



Zukunftskolleg Newsletter Issue #03/2023

Dear fellows and friends,

We welcome you all back for the 2023/2024 winter semester in Konstanz! Although the fog has found its way here again, we are very much looking forward to the next weeks, as lots of events and talks are planned.

The Zukunftskolleg has launched a new fellowship format called ZENiT (= Zukunftskolleg Exchange Network: interdisciplinary Talent). Our call for the 2-year Postdoctoral Fellowships at the Zukunftskolleg closed on 10 October 2023. We received 211 applications. In addition, we have welcomed our new Research Fellow Elisa Deiss-Helbig, who is affiliated with the Department of Politics and Public Administration. We also congratulate our Research Fellow Anna Stöckl from the Department of Biology, who received an ERC Starting Grant from the European Research Council.

We wish you a great start to the lecture period!

Warmest regards,

The Zukunftskolleg team

Current calls for applications

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- › Recent call for five 2-year Postdoctoral Fellowships at the Zukunftskolleg

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- › Research Fellow Elisa Deiss-Helbig

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- › On the trail of a great mystery

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- › German Research Foundation (DFG) grant for Violeta Ivanova Rohling
- › Substitute Professorship for Borbála Zsuzsanna Török
- › ERC Starting Grant for Anna Stöckl
- › Heisenberg Professorship (with tenure track) for Bernard Lepetit

Current calls for applications

New Fellowship Programme: ZENiT = Zukunftskolleg Exchange Network: interdisciplinary Talent

The purpose of the programme:

Researchers at an early career stage are obliged to focus on a single research question in order to become the best in their fields, gain visibility and establish a successful career. At the same time, this is a career stage in which new questions, often across disciplinary boundaries, become particularly interesting for generating the ideas of tomorrow! These projects are best pursued as groups, with the best colleagues from across the world, and need preparation – but often the structures within our universities are not ideal for creating such groups.



The Zukunftskolleg ZENiT Research Group enables researchers to create such a group, which would meet in Konstanz over the course of three years to develop research ideas, perhaps write a book together or apply for a grant; found a new society or establish a series of specialized meetings; invent a new discipline at the interface of related ones; create a new performance or exhibition, or pursue a dream project on the sidelines of their current focus: Think big, think long-term, think creative together!

[More information on the programme and the new call for applications](#) – application



Recent call for five 2-year Postdoctoral Fellowships at the Zukunftskolleg

In its latest call for **five 2-year Postdoctoral Fellowships** (the closing date for applications was 10 October 2023), the Zukunftskolleg received 211 applications.

After a formal eligibility check, 67 applications were eligible – 13 came from Germany and 54 from abroad, 39 were from male applicants, 27 from female applicants and one was from a non-binary applicant. Most applicants came from the Department of History and Sociology and the Department of Politics and Public Administration.



In the next steps, the candidates will be evaluated by the local hosts and the peer reviewers. In its meeting on 25 and 26 January 2024, the Recruitment Committee will decide on the candidates to be offered a 2-year position.

Postdoctoral Fellowships are intended for researchers in the early stages of their careers who plan to develop and implement an independent research project. The fellowships are open to researchers from all fields represented at the University of Konstanz. Each fellow is a member of both a university department and the Zukunftskolleg. Additionally, fellows of the Zukunftskolleg can be affiliated to the Clusters of Excellence at the University of Konstanz: [“Centre for the Advanced Study of Collective Behaviour”](#) or [“Politics of Inequality”](#).



Welcoming of new members to the Zukunftskolleg

Research Fellow Elisa Deiss-Helbig

Elisa Deiss-Helbig is the new **Research Fellow** from the 17th call for applications for fellowships. She started her fellowship on 1 October and is affiliated with the **Department of Politics and Public**

Administration.

