

Women in International Security - Brussels

Report on 2022

2022 was a year of transformation. WIIS Brussels slowly came out of the virtual world due to recurring pandemic waves and resumed its meetings in person. The community welcomed the return of its Happy Hours, and the Steering Committee continued investing in digital products through its podcasts and a new website. Mentoring & trainings continued to serve the Brussels-based community. Progress was made on reaching beyond Brussels to learn from women in conflict zones through conversations about security with experts from the MENA region and Ukraine. Diversity, equity and inclusion continued to guide our reflections as a community.

WIIS amplifying women voices

Podcasts: WIIS-Brussels learnt to use a variety of media during the pandemic and the podcast series was the most successful. In 2022, the Podcast series stands out closing the year with excellent numbers in terms of outreach and impact.

Ilana Bet-El and Florence Ferrando curate the WIIS Brussels Voices podcast series focusing on Women in Leadership. During 2022, the *nine episodes* looked at women and leadership in the context of the war in Ukraine, with respect to the future of the EU, but also through their role and impact as journalists and historians. <https://wiis-brussels.org/podcasts/>

Sabrina Dao and Sofiiia Shevchuk contributed to the podcast with a series on Climate, Security and Gender over the summer 2022 bringing diverse voices on climate security with young experts from Europe and North America. In the wake of the June 2022 NATO Summit in Madrid, the series of *five episodes* spanned a wide variety of aspects regarding climate security, from the role of multilateralism to the role of new technologies, and the consequences of geopolitics on climate change.

Website: The Steering Committee launched the website redesign process along with rebranding. Thanks to considerable efforts of Eva Ribera and Florence Ferrando, and the tremendous talent of Elsa Löw, our new website went live in October 2022. The feedback so far has been excellent and we all welcome you on <https://wiis-brussels.org>. Clotilde Sipp and Diana DeVivo will continue to manage this website in cooperation with others.

Social Media: Krystal Gaillard has been the voice behind all our social media engagements this year, amplifying the work of WIIS colleagues and pushing information to our community.



WIIS partnering and exploring new approaches

In 2022, WIIS Brussels offered a platform to consult within its community and with friends from other organizations on how we related to [security in a post COVID-19 environment](#). Building on the consultation that took place among WIIS members in Brussels throughout the pandemic, delving into personal stories and exploring how to create the conditions for our security beyond old concepts and structures, WIIS Brussels engaged with women in conflict zones from the MENA region (Yemen, Libya, Iraq) in partnership with the *Arab Reform Initiative* (ARI) to Ukraine partnering with *Women's Information Consultative Center*. Nad'a Kovalcikova led this series of *five consultations*, both on-line and in-person through a self-enquiry process, navigating a complex reformulation of security taking account of human, economic, health, mental and psychological security, stressing the importance of trust, community, the need to empower people, offering greater compassion, in search of a new balance between the respective roles of individuals, national and international players.

Special Projects and Events

At the end of 2021, WIIS-Brussels was awarded a project on [Women in security and counterterrorism \(WCT\)](#) by the European Union to develop a guidance to improve the participation of women in the criminal justice response to terrorism. The launch of the project took place on 11 February 2022. The team presented the project at the Global Counterterrorism Forum side-event in Dakar, in May 2022, and at the United Nations General Assembly, in September 2022; organised expert consultations, notably through an online survey (available in English, French and Arabic on WIIS Brussels website) but also through a workshop in Amman, Jordan in October 2022, and interviews. The project is expected to be finalised in June 2023. For more information, please contact Pauline Massart or Florence Ferrando, or check out our website: <https://wiis-brussels.org/projects/>

In 2022, WIIS-Brussels entered into a partnership with Microsoft through “[Conversation Unscripted](#)” – a multistakeholder initiative aimed at bringing together European leaders to explore avenues to reduce the gender gap in the fields of politics and technology. Charlotte Josam is leading the WIIS contribution, taking part in a first event – a high-level panel discussion on “Minding the Gap: increasing women participation in policy and technology in Europe”, which will be followed by a series of workshops throughout 2023. https://wiis-brussels.org/wiis_events/conversations-unscripted/

WIIS Brussels has continued holding virtual policy events and ‘[Conversations with](#)’ notably with Dr. Rosa Balfour, Advisor to WIIS Brussels and Director of Carnegie Europe, in the days following the beginning of the war in Ukraine, to help us make sense of the first few days of this major crisis in the midst of Europe.



