

Ms. Teodora Čakarmiš  
3203 W Juneau Ave  
Milwaukee, WI, 53208  
USA

05/1/2018

To the admissions committee:  
Chemin Eugène-Rigot 2  
1202 Genève  
Switzerland

It is my mission to tackle and assuage human rights maladies caused by environmental degradation. I wish to deliver on this commitment by developing programs that are sensitive to the idiosyncrasies of individual communities as well as by advocating for expansion of legally-binding documents on climate change mitigation and adaptation. I believe that the question of environmental justice is inherently linked to global governance and it is for this reason that I urge you to consider my application for the Master of International Affairs programme at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

Growing up in the Republic of Serbia, a country that suffered from a mostly self-inflicted chronic exclusion from the international community, I have experienced armed violence first hand and have always yearned to reverse Serbia's state of isolation. From an early age I understood that decisions of intergovernmental bodies can have significant impact on the most local and personal of experiences. Firmly believing in the peacemaking process that is initiated with exposure to foreign cultures and languages, I have consistently sought out academic rigor, multicultural exposure, and experience in the public sector.

In pursuing a holistic education, I expanded on my experience in the Bilingual (French-Serbian) Class of the Third Belgrade High School by receiving my Bachelor's degree with a double major in Political Science and French from Grinnell College. Moreover, I spent my third year studying abroad with Hamilton College in Paris, France and taking classes at the *Institute d'études politiques*. My two-language education instilled in me the value of appreciating multiple perspectives and comprehending that interpretation of the past is often relative. Throughout my time at Grinnell College, I was empowered by my mentors to analytically approach and rediscover my country's history. I delved into research on use of sexual violence as a tool of ethnic cleansing during the breakup of Yugoslavia, which culminated in a paper entitled *Yugoslav Wars: Gendered War Making and a Pacifist Feminist Response*. Moreover, undertaking multidisciplinary learning with classes such as: Advanced Policy Analysis of Climate Change, Economy of Sustainability, and Constitutional Law & Politics enabled my research, writing and critical thinking skills to flourish.

Wishing to become a part of a movement that urges the global community to address consequences of irresponsible greenhouse gas emissions I joined the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Palau to UNESCO. I was responsible for all diplomatic correspondence as well as

external outreach, while serving as the Executive Assistant to the Permanent Delegate. I contributed extensively to organizing events such as the launch of the book *Palau and its Neighbors in the Pacific* (held in the General Assembly), as well as the ‘Silent Seas’ exhibit (presented in UNESCO headquarters in partnership with the Cousteau Foundation). I was also part of a team that secured the funds for a construction of the Alliance of Small Island States pavilion on the occasion of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Convention of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP22). The pinnacle of my efforts was being entrusted with choosing, arranging, and presenting digital materials that sensitized policy makers to the plight of those most vulnerable to climate change—the small island nations—at COP22 in Marrakech.

Upon graduation, I chose to complete a year of service, in order to explore the potential of community organizing against environmental neglect and crime. As a Community Programs Educator at the Urban Ecology Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, I develop, put into practice, and review the successfulness of programs that combat issues as acute as food deserts, lack of green spaces, and a need for engaging after-school programs for youth of disadvantaged backgrounds. So far, I have been the main educator of the Young Scientist Club, designed to inspire naturalist thinking skills and a sense of environmental responsibility in kids aged four to twelve. Additionally, I have created the Environmental and Social Justice through Documentaries Series, which gathers the community around free screenings of films, aimed at raising awareness of the threats to our environment and to our own well-being, as well as at inspiring change in individual and neighborhood behavior. Last, I am currently coordinating Healthy Cooking Demonstrations that have a food justice mission to showcase how nutritious meals can be made affordably and sustainably to a community acutely affected by health implication of living in an urban food desert.

Considering my bilingual academic foundation, my ease of navigating varied international spheres, and my desire to serve in the interest of communities suffering from the double trap of dwindling natural resources and violence, I hope to be given the chance to develop an expertise in implementing sustainability-oriented peace building projects with this programme. I am confident that attending an institution of such distinguished scholars and inspiring colleagues in Geneva—the diplomatic center of the world—will create the perfect foundation for my vocation in the international environmental policy.

Thank you for considering my application.

Yours sincerely,

Teodora Čakarmis

**TEODORA ČAKARMIŠ**

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**EDUCATION**

**Bachelors of Arts, Political Science and French**  
*Grinnell College*

**May 2017**  
**Grinnell, IA, USA**

- Honors in Political Science and Honors in French; GPA: 3.78
- Awarded John Young '54 Memorial Scholarship for embodying values of leadership, community empowerment and devotion to mentorship for the academic year 2015/2016
- Completed a year abroad in Paris, France with the Hamilton in France program, and attended the local *Institut d'études politiques* (Sciences Po) university for a semester
- Selected as one of 12 student representatives by the Career, Life and Services Office to attend the New York City International Relations Industry Tour