Before coming to Konstanz, Elisa worked as a research associate at the Institute for Social Sciences at the University of Stuttgart, where she also completed her doctoral degree. In 2021, she received funding for a temporary position as principal investigator in her research project GROUPTA (“Group targeting and citizens’ responses to electoral promises and their realization”) from the German Research Foundation (DFG). Together with two colleagues from Sciences Po (Paris) and the University of Trier, Elisa also secured a grant for a French-German research project called UNEQUALMAND (“Unequal mandate responsiveness? How electoral promises and their realizations



target groups in France and Germany”) from the German Research Foundation and the French National Research Agency (ANR).

“Working on my dissertation, I have focused on candidate selection and the descriptive representation of citizens with immigrant origins,” Elisa explains. “In my current research, I study political inequality from a fresh perspective by looking at how inequalities in the policy representation of a variety of social groups can be traced back to electoral promises and enacted policies.”

Her research project at the Zukunftskolleg takes a multi-faceted approach. She examines political inequality through various lenses: (1) analyzing it at different stages of the policymaking process, encompassing both promise making and promise fulfilment; (2) exploring it from demand-side (voter-based) and supply-side (party-based) angles; (3) studying it across the spectrum of socially diverse groups, (4) with a pronounced emphasis on politically marginalized groups. “In a first step, my analyses are restricted to electoral promises made by governing parties. In a second step, the research will be extended to opposition parties’ electoral pledges as well. Over the next five years, I aim to unravel a series of intriguing questions: Which social groups receive electoral promises and for whom do these promises translate into concrete actions? How do the mobilization resources and societal perceptions of these groups influence this process? How have perceptions of the deservingness of different social groups evolved over time; how can we explain variations in the perceived deservingness of groups at the individual level; and how does this contribute to our understanding of the making and fulfilment of electoral promises for particular social groups? How and under what conditions do citizens respond to group appeals in electoral programmes and to the fulfilment and breach of these promises; and what does this tell us about parties’ incentives to make and fulfil promises to particular groups?”

We wish Elisa a good start and all the best for her time at the Zukunftskolleg!



Review of events

Public Talks, Meetings and Workshops

11 July 2023, Raghavendra Gadagkar

Senior Fellow and member of the Scientific Advisory Board

Talk: "Can we understand an insect society, and why should we care?"

Raghavendra Gadagkar (Senior Fellow and member of the Scientific Advisory Board / DST Year of Science Chair Professor, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore) gave a talk entitled "Can we understand an insect society, and why should we care?".

Abstract:

*Many species of insects, such as ants, bees and wasps, organize themselves into societies comprising a few fertile queens and many sterile workers. Displaying features such as conflict, cooperation, altruism, division of labour, communication and much more, they parallel and sometimes surpass human societies. In this talk, he described our attempts to use observations and experiments to understand the workings of one such tropical insect society, the Indian paper wasp *Ropalidia marginata*, and reflected on why we should care about understanding them.*

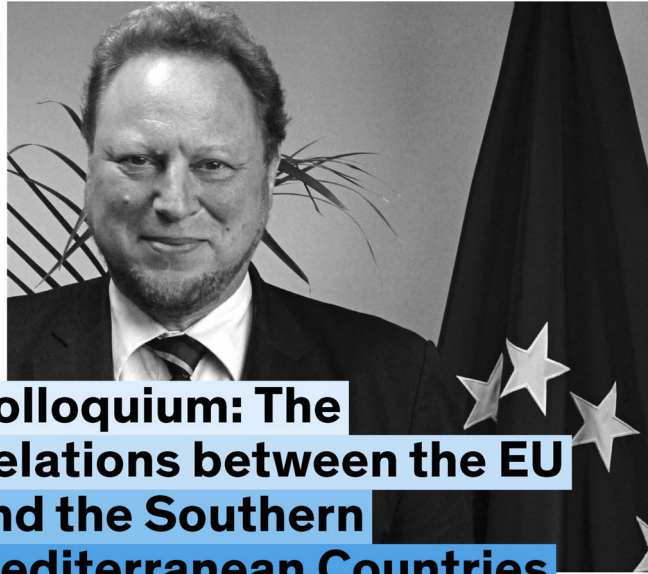
12 July 2023, Michael Köhler

Deputy Director-General at the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation, European Commission

Public talk: "The Relations between the EU and the Southern Mediterranean Countries"

The Zukunftskolleg extended an invitation to the public talk by Michael Köhler (European Commission) on Wednesday, 12 July entitled "The Relations between the EU and the Southern Mediterranean Countries". He was invited by James Wilson (Postdoctoral Fellow / History and Sociology).

