Report for Website of 1st FEN event:

Previous Events

19/05/2022 – The EU's Policy Coherence to the Middle East
The first edition of the Forum on European Neighbourhood dealt with the EU's policy and presence in the Middle East. Even though most countries in this region are not part of the EU's neighbourhood policy, the region has become an important field for the EU to distinguish itself from other actors in international relations. Therefore, the speakers discussed the EU's position in the Abraham Accords and the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action).

Ramin Forghani, doctoral researcher from the University of Luxembourg, pointed out that the EU had a weak position in the early negotiations of the Abraham Accords. The EU hardly had a distinguished position and kept the diplomatic affords to a minimum. However, the EU warmly welcomed the agreement when it was declared in August 2020. Mr. Forghani underlined that the Abraham Accords have a high potential for the EU's strong diplomatic core to contribute to peace and stability while being a huge opportunity to extend their trade network into the region.

Javad Keypour, junior researcher from TalTech University (Estonia), addressed the EU's role in the JCPOA. He walked the audience through the history of Iran's nuclear program and the different phases of how the international community dealt with it. Currently, the EU is in the central negotiation position since the US withdrew from the negotiations in 2018. For the EU, the JCPOA is closely connected to its "strategic autonomy" approach and, therefore, crucial for its perception as an international actor. However, Mr. Keypour is convinced that the relationship with Iran has mainly turned to a security issue. There might be a chance for the EU to build an economic deeper economic relationship with Iran in the future. Still, for now, the EU seems to follow a security-based strategy for Iran to guarantee sustainable success in the JCPOA rather than an economic-driven one.