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European

Automobile

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Association

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ACEA Competitiveness Award 2008 for graduate Klara Wittkowski

Klara Wittkowski, graduate from the College of Europe in Bruges, has won this year's ACEA Competitiveness Award for a thesis on the impact of climate change mitigation policy on Europe's trade agenda.

ACEA, the Brussels based European Automobile Manufacturers' Association, yearly rewards a College of Europe student for a thesis that shows academic excellence and investigates a dimension of EU regulation and industry competitiveness without necessarily being automotive-industry specific. It is the third time the European automobile industry grants the award. Last year, the winner was Elias Huchler, with a thesis on the impact of the European Emissions Trading Scheme.

Wittkowski, a German/Hungarian national, has studied Political Science in Toulouse at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques before doing her Masters in EU International Relations and Diplomacy at the College of Europe in Bruges. She picked the topic of climate change because it is "one of the most important issues for policy makers today". Wittkowski investigated if there could be a reason to link climate change mitigation strategies and trade policy. She found that trade policy can be an instrument to enhance the effectiveness of environmental measures but that finding the global political consensus to actually do so remains difficult.

The cooperation between the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association and the College in Bruges is rooted in the mutual conviction that close cooperation is essential between industry & business and the EU institutions, many of which recruit from the College of Europe. European integration is still work in process. Continuous interaction between society's decision makers is of utmost significance to preserve what has grown and find the right balance between sound regulation and unnecessary bureaucracy.

Ivan Hodac, secretary general of ACEA, congratulated the winner. "Klara Wittkowski has made an outstanding analysis on an important topic", said Hodac. "With this yearly award, our industry underlines its support for excellence in a knowledge-based society. The automotive industry is one of the most innovative sectors in the world. Both Europe and our industry need highly-qualified people to stay competitive."

ACEA represents the fifteen major European vehicle manufacturers. At the heart of the European industry, the automotive sector is the leading employer in manufacturing in the EU. The car industry provides increasingly high-skilled jobs to 2.3 million Europeans and indirectly supports another 10 million employees in related sectors. Europe is the world's largest vehicle producer. Of the almost 50 million passenger cars produced globally, 33% are manufactured in the EU. The ACEA members yearly invest 4% of turnover (euro 20 billion) in R&D.

For further information, please contact Sigrid de Vries, Director Communications, ACEA +32 2 738 73 45 or sv@acea.be Please also visit www.acea.be
