

“Connecting Horizons”
39th Annual Businet Conference Programme
11th to 14th November 2026

Wednesday 11th November 2026

Time	Activity	Room
9.00 - 12.00	Extended Board Meeting Chairs and Vice Chairs of Working Groups meet with the Businet Board.	Portomaso 2
10.30 – 13.30	Pre Conference Company Visits Exclusive visits to leading organisations in Malta, hosted by Stage Malta to get a behind-the-scenes look at the country’s business and professional landscape. Meet professionals, discover different career paths and gain first-hand insight into how organisations operate in Malta. The tour will depart at 10.30 am from reception area of the Hilton Malta Hotel and you must register at the conference desk to participate. Maximum 30 spaces available, transport included. The group will return to the hotel by 13.30	Conference Desk - Foyer
13.30 - 15.15	Newcomers Introduction <i>An introduction to Businet for new members and guests.</i> <i>Led by the Businet Board: Ferdi Hofstede, Nico Nijsten, Michael Bahles, Yvonne Farrand, Heidi Vervaecke and Griet Barrezele</i>	Portomaso 2
15.30 - 17.15	International Relations Managers Working Group Facilitated by Isinsu Atalay and Matthieu Breville	Portomaso 2

Official Conference Opening

18.30

Global Aperitif and Welcome

Portomaso Foyer

Informal welcome and conference opening

Delegates are asked to bring delicacies from their region/country in order to share with fellow delegates. An appropriate table for each country represented will be made available. The room for the Global aperitif can be accessed at 18.00 for the setup of contributions to this event.

20.15

Dinner

Oceana Restaurant

A buffet dinner to welcome you to Malta.

Close 23.30

Thursday 12th November 2026

08.45

Assemble in Main Conference Room

Portomaso

08.50

Welcome to the 39th Annual Businet Conference

Ferdi Hofstede, Businet President

09.00 – 09.40

Keynote Address:

Portomaso

Dr. Rajiv Vaid Basaiawmoit

Diversity of experience is key to experiential and transformative education

Head of Sci-Tech Innovation & Entrepreneurship, Aarhus University

2025 Entrepreneurship Educator of the Year (Triple E awards)

Introduced by Nico Nijsten – Board Member

09.40 – 09:50

Introduction to Thinking Out Loud and Workshop sessions

Portomaso

Yvonne Farrand

Businet General Manager

9.50 – 10.10

Businet International Start Up Competition & BIUIN

Portomaso

Introduced by Paul Bartels and Marco Lamas

Chairs of Entrepreneurship Working Group

During this session the winning student from the 3rd Edition of Businet Start Up Competition will present their winning pitch and receive their award from Dr Rajiv Vaid Basaiawmoit. They will introduce the new Businet Incubator initiative.

10.10 – 10.45	<p>Thinking Out Loud</p> <p>Facilitated by Owen Ross with Griet Barrezeele, Faith Fung and Marlies de Vette</p> <p><i>A fast-paced session during which members will have a limited time to briefly present what they hope to achieve from attending the conference and what kinds of partnerships or collaborations they are seeking.</i></p> <p>Registration at Conference Desk in advance.</p>	Portomaso
10.45 – 11.15	<p>Networking Period</p> <p>Tea and Coffee will be available in the foyer</p> <p>Including a display of Start-up competition entries</p>	Portomaso foyer
11.15 - 12.05	<p>Workshop Sessions: Best Practice in Businet</p> <p>1 Designing the Experience - A Gamified Approach to Learning – Part 1</p> <p>Dr. Rajiv V. Basaiawmoit</p> <p>Aarhus University & Dr. Taru Deva Biosymfonix</p> <p>2 Sharing Best Practices: Turning Education Evaluations into Quality Improvement</p> <p>Marieke Steert, Rianne Niewold and Janneke Busser</p> <p>Windesheim UAS, Zwolle</p> <p>3 From Alumni to Community: Building a Strong Professional Network</p> <p>Miguel Van Slyke and Willem Bonneux</p> <p>Artevelde University of Applied Sciences</p> <p>4 Navigating the European Degree Label Exploratory Action in Higher Education</p> <p>Tony Johnston</p> <p>Technical University of the Shannon (TUS)</p> <p>5 "Defying the Odds: Crafting an International Strategy That Works"</p> <p>Matthieu Brecville</p> <p>Catholic University of Vendée - ICES</p> <p>6 Will AI Kill Creative and Critical Thinking as <i>Video Killed the Radio Star</i>?</p> <p>Julia Huisman</p> <p>NHL Stenden Emmen UAS</p>	<p>Portomaso 1</p> <p>Portomaso 2</p> <p>Portomaso 3</p> <p>Skuna 1</p> <p>Catra</p> <p>Gifen</p>

12.10 - 13.00	7 Best Practice COIL South Africa – The Netherlands: Intercultural Management for Business Students Pieter de Vos The Hague University of Applied Sciences	Luzzu
	Workshop Sessions: Best Practice in Businet	
	8 Designing the Experience - A Gamified Approach to Learning – Part 2 Dr. Rajiv V. Basaiawmoit Aarhus University & Dr. Taru Deva Biosymfonix	Portomaso 1
	9 The myth of rational choice: are your decisions really your decisions? Mark Crowder Manchester Metropolitan University, UK	Portomaso 2
	10 Beyond the Buzzword: How Do We Really Embed Sustainability in Learning? Noelle O'Connor Technical University of the Shannon (TUS)	Portomaso 3
	11 From Going Abroad to Growing Through Change: Rethinking Preparation for Student Mobility Jurgen Basstanie and Deborah Vanbeckevoort Thomas More University and Karel de Grote University	Skuna
	12 TUS Second Shot: A Flagship Project that has reduced First-Year Non-Progression from 21% to 13% in Three Years Owen Ross Technical University of the Shannon (TUS)	Catra
	13 Interdisciplinary, Challenge-Based Education Faith Fung and Marlies de Vette Rotterdam Business School	Gifen
	14 Decode Your Blood. Fuel Your Energy. From blood markers to smarter nutrition Dominique Ropson Henallux	Luzzu

