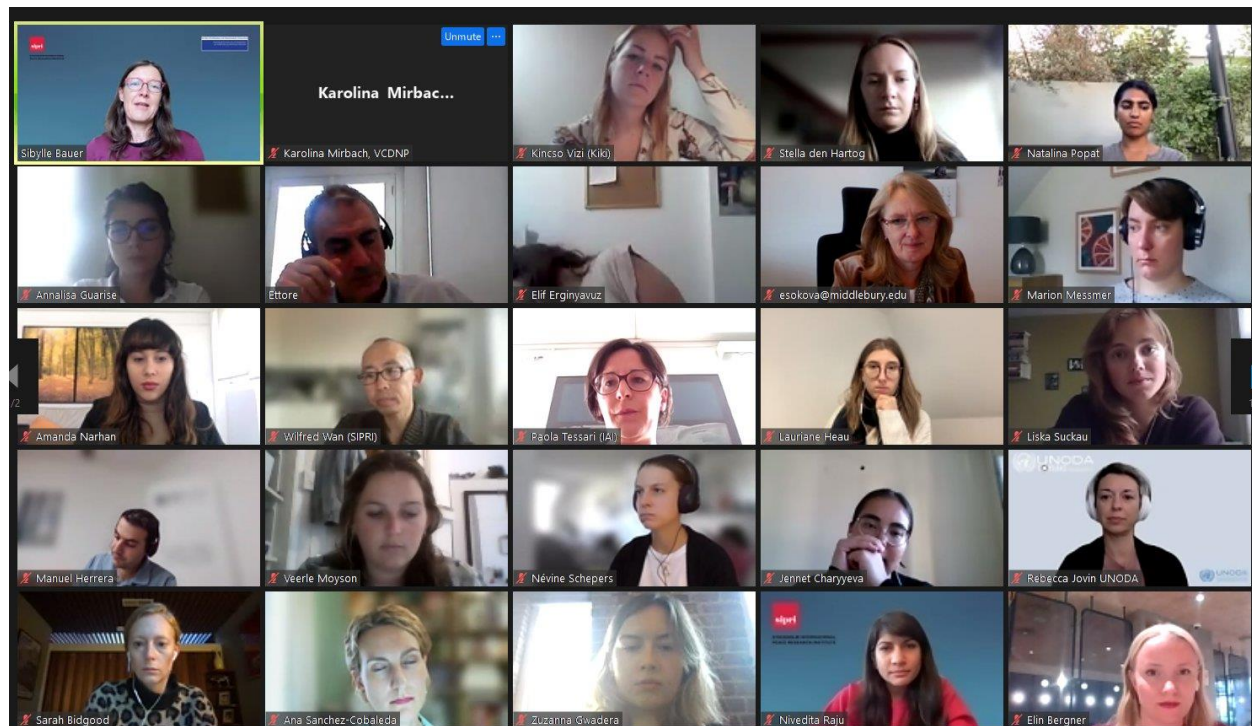


Launch of the 2022 Young Women in Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Mentorship Programme

23 September 2022

On 19 September 2022, the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP) and the International Affairs Institute (IAI), as part of the [Young Women and Next Generation Initiative \(YWNGI\)](#), launched the **2nd edition** of Young Women in Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (YWNPD) [Mentorship Programme](#).

The Mentorship Programme, established in 2021 and organized in the framework of the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium (EUNPDC), pairs 20 young women (mentees), carefully chosen through a highly competitive selection process, with well-established experts (mentors) to engage in a mentoring relationship that envisions, among other things, regular video or in-person meetings. Mentees are also expected to attend conferences, seminars, social events, and other activities, in order to be exposed to networking and career opportunities.



The launch event was opened by the VCDNP Executive Director, Elena Sokova, the IAI Executive Vice-President, Ettore Greco, and the EUNPDC Chair, Sibylle Bauer who welcomed the new cohort and congratulated new mentees for having been selected among over 300 very strong applications.



VCDNP Executive Director, Elena Sokova, IAI Executive Vice-President, Ettore Greco, and EUNPDC Chair, Sibylle Bauer

Three former mentees - Akanshya Gurung, Emily Faux, and Virginia Bertuzzi - shared their personal experience during the previous edition of the programme.