The talk took place in collaboration with the Department of Politics and Public Administration in the framework of its departmental colloquium.



Colloquium: The Relations between the EU and the Southern Mediterranean Countries

Colloquium: Dr. Michael Köhler

Deputy Director-General in the Directorate-General "European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation"

Wednesday, 12 July 2023, 17:00, Room Y311



18 July 2023, Gruia Badescu Research Fellow / History and Sociology

Talk: "Cities and war: Perspectives on the reconstruction of Ukraine from Southeastern Europe and beyond"

On behalf of our Research Fellow Gruia Badescu (Department of History and Sociology), the Zukunftskolleg extended an invitation to his talk entitled "Cities and war: Perspectives on the reconstruction of Ukraine from Southeastern Europe and beyond" on 18 July 2023.

17-18 July 2023, Scientific Advisory Board Meeting

The Scientific Advisory Board spent two days, from 17-18 July, at the Zukunftskolleg and advised us on our future development.

Special thanks to Raghavendra Gadagkar, David Gugerli, Sabine von Heusinger, Michael Matlosz, Elke aus dem Moore, Manuela Nocker, Jane Ohlmeyer, Vinod Subramaniam and Ingrid Wüning-Tschol! It was great having you with us, discussing with you and receiving helpful recommendations!

More information about the [Scientific Advisory Board](#) members.



24-26 July 2023, Martin Buber Symposium

Workshop: "Design: Thinking, Making, Doing. Thinking about design and thinking with design to solve big questions"

Using a "Design Theory" methodology, the symposia had four interwoven themes or "wicked questions", all of which are of an interdisciplinary nature and highly relevant to the ongoing and future challenges we face as researchers:

- How can we contribute to / stimulate/ inspire different nations, with different agendas, towards the common good of planetary health?
- How can we include more diverse perspectives in the decolonization of science (including diversity discourse)?
- How can our science communication have a higher impact on society and governance?
- How can we raise awareness about successful psychological treatment and healing interaction in everyday life?

This was a great opportunity to expand our academic networks, present the Zukunftskolleg and engage in interdisciplinary research on these important issues.



Stiftungsfonds Martin-Buber-Gesellschaft

10-12 October 2023, NetIAS Business Meeting 2023 in Konstanz

In October, the European Institutes of Advanced Study met in Konstanz for the annual meeting of NetIAS (Network of European Institutes for Advanced Study) to foster cooperation between institutions.

The participants discussed new and ongoing NetIAS projects, ranging from the funding programme CAT (Constructive Advanced Thinking) to the network's debate series (NetIAS Debates) or various working groups on "Arts & Science", "Diversity" and

“Assessing Applications”.

The meeting was held on 11 October at Konzil Konstanz. After a walk in the historic city centre in the afternoon, Research Fellow and historian Gruia Badescu gave a public talk (see below) at the Konzil on “Making sense of urban destruction: Architecture, memory, and repair”.

The Zukunftskolleg has been a member of NetIAS since June 2018. The network brings together 26 Institutes for Advanced Study across Europe.

NetIAS was created in 2004 to stimulate a dialogue on IAS practices and possible forms of cooperation. Within the whole network, more than 500 researchers are hosted every year for up to one full academic year.



