemic innovation. An accelerator of ideas, alliances and vision where science, culture, politics and innovation intertwine to co-create solutions to drive a fair and regenerative ecological transition.

The initiative has been conceived and curated by Riccardo Luna, journalist and Italian innovation advocate, with a longstanding commitment to sustainability. He is currently a columnist for Corriere della Sera.

Produced by the Future Food Institute, a global innovation ecosystem founded by Sara Roversi to tackle the most pressing challenges of the global food system, the Venice Climate Week collaborates with key institutions including UNESCO-IOC, NATIVA, Venice World Sustainability Capital Foundation (VSF), CMCC Foundation, SEA BEYOND, The Human Safety Net, Ocean Space, Ca' Foscari University, IUAV, Venice International University, the City and Region of Venice, and leading environmental and sustainability organizations like Marevivo, WWF, Legambiente, and ASviS.

As an inspiring start to Venice Climate Week, the economist visionary Jeremy Rifkin gave a Lectio Magistralis unveiling "Planet Aqua" and the central role of water as our most precious common good. "Our hydrosphere, which animates all life, is being re-naturalized in the wake of global warming, triggering record winter snowfalls, torrential spring floods, devastating summer droughts, heatwaves, wildfires, and deadly autumn hurricanes, causing severe damage to ecosystems, infrastructure, and society." Jeremy Rifkin is working with the European Commission, the European Parliament, industry, and civil society to integrate a Blue Deal into the existing Green Deal, positioning Europe as the first actor in the transition from the Era of Progress to the Era of Resilience in the age of Planet Aqua.

It is too early to understand the results of this awareness-raising activity, but the simple fact of networking between different subjects is a positive aspect.

Also recently born is the SEA BEYOND Ocean Literacy Centre, a dynamic space in the Venice lagoon, co-designed by the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic

Commission (UNESCO-COI) and the CRA – Carlo Ratti Associati studio. Inaugurated in 2025 by the Prada Group and UNESCO-COI, the centre is dedicated to understanding and understanding the ocean, with the aim of increasing awareness of its fundamental role for life on Earth. An information centre that illustrates how tides, currents and climate shape our planet, while discovering the extraordinary biodiversity that populates coastal and marine environments.

Nor should we forget the Ocean Space, located in the historic Church of San Lorenzo (dated back to 853 AD), which is a global centre dedicated to promoting critical ocean literacy and protecting marine environments through art, research, and public programs. Led by TBA21–Academy, Ocean Space serves as an international platform fostering collective action to safeguard ocean ecosystems.

In the same days, a new space was inaugurated in the city, Casa Sanlorenzo, located in a historic building restored by architect Piero Lissoni, will host Sanlorenzo Arts Venice, an exhibition and research space that combines art, design, and architecture, reflecting the deep connection between creativity and technological innovation in the world of custom yachts.

HEAD IMAGE | *View of the Lagoon and the city of Venice, where nature, history, art and culture intertwine.. (© Vela Spa, 2025).*
