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ACEA Competitiveness Award 2007 for graduate Elias Huchler

Elias Huchler, graduate from the College of Europe in Bruges, has won this year's ACEA Competitiveness Award for a thesis on the business impact of the EU emissions trading scheme.

ACEA, the Brussels based European Automobile Manufacturers' Association, yearly awards 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. The award contains a prize of 1.000 euros and the offer to gain practical experience in Brussels and insights into the automotive industry through an internship at the ACEA secretariat in Brussels. It is the second time the European automobile industry grants the award. Last year, the winner was Anna Comino, with a thesis on trade relations between the EU and China.

Huchler, winner of this year's award, is a German national and studied business in Germany and France before following a Master in European Economic Studies at the College of Europe. "I am delighted with the award. Getting a better understanding of the impact of EU regulation on business in general and in particular on industries' competitiveness in the light of environmental pressure is essential and it was a fascinating topic to dig into", said Huchler.

Paul Demaret, rector of the College of Europe, underlined the importance of close cooperation between business and EU institutions. "Europe celebrates the 50th birthday of the Treaty of Rome today. The internal market has benefited European citizens and businesses alike, but European integration is still work in process. Continuous interaction between today's and future 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. "Elias Huchler has delivered outstanding research on a relevant topic for society", 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 thirteen 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