11 October 2023, Gruia Badescu
Research Fellow / History and Sociology

Public talk: “Making sense of urban destruction: Architecture, memory, and repair”

Abstract:

Cities have been targets of destruction in wartime and of reshaping during authoritarian regimes. Yet ambitious planning schemes as well as real estate calculations also led to cityscapes being dramatically altered. This talk addresses the aftermath of such urban destruction, focusing on processes of reconstruction and reparative measures after war and dictatorships. It explores a variety of ways of engaging with urban destruction, from post-war reconstruction which aims to problematize the past to memorial acts connected with the violence of authoritarian regimes. Drawing from research in European, Middle Eastern and Latin American cities, it also traces how the reshaping of cities is connected by circulations of ideas and practices. Bridging the dimensions of urban transformations and memory, it thus interrogates how cities grapple with their often traumatic pasts and imagine their futures.



Making sense of urban destruction: Architecture, memory, and repair

Wednesday, 11 October 2023

17:30, Konzil Konstanz, Hafenstrasse 2

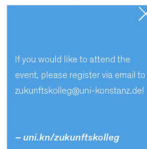
Public talk by Gruia Badescu

(Research Fellow Zukunfts Kolleg / History and Sociology)

Abstract

Cities have been targets of destruction at wartime and of reshaping during authoritarian regimes. Yet also ambitious planning schemes as well as real estate calculations led to cityscapes being dramatically altered. This talk addresses the aftermath of such urban destruction, focusing on processes of reconstruction and reparative measures after war and dictatorships. It explores a variety of ways of engaging with urban destruction, from post-war reconstruction which aims to problematize the past to memorial acts connected with the violence of authoritarian regimes. Drawing from research in European, Middle Eastern and Latin American

cities, it also traces how the reshaping of cities is connected by circulations of ideas and practices. Bridging the dimensions of urban transformations and memory, it thus interrogates how cities grapple with their often traumatic pasts and imagine their futures.



24 October 2023, Jour fixe

ZUKOnnect & Herz Poster Session

Our eight current ZUKOnnect & Herz Fellows (2023 cohort) organized a poster session.

The poster session started with a short round of lightning talks, in which each of the ZUKOnnect & Herz Fellows presented their research topic in two minutes to the whole audience. Afterwards, the posters were presented to the audience.

Dorothea Debus (Vice Rector for International Affairs, Equal Opportunity and Diversity) closed the session.

31 October 2023, Jour fixe

Information session

Thomas Wrabetz (Team LVE) informed the Zukunfts kolleg about the course evaluation (LVE) / courses for online evaluation and how to register courses, etc.

Afterwards, Laura Dirmaite and Mihaela Mihaylova offered help with potential questions / problems on "How to fill in forms (travel forms and applications for undergraduate student assistants, etc.) or "How to apply for cofunding?"

To close, the fellows gathered for coffee and a small Halloween get-together.



Forthcoming events

Jour fixe

Tobias Sutter
(Research Fellow /
Computer and
Information Science)

“Machine learning for
dynamical systems”

7 November 2023

13:30 – 15:00

Y326 / hybrid

**Sidney Carls-
Diamante** (Fellow /
Philosophy)

“Creativity as uncertainty reduction: an active inference model”

14 November 2023

13:30 – 15:00

Y326 / hybrid

Mohsen Jenadeleh (Associated Fellow / Computer and Information Science)

“JND-based perceptual quality assessment of nearly lossless compressed visual media”

21 November 2023

13:30 – 15:00

Y326 / hybrid

Jacob Bloomfield (Postdoctoral Fellow / Literature)

Public Jour fixe: Book presentation of “Drag: A British History”

About the book:

“A must-read for anyone interested in the history of drag performance.” – Publishers Weekly

A rich and provocative history of drag’s importance in modern British culture.

“Drag: A British History” is a groundbreaking study of the sustained popularity and changing forms of male drag performance in modern Britain. With this book, Jacob Bloomfield provides fresh perspectives on drag and recovers previously neglected



episodes in the history of the art form.