13.00 – 14.00	Lunch buffet	Portomaso foyer
14.00 - 15.30	Working Group Activities: Wellbeing@Work- Facilitated by Laurence Leonard and Eluan Bescond Creative Industries - Facilitated by Richard Hall Information and Computer Technology - Facilitated by Griet Barrezeele and Corneel Theben Terville STEM - Facilitated by Dale Lyon Marketing and International Trade - Facilitated by Heidi Vervaecke , Lieven Van Hyfte and Edgar van Noort	Skuna Portomaso 1 Portomaso 2 Gifen Portomaso 3
15.15 -15.45	Coffee and Networking Tea and Coffee will be available in the Foyer	Portomaso foyer/Business Centre Foyer
15.45 - 17.15	Working Group Activities: Intercom (Intercultural Competencies) - Facilitated by Martine Michels and Julia Huisman Law - Facilitated by Nico Nijsten and Michael Jensch Tourism - Facilitated by Tony Johnston and Miguel Van Slycke Supply Chain Management - Facilitated by Marco Mosselman and Lieven Theys Communications - Facilitated by Richard Hall , Deborah Vanbeckevoort and Janneke Busser-Kanis	Catra Gifen Portomaso 2 Luzzu Portomaso 1
18.15	Meet at Reception	Reception
18.20	Coaches depart reception <i>Departure by coach. A short walking tour of Mdina (the historic old Maltese Capital – the Silent City) before dinner at Razzett L-Antik Restaurant. Coaches will return from the restaurant to the hotel at 22.45.</i>	

Friday 13th November 2026

08.50	Assemble at the Conference Room Welcome and Introduction to today's programme <i>Yvonne Farrand, General Manager Businet</i>	Portomaso
09.00 - 09.35	Keynote Address: Rick Verhagen Emotion Regulation and Decision-Making: Preparing Students for when the stakes are real Educator and trainer Royal Military Academy Netherlands <i>Introduced by Michael Bahles – Board Member</i>	Portomaso
09.35 - 10.05	Panel Discussion: How do we guide our student to navigate in Uncertain Times? Sir Patrick O'Brien - Journalist Dame Martha Gauchi – Stage Malta Rajiv Vaid Basaiawmoit – Aarhus University Rick Verhagen – Royal Military Academy Netherlands <i>Moderated by Heidi Vervaecke – Board Member</i>	Portomaso
10.05 – 10.10	Announcements by Yvonne Farrand and Griet Barrezelee Student Unite Futures and other announcements	Portomaso
10.10 – 10.20	Housekeeping	Portomaso
10.20- 11.00	Networking period Tea and Coffee	Conference Foyer
11.00 – 11.50	Annual General Meeting Member Institute Representatives	Portomaso 1 & 2
12.10 – 13.00	Workshop Sessions: Best Practice in Businet 15 Building the Practice: Decision-Making and Emotion Regulation in Action Rick Verhagen Royal Military Academy Netherlands 16 Internationalisation without travel: Flexible COIL models for global learning Mark Crowder Manchester Metropolitan University	Portomaso 1& 2 Skuna

17 Level up your class — A crash (Bandicoot) course in educational game design

Michiel De Coninck

Artevelde University of Applied Sciences

Gifen

18 Robust minds for robust futures — ensuring cognitive sustainability in the age of addictive technology design

Boris Ney

Windesheim University of Applied Sciences

Portomaso 3

19 Live Your Life: Bringing Financial Literacy to Life Through Play

Sven D'Hondt and Ineke Vleeschouwer

HoGent

Catra

20 Project Model Canvas: Transforming ideas

Paul Guest

Orientra

Luzzu

13.00 – 14.00

Lunch buffet

Portomaso Foyer

14.00 - 16.00

Cross Curricular Working /Special Interest Groups

Entrepreneurship facilitated by **Paul Bartels and Marco Lamas**

Portomaso 3

Interdisciplinary Project facilitated by **Ferdi Hofstede, Stephen Ireland and Caroline Van Hoeck**

Luzzu

Research Group facilitated by **Mantas Dilys** and **Karolina Matukynienė** including **workshop** by **Karen Vanderlinden**
'Hard Choices: what to research and what not to'

Gifen

Internationalisation@Home facilitated by **Sven Cerulus** and **Nina Turčin**

Skuna

Sustainability facilitated by **Marriannick Bossut, Marlies de Vette and Noelle O'Connor**

Portomaso 1 & 2

Decision Makers Forum facilitated by **Mindaugas Samuolaitis**

Catra



15.15. – 15.45	Networking and Coffee Coffee and tea will be served in foyer	Portomaso foyer/ Business Centre Foyer
16.15 – 17.00	Conference Feedback Session	Portomaso 1 & 2
17.00	Meeting Close	
19:15	<i>Pre Gala Dinner – Photographs outdoors in the Neba restaurant area. Group and individual opportunities</i>	Neba
19.30	<i>Pre Gala Dinner Drinks Reception</i>	Neba
20.15	Gala Dinner There will be live music and a DJ until 2.30am	Portomaso Ballroom

Saturday 14th November 2026

09.00

Departure for Social Day

Reception

Saturday's Social Tour

'A Taste of Southern Malta and Valletta'

18.00
(approx.)

Arrival back at the hotel