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Mitteuropa Stiftung
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Dear President,

I must express my gratitude to the Mitteleuropa Stiftung for supporting my academic endeavors during this past year. As a beneficiary of this generous scholarship, I will be the first in my family to complete higher education and will certainly be one of the very few – coming from a modest socio-economic background in Belgrade, Serbia – to attend an institution as prestigious as the IHEID.

The scholarship has allowed me to build on the academic rigor that I had developed studying Political Science at Grinnell College in Iowa, USA and further explore my interdisciplinary approach to environmental policy analysis. As part of the MIA programme, I have been able to focus on International Trade and Finance as my specialization and pursue a minor in Environment, Natural Resources and Sustainability. Classes such as Finance and Development and Political Economy of International Energy have been particularly foundational in that they have allowed me to wrestle with two competing paradigms – economic development and environmental conservation – as well as examine their potential points of convergence. Due to my interest in the transition to a ‘green economy’, I became part of a Capstone group that consults Symbiotics (an investment company specialized in emerging, sustainable and inclusive finance) and I am now undertaking research on Swiss banks’ Environmental, Social and Governance commitments. The research makes use of assessing institutions’ investment portfolios; therefore, being able to attend a conference on Blended Finance this past November was a useful exposure to alternative investment mechanisms. What is more, I have defined my Master thesis as an Overview of Western Balkan’s Decarbonization Efforts (or Lack Thereof) in the Context of EU Candidacy, allowing me to marry my thematic focus on renewable energy with my regional focus on South Eastern Europe.

I strongly believe that my academic journey will provide a strong basis for a fulfilling professional career in sustainable energy finance. Thus, I see the Mitteleuropa Stiftung scholarship as having been crucial in both my academic and my long-term career development.

Sincerely,
Teodora Cakarmis