Despite its transgressive associations, drag has persisted as an intrinsic, and common, part of British popular culture – drag artists have consistently asserted themselves as some of the most renowned and significant entertainers of their day. As Bloomfield demonstrates, drag was also at the centre of public discussions around gender and sexuality in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from Victorian sex scandals to the “permissive society” of the 1960s. This compelling new history demythologizes drag, stressing its ordinariness while affirming its important place in British cultural heritage.

28 November 2023

16:00 – 17:30

BA420, University Library

Executive Committee election + Ariane Bertogg (Postdoctoral Fellow / History and Sociology)

“Sketch for a current grant proposal”

5 December 2023

13:30 – 15:00

Y326 / hybrid

Collaborative WIAS/Zukunftskolleg event

“Basic Science for Sustainable Development”

1. “Self-charging solar panels” – Ashwinder Kaur (Herz Fellow / Physics, Zukunftskolleg)
2. “Controlling M-S-H crystallization for building a green future” – Cristina Ruiz Agudo (Research Fellow / Chemistry, Zukunftskolleg)
3. “Cancer, spatiotemporal analyses of extracellular vesicle transfer in tumour microenvironment” – Nao Nishida (Assistant Professor / Life Science, Waseda Institute for Advanced Study)
4. “Autocratization: Causes and consequences” – Yuko Sato (Assistant Professor / Political science, Waseda Institute for Advanced Study)

12 December 2023

9:00 – 10:30

Y326 / hybrid

Ori Harel (educational psychologist and mindfulness/yoga trainer; ori-harel.com)

“Mental strengthening”

19 December 2023

13:30 – 15:00

Y326 / hybrid

Open discussion

“What are our academic values?”

9 January 2024

13:30 – 15:00

Y326 / hybrid

Hendrik Rommeswinkel (Research Visit Fellow / Economics, Waseda Institute for Advanced Study)

“Preference for Verifiability”

16 January 2024

13:30 – 15:00

Y326 / hybrid

Elisa Deiss-Helbig (new Research Fellow / Politics and Public Administration)

“Understanding political inequality via electoral promises and their fulfilment”

23 January 2024

13:30 – 15:00

Y326 / hybrid

María Cruz Berrocal (Associated Fellow / History and Sociology)

“The archaeology of small islands in the Pacific: the past for the future”

30 January 2024

13:30 – 15:00

Y326 / hybrid

Jennifer Randerath (Associated Fellow / Psychology)

title tba

6 February 2024

13:30 – 15:00

Y326 / hybrid

Executive Committee election

13 February 2024

13:30 – 15:00

Y326 / hybrid



Book presentation of “Drag: A British History”

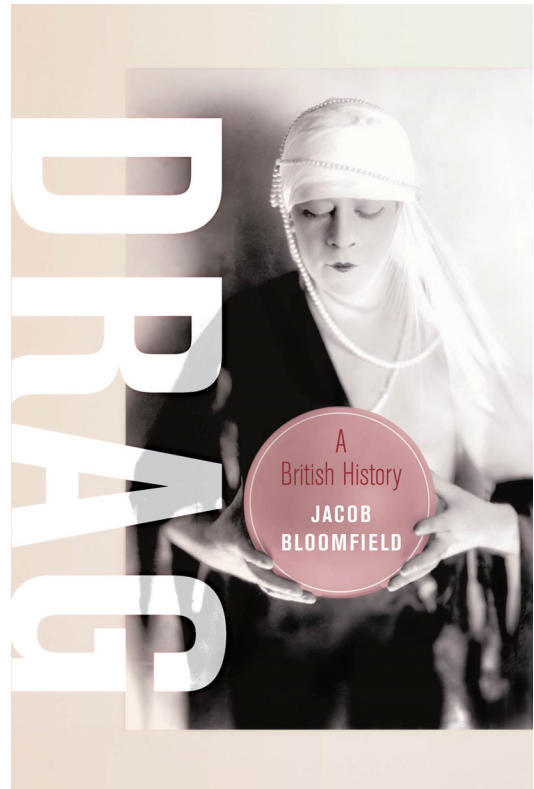
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28 November 2023
16:00 – 17:30
BA420, University Library



University Day 2023: Connecting the researchers of tomorrow

Selected ZUKOnnect fellows interact with pupils of the Hegau Bodensee Seminar (aged 16-18) to share their fascination for science around the world.

Workshop 1:

Jennifer de Sousa Barros (Herz Fellow / Biology):

“From Dracula to Batman: the truth about the real ecosystems’ heroes, the bats!”

Workshop 2:

Khanyile Mlotshwa (ZUKOnnect Fellow / Politics and Public Administration):

“Cities and inequality”

29 November 2023
16:30 – 19:30
Zukunftskolleg

University Day 2023



Connecting researchers of tomorrow

Wednesday, 29 November 2023, 16:30–19:30,
Zukunftskolleg (Y building), University of Konstanz

Workshop 1

From Drácula to Batman: the truth about the real ecosystems' heroes, the Bats!
Jennifer de Sousa Barros, Herz Fellow / Biology

Workshop 2

Cities and inequality
Khanyile Motshwa, ZUKOnnect Fellow / Politics and Public Administration

More information about the
Hegau Bodensee Seminar and
the Zukunftskolleg:
– hs.humboldt-konstanz.de
– uni-konstanz.de/zukunftskolleg

Network event: Let's talk about the SDGs

This is a **network event and open discussion** with Konstanz students enrolled in the “**Qualifikation N**”, an additional certificate for those interested in the Sustainable Development Goals. In Germany, many prioritize climate change. What dominates the discussion and activities in other countries? Ecological, economic or social aspects – let's widen the horizon together.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



ZUKOnnect Fellows will share their experience with and perspectives on the SDGs with students.

The event is open to all students who are interested in the SDGs, but **registration via email is required**: qualifikation.n@uni-konstanz.de

This is a joint event of the Green Office, the Staff Unit Sustainability, the Centre for Transferable Skills (SQ) and the Zukunftskolleg.

14 December 2023
17:00 – 19:00
Y326



Executive Committee meetings in the 2023/2024 winter semester

29 November 2023
14:30 – 16:30

10 January 2024
14:30 – 16:30

31 January 2024
14:30 – 16:30



Publications

The importance of IAS in Germany

The German magazine “Forschung & Lehre” recently published two articles on the situation and importance of Institutes for Advanced Studies (IAS) in Germany – and the Zukunftskolleg in particular.



In September 2023, “Forschung & Lehre” published an [interview with the director of the Zukunftskolleg, Giovanni Galizia](#), entitled “Institutes of Advanced Study als ‘Insel der Seligen’” in which he describes the special atmosphere and dynamics among its fellow community and their freedom for creativity.

This article has now been followed by another publication in “Forschung & Lehre”: a position paper entitled “‘Institutes for Advanced Study’ wollen sichtbarer werden”, which was drafted by 20 of the 24 members of the German Network of Institutes for Advanced Studies on the distinct contributions of IAS to the German academic system, future challenges to its institutional form, as well as regulatory needs and financial

requirements in the future.

[Read more.](#)



On the trail of a great mystery

An interdisciplinary project led by **primatologist Gisela Kopp** is using genetic analysis to determine the geographic origin of mummified baboons found in Ancient Egypt.

The team finds evidence that the two legendary trading regions of Punt and Adulis may have been the same place separated by a thousand years of history.

In Ancient Egypt, various deities were portrayed as animals. Thoth, the god of learning and wisdom, was represented by a hamadryas baboon. Baboons, probably held in captivity in Egypt, were mummified as votive offerings after their deaths. Today, no wild baboons live in Egypt, and there is no evidence to suggest that these primates did so in the past. In an interdisciplinary project involving biologists, Egyptologists and anthropologists, Gisela Kopp, a biologist from Konstanz who conducts research on non-human primates, pursued the question of how and from where baboons came to Egypt. The results have been published in the current issue of the journal eLife.



[Read more.](#)



Careers, distinctions and grants

German Research Foundation (DFG) grant for Violeta Ivanova Rohling

We congratulate **Violeta Ivanova Rohling (Postdoctoral Fellow / Physics)** who has received a grant from the German Research Foundation (DFG) for her project “Deep learning methods with symmetry priors for problems in quantum computing”.

The project's objective is "to develop and adapt deep learning and reinforcement learning methods that use structural priors, namely special symmetries, as well as manifold priors with the goal of solving two specific problems in quantum computing: to find optimal physical spin exchange gate sequences that make most efficient logical two-qubit gates, important for spin exchange-only quantum computation, and to find optimal measurement operators for efficient quantum state tomography," explains Violeta.



The grant to the amount of €241,804 covers Violeta's own position plus a 22 percent programme allowance for 28 months.

Find more information on Violeta and her project [here](#).



Substitute Professorship for Borbála Zsuzsanna Török

We congratulate our **alumna Borbála Zsuzsanna Török from the Department of History and Sociology**, who now holds the Chair of Eastern European History at the University of Göttingen.

Borbála Zsuzsanna Török was a Research Fellow at the Zukunftskolleg from June 2009 until May 2014 and worked on the project "Academic reform and knowledge transfer in Hungary at the end of the eighteenth century (1768-1830)".

We congratulate her and wish her all the best.



ERC Starting Grant for Anna Stöckl

Congratulations to **Research Fellow Anna Stöckl**, who has received an ERC Starting Grant from the European Research Council.

The biologist will receive €1.5 million in funding for her project "Closing the loop in dynamic vision – from single photons to behaviour in extreme light environments" (or "DynamicVision" for short). The project focuses on the visually-guided flight of moths. Anna Stöckl will combine different methodological approaches, from neuroanatomical studies to measuring nerve

cell activity and conducting behavioural experiments. In addition, she and her research group will develop a camera setup that can detect changes in the visual environment as seen by a flying insect. The scenes recorded with this method can be tested directly on visual neurons in the moth brain.

“I am very happy and humbled to have received an ERC starting grant to dive deeper into the visual processing of nocturnal moths and their ability to navigate challenging visual habitats at night. This would not have been possible without the support of many friends, colleagues and my lab, for which I am extremely grateful. I am very excited about starting the project and learning more about how moths master the dynamics of natural and artificial light sources at night,” says Anna Stöckl.



Each year, the ERC awards Starting Grants to promising young researchers. The aim is to give them the opportunity to set up and expand their own research teams and to move research projects forward that have high innovation potential.

Anna Stöckl has been a Research Fellow at the Zukunftskolleg since June 2022.

Read more about the ERC grant and her [project](#).



Heisenberg Professorship (with tenure track) for Bernard Lepetit

We congratulate **Bernard Lepetit (former Postdoctoral Fellow / Department of Biology)** who started as a Heisenberg professor (with tenure track) on 1 October 2023 at the Institute of Biology of the University of Rostock, where he is chair of the new group “Molecular Stress Physiology”.

“I am very grateful for the opportunities I received from and the time I had within the Zukunftskolleg. I received the fellowship at the right moment. It allowed me to become independent early on and to gain visibility. Also, I got to know fascinating people from various disciplines who I would never have met elsewhere, who inspired me and showed me the different paths for evolving within the academic system. I will not forget several inspiring talks and discussions particularly during the earlier Jours fixes. Now, a new chapter has commenced that me and my family are starting with enthusiasm, but respect as well.”



The objective of the Heisenberg Programme of the German Research Foundation is to promote researchers who are eligible for appointment to a professorship and have demonstrated excellence in their research achievements.

Bernard Lepetit was a Zukunftskolleg Fellow from September 2013 until March 2018, working on the projects “Retrograde signalling in diatoms based on the redox state of the plastoquinone pool” and “Regulation of photoprotection in diatoms”.

We congratulate him and wish him all the best!

More information on the [Heisenberg Programme](#).

