

Five New Helmholtz Young Investigator Groups at KIT

Young Investigators Succeed in a Multi-stage Selection Process



Investigation of the atmosphere at the Institute of Meteorology and Climate Research. Here, two Helmholtz young investigator groups will be established. (Photo by: Markus Breig)

The Helmholtz Association will fund five new young investigator groups at KIT. With these funds, five excellent young scientists will set up and manage their own research groups at Karlsruhe. Every position of a head of a young investigator group is associated with an annual budget of at least EUR 250,000 over five years and the option of employment for unlimited duration afterwards. In total, twenty new young investigator groups will be established at centers of the Helmholtz Association. This year, most of these groups will be set up at KIT.

Now, Dr. Francesco Grilli, Dr. Corinna Hoose, Dr. Pavel Levkin, Dr. Miriam Sinnhuber, and Dr. Svetoslav Stankov will have the opportunity to conduct autonomous research at KIT and make their ideas come true. In parallel, they will lecture or offer seminars. In this way, they will qualify for a university career. The five young researchers succeeded in this year's multi-stage selection process of young investigator groups of the Helmholtz Association. After three to four years, every group will be subjected to an interim evaluation. In case

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of a positive result, the group head will be offered an employment for unlimited duration (tenure track).

The working group headed by Dr. Francesco Grilli at the KIT Institute for Technical Physics (ITP) concentrates on energy technology and in particular on high-temperature superconductivity (HTC): The group "AC Loss in High-temperature Superconductors" studies AC losses in high-temperature superconductors and superconducting media. Minimization of such losses is crucial for use in future electricity supply grids.

The Helmholtz young investigator group "Aerosol Effects on Cloud Ice, Precipitation, and Climate" headed by Dr. Corinna Hoose from the Atmospheric Aerosol Research Division of the Institute of Meteorology and Climate Research (IMK-AAF) wishes to develop models for simulating the effect of aerosols – finest suspended particles – on cloud ice formation, precipitation, and the climate. The group "Solar Variability, Climate, and the Role of the Mesosphere/Lower Thermosphere" headed by Dr. Miriam Sinnhuber works at IMK's Atmospheric Trace Gases and Remote Sounding Division. The group studies how variations of solar activity influence the climate.

At the KIT Institute of Toxicology and Genetics (ITG), the group "Functional and Stimuli-responsive Polymer Surfaces" of Dr. Pavel Levkin, in cooperation with researchers from the University of Heidelberg, concentrates on the synthesis of novel polymer-based materials with defined properties in terms of morphology, surface chemistry, and elasticity. The group studies the behavior of cells and bacterial biofilms on the surface of such materials.

Dr. Svetoslav Stankov heads the group "Interplay between Structure and Lattice Dynamics in Epitaxial Rare Earth Nanostructures" at the Institute for Synchrotron Radiation (ISS). It is aimed at developing epitaxial nanostructures with a tailored setup and stress state and at obtaining fundamental understanding of the lattice dynamics of nanostructures.

The above young investigator groups are funded by the Helmholtz Association from the central Initiative and Networking Funds and the Helmholtz centers at a 50:50 ratio. Apart from the head of the young investigator group, funding usually covers three positions for scientists and the laboratory equipment.

The Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is the merger of the Forschungszentrum Karlsruhe, member of the Helmholtz Association, and the Universität Karlsruhe. This merger will give rise to an institution of internationally excellent research and teaching in natural and engineering sciences. In total, the KIT has 8000 employees and an annual budget of 700 million Euros. The KIT focuses on the knowledge triangle of research – teaching – innovation.

The Karlsruhe institution is a leading European energy research center and plays a visible role in nanosciences worldwide. KIT sets new standards in teaching and promotion of young scientists and attracts top scientists from all over the world. Moreover, KIT is a leading innovation partner of industry.

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