Akanshya Gurung noted how the mentorship programme was valuable to her as it challenged the assumption that young women have no place in discussing nuclear weapons, arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. She also shared how the programme helped her build a network of likeminded, passionate and motivated people, suggesting the new cohort not to look at the programme as just another item to put on their resumes but as a unique process for making connections and create opportunities.

Emily Faux noted that the mentorship programme, proved to be very useful for her Ph.D. studies, extracurricular research activities, and essay-writing competition. Ms. Faux praised the professionalism of the VCDNP and IAI noting that **“whenever an issue arose, they were always there to help resolve them”**.

For Virginia Bertuzzi, the programme was a “milestone exercise”. Ms Bertuzzi noted that her cohort of mentees became her family and helped her to stay motivated and not to lose hope even in difficult times. Now, they all look forward to the opportunity to meet again because, she said:

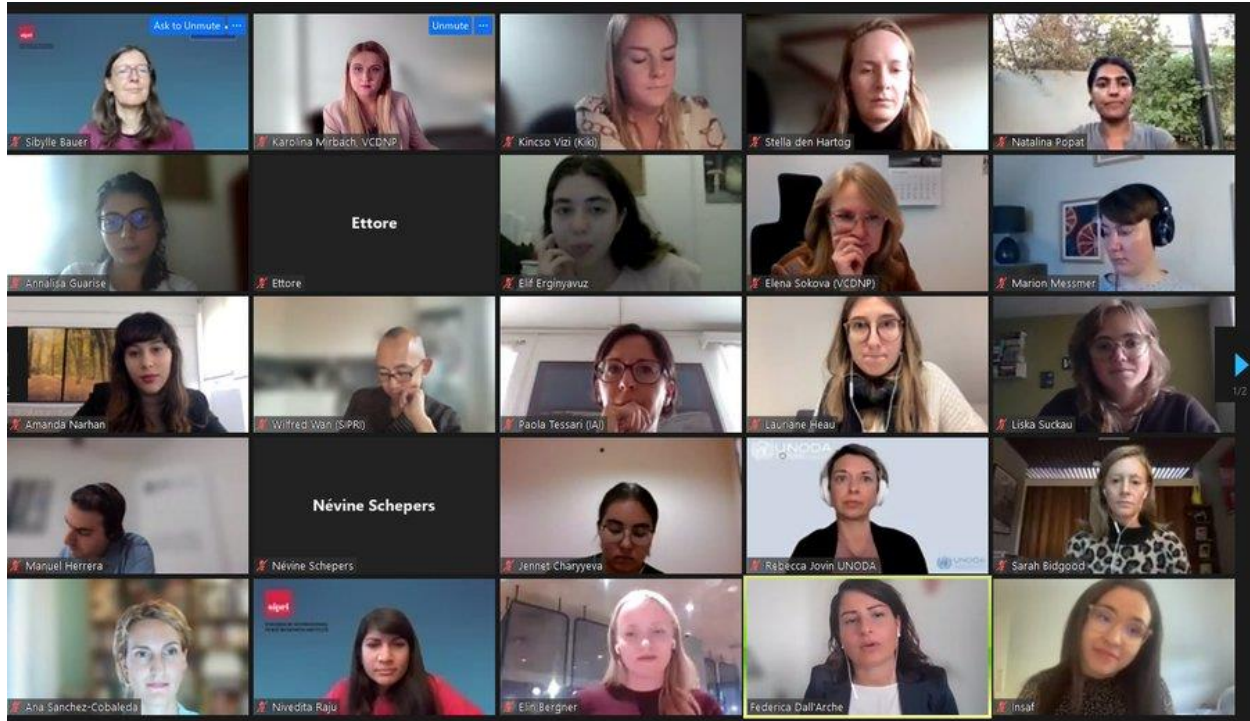
“Once mentee, always mentee”. She encouraged the new cohort to take advantage of the opportunity and to ask for help given that having a mentor, she said, is priceless.



Akanshya Gurung, Emily Faux, and Virginia Bertuzzi, mentees of the 1st edition of the mentorship programme

Federica Dall’Arche, Senior Research Associate at the VCDNP and Paola Tessari, Researcher at the IAI, offered an overview of the programme, discussing expectations and opportunities for both mentors and mentees as well as the upcoming activities. A round of introductions of all participants

followed, allowing the organizers, mentors, and mentees to get to know each other better.



The VCDNP and IAI look forward to working with this bright and motivated cohort of mentees and deeply thank returning and new mentors in the 2022 Programme.