Building on their series of podcasts on Climate Security, Sabine Dao and Sofiiia Shevchuk organized an event to welcome the various participants to the podcasts and continued the conversation on climate security challenges, as a networking event.

Other online events and 'Conversations with' saw cooperation with WIIS chapters in Switzerland, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Italy, Poland, Romania, and WIIS Global, but also the German Marshall Fund of the US and its Fellows, Friends of Europe, and the Heirich Böll Foundation with its new Fellowship program.

WIIS Mentoring and Training the next generation

Thanks to Laura Semmler and her team with 27 pairs of mentees and mentors, the [2021-2022 mentoring programme](#) had its final event live, in April 2022. The feedback has been, once again, extremely positive, especially on the pairing of mentees and mentors. Some productive relationships led to successful job searches. <https://wiis-brussels.org/mentoring/>

With the same level of engagement, Sofiiia Shevchuk and her team launched the [2022-2023 mentoring programme](#), in October 2022, with an in-person launch event. The group of mentors this year include several members of the WIIS-Brussels steering committee, EU officials and NATO international staff, as well as professionals from the private sector and academia/think tanks. https://wiis-brussels.org/news_post/mentoring-programme-2022-launch-event/

In 2022, Daria Nashat organized [four training sessions](#): "*Prepared to be Powerful!*" with the inspiring Dion Johnson – a multi-award-winning Women's champion; a Poetry workshop with Dorothy Oger; "*Unexamined and Unnamed: Coloniality in Culture and Everyday Practice*" with the British-Jamaican strategist Terri Beswick; and "*Exploring a cyber threat intelligence case*" with Jamila Boutemeur, former WIIS Steering Committee member and expert in cyber security.

Networking and Community Building

The WIIS-Brussels community meets regularly and in several formats. The Steering Committee meets every month. It engages with a group of Advisors on an *ad hoc* basis. It gathers with its members around "Happy Hours." These events suspended throughout the pandemic finally resumed in Autumn 2022 with one gathering on 20 September, and a second one on 5 December, thanks to Eva Ribera and Ilaria Giustacchini supporting our community of Brussels-based members.

The WIIS steering committee had an opportunity to further train itself in terms of diversity and inclusion, as well as leadership. Group coaching on the pattern of domination and its impact in the field of security, the work environment and society more broadly was also tailored and offered to this group.



WIIS CAMPUS developed a new Syllabus to offer partnership with various universities & colleges aiming to build partnership with academic institutions in Belgium. WIIS Campus continued building on its podcast bringing together senior diplomats with younger generations of women and monthly policy insights on a wide range of issues, from gender-related ones to peace and security, from fundamental rights to European affairs.

WIIS@NATO had a particularly active year with *five conversations* with women in leadership positions at NATO; *two training sessions* exchanging tips and know-how for this specific community; *two brainstorming* discussions on organizational culture; *one event* on the NATO Strategic Concept; and a *high visibility event* around the private screening of the movie “News from Brussels” followed by a panel discussion with the film director Nadine Van Loon and a few high ranking officials in the organization, ending with a networking reception. The community also organized *two* networking events in 2022. Finally, closing the year, the Belgian Ambassador to NATO facilitated a conversation between WIIS@NATO and Women at Work (WaW) within the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Brussels Team

- President: Isabelle François
- Vice President: vacant
- Secretary-General: Romana Michelon
- Treasurer: Rebekka Haffner

- Steering Committee members: Sabine Dao, Diana DeVivo, Florence Ferrando, Krystal Gaillard, Ilaria Giustacchini, Charlotte Josam, Nad’a Kovalcikova, Pauline Massart, Daria Nashat, Eva Ribera, Sofiiia Shevchuk, Clotilde Sipp

- The Advisors: Rosa Balfour, Ilana Bet-El, Christian Leffler, Corinna Hörst, Philippe Maze-Sencier, Jane Morrice, Teri Schultz, Marriët Schuurman, Alexandre Stutzmann.

Partners and cooperating organizations this year

- European Commission (FPI)
- Delegation of the Netherlands to NATO
- U.S. Mission to NATO
- Microsoft
- Arab Reform Initiative (ARI)
- Women’s Information Consultative Center in Ukraine
- German Marshall Fund of the United States
- WIIS-Netherlands
- WIIS-Switzerland
- WIIS-Germany
- WIIS-Portugal
- WIIS Global