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND NON-PROFIT MANAGEMENT**

**Community Programs Educator**  
*Urban Ecology Center*

**August 2017 – Present**  
**Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA**

- Refocused the Young Scientist Club with lesson plans incorporating recreational, educational, and artistic outdoor activities, increased attendance and consistency of club members, and motivated service-learners and volunteers
- Conceptualized the Environmental and Social Justice through Documentaries Series that gathers the community around thought-provoking films, creates a safe space for discussion, and supports organic calls to action; showing of “Milwaukee 53206” welcomed 112 attendees, including neighborhood aldermen, students from two near-by high schools, and representatives of local non-profits
- Facilitating the Healthy Cooking Demonstrations public program that will serve over 50 families in a span of 9 months and feature local chefs recognized by the American Culinary Federation; tending to the Center’s community garden (to be used during the program), customizing an edible garden blueprint for the spring of 2018, and furthering composting efforts

**Fellow**  
*Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation*

**September 2016 – May 2017**  
**Grinnell, IA, USA**

- Analyzed the sustainability of Foundation’s activities in regards to profitability and impact: tracked financial implication of each program, developed surveys to assess impact of different activities, and worked on better-management proposals with the Sustainability Task Force (a subdivision of the Board of Directors)
- Collected and catalogued reports on the use of the mini grants, that the Foundation – under its umbrella approach – uses to award funds to local non-profits, school committees, and neighborhood initiatives in Poweshiek County, and maintained a relationship with the awardees

**INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS EXPERIENCE**

**Executive Assistant**  
*Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Palau to UNESCO*

**February – August 2016**  
**Paris, France**

- Identified and corresponded with potential external partners: spearheaded collaboration with Disney France, Volvo Ocean Race, Cousteaux Foundation, *Institut d'études politiques*, and PRESAGE on joint programming
- Coordinated event planning for the ‘Silence of the Seas’ exhibit displayed in UNESCO headquarters for the World Ocean Day, as well as for the book launch of the Delegation’s original work: *Palau and its Neighbors in the Pacific*, held in the National Assembly
- Formalized the goals of the Delegation of Palau by obtaining, choosing, and arranging digital audiovisual materials, with a storytelling and solution-based approach, at the Alliance of Small Island States booth at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (COP22)

- Liaised with other Small Island Member States, in preparation for COP22, arranged the Small Island Developing States Group meetings, wrote briefs, took minutes, and executed necessary administrative duties

**Intern at the Cabinet of the Chief Negotiator**

**June – August 2015**

***Negotiating Team for the Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union***

**Belgrade, Serbia**

- Edited articles, published on the Negotiating Team’s website, rendering the complex body of EU legislation accessible to the public and clarifying how the accession process affects ordinary citizens
- Assessed bilateral and multilateral negotiating partners, prepared negotiating points, took minutes during diplomatic meetings, assisted in other tasks concerning diplomatic communication and protocol

**Assistant Editor**

**June - August 2014**

***BIZLife***

**Belgrade, Serbia**

- Monitored international round the clock events in business and politics, created daily content for the BIZLife website including news, reports, and interviews
- Authored “The Harms of Discriminating against Women in the Workforce” article by using UN and OECD data on gendered discrimination in the Balkans and by mapping judicial loopholes that minimize protection for victims
- Headed organization of the “Stop Shadow Economy” round-table event, created a guest list, personally invited fifteen relevant speakers, and secured attendance of Mr. Nikola Corsovic, the State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance at the time

**CAMPUS LEADERSHIP AND MENTORING**

**Founder, Coach, and Choreographer of the Grinnell Synchro Club**

**September 2014 –May 2017**

***Grinnell College***

**Grinnell, IA, USA**

- Formed Grinnell College’s first synchronized swimming club, coordinated club advertising, constructed a club budget, and managed club training sessions with twelve active members
- Established a safe space for artistic expression through positive reinforcement and one-on-one work with each club member and taught basic techniques of synchronized swimming, ballet, acting, and performance

**Member of the French Student Educational Policy Committee**

**August 2016 – May 2017**

- Elected to serve on the liaison group between students and faculty, which communicates student input on issues such as faculty candidates, professor reviews, tenure applications, curriculum, and other departmental issues to the school administration
- Organized a catered round-table event “One Year After the Paris Attack: Unpacking the Impact of *Traumatisme*,” open to the entire campus and moderated the discussion between professors from multiple departments

**French Language Tutor and Facilitator of *Séance Pratique***

**August 2016–May 2017**

- Instructed an interactive small-group weekly class for beginner-level students to develop their conversation skills in French, assessed students’ progress and contributed to the grading process in collaboration with the course instructor
- Assisted over 25 students in one-on-one meetings aimed at clarifying class material, tackling challenging assignments and improving overall class performance

**Writer for the ‘Francophone Grinnellian’**

**January 2013 - May 2017**

- Covered topics of comparative politics and international affairs for the French Department’s yearly magazine
- Examined differences between inclusion of immigrant families in the United States of America and Canada into public life and published an article entitled “Multiculturalism of Quebec” listing the integrative practices that have made communities of Quebec more cohesive

**LANGUAGES**

- Serbian (Native), English (Bilingual proficiency), French (Working Proficiency), Arabic (Beginners)
- Cambridge Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA)