



## Press Release No. 16/2018

Press Office  
Universitätsstraße 10  
D-78464 Konstanz  
+49 7531 88-3603  
Fax +49 7531 88-3766

kum@uni-konstanz.de  
www.uni-konstanz.de

21 February 2018

## Primate researcher confirmed as the first Zukunftskolleg Hector Fellow

**Biologist Dr Gisela Kopp, who will be the first researcher to receive a Hector Pioneer Fellowship, will join the University of Konstanz's Zukunftskolleg in March 2018.**

The Zukunftskolleg was able to establish the Hector Pioneer Fellowship in 2017 thanks to the generous support from the Hector Stiftung II (Hector Foundation II). It provides outstanding early career researchers from MINT disciplines (mathematics, computer and information science, natural sciences, technology) with the opportunity to build up an independent early career research group at the Zukunftskolleg. The five-year fellowship is geared specifically towards scientists who pursue innovative and interdisciplinary research approaches.

The biologist Dr Gisela Kopp was selected to be the first Hector Pioneer Fellow following a multi-stage selection process. "I am very pleased to be able to continue my research as a Hector Pioneer Fellow. The excellent working conditions, high degree of independence and long-term prospects that this position promises will enable me to explore unusual research questions and new avenues of thought", the biologist says.

Gisela Kopp has been a researcher at the University of Konstanz and the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology in Radolfzell since 2016, investigating the relationship between behaviour and genetics and its impact on speciation. She combines behavioural ecology with genomics, field studies, laboratory analysis and computer simulation to better understand the evolutionary dynamics and behavioural patterns of wild animals: "Why and how do closely related species develop different social systems and how can these behaviours influence the evolution of a population? We know quite a lot about the influence that various ecological niches exert on the development of a species, but what remains largely unknown is how different behaviours impact diversification".

Kopp values both the innovative methods that are being developed in the University of Konstanz's Department of Biology and at the Max Planck Institute and the Zukunftskolleg's interconnected and interdisciplinary research culture: "They open up a range of new options for me".

Gisela Kopp grew up in Überlingen on the shores of Lake Constance. She carried out the research for her doctoral thesis, which was supervised by Professor Julia Fischer, at the German Primate Center, Leibniz Institute for Primate Research, earning her doctorate on "Gene flow dynamics in baboons – The influence of social systems" from the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen in 2015.

Among other awards and honours, she received a scholarship from the Christiane-Nüsslein-Volhard-Foundation. Her doctoral thesis won the DPZ Sponsorship Award of the German Primate Center, one of the most highly endowed doctoral awards in Germany. Gisela Kopp also led several expeditions to carry out field studies with primates in West Africa and was a visiting scholar at Duke University in Durham (USA) and the École Normale Supérieure in Paris (France).

The Zukunftskolleg is one of the University of Konstanz's central research facilities for the promotion of early career researchers who have completed their doctorate but have yet to secure a professorship. It offers an alternative path to a career in academia, bypassing the classic Habilitation (post-doctoral qualification). The goal is to support early career researchers as they start their careers, to provide a creative, international and cross-generational community and to ensure the fellows' academic independence early on. The Zukunftskolleg offers two- and five-year fellowships as well as financial, structural and individual support services. It is funded through the Excellence Initiative and the "Zukunftskolleg Incoming Fellowship Programme Marie Curie" (ZIF-MIC) of the European Union. The Hector Foundation II has funded one fellowship since the beginning of 2018.

The foundation was established in Weinheim in March 2008 by Dr h.c. Hans-Werner Hector and Josephine Hector. It is part of a group of companies established to ensure that a part of the couple's estate continues to be donated to a range of specific charities – both during their lifetime and after their death.

**Facts:**

- First Hector Pioneer Fellowship awarded to Konstanz biologist Dr Gisela Kopp
- Research on the evolutionary dynamics behind the behavioural patterns of wild animals
- Five-year fellowship as early career research group leader at the University of Konstanz's Zukunftskolleg
- Funding for outstanding early career researchers from MINT disciplines (mathematics, computer and information science, natural sciences, technology)
- Funding provided by the Hector Stiftung II (Hector Foundation II)
- For further information about Gisela Kopp and the Hector Pioneer Fellowship, please visit:  
<https://www.orn.mpg.de/person/49234/642473>  
<http://bit.ly/2sJeoo6>

Contact:

University of Konstanz  
Communications and Marketing  
Phone: +49 7531 88-3603  
Email: [kum@uni-konstanz.de](mailto:kum@uni-konstanz.de)

Sigrid Elmer  
University of Konstanz  
Zukunftskolleg Coordinator for Public Relations and Knowledge Transfer  
Universitätsstraße 10  
78457 Konstanz, GERMANY  
Phone: +49 7531 88-4819  
Email: [zukunftskolleg-pr@uni-konstanz.de](mailto:zukunftskolleg-pr@uni-konstanz.de)  
<http://zukunftskolleg.uni.kn>

- [uni.kn](http://uni.kn)