



## Dear Readers,

ever since the oil crisis of the mid-70s the Middle East has become a sphere of interest for the European Union. The programmes for international understanding, knowledge transfer, and trust building initiated during the past 25 years have usually met great acclaim on both sides of the Mediterranean. Their core motivation is the intent to intensify the dialog through cooperation with civil society.

The work of this civil society in education, arts, and human development receives financial support by such programmes. Since 1995, the „Euro-Mediterranean Partnership“ is in place, since 2003 the „European Neighborhood Policy“. Activities of civil societies are of relevance in both programmes with movements for more democracy and human rights at their centre.

However, ever since its inception, these ideals have also met criticism for being „too European“. The support for civic values as the basis for such civil society following an Eastern model has been neglected, commentators say, and too much money has been directed into expensive but isolated prestige projects.

SEKEM attempts change by developing civil society through reconciliation of individuality and community. Its success shows, that a holistic combination of the two can only be developed with commitment for each and every individual. An approach to be recommended for more European Union activities.

**Your editorial team**

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## Ground Breaking Ceremony

Exactly 11 years ago, on the 70th birthday of Dr. Hans Werner, the SEKEM Medical Centre was founded thanks to his efforts. Since that date the popularity of the centre and the number of patients is growing steadily. Today more than 30000 patients from the surrounding villages and close-by town are cared for by a dedicated team of medical specialists. There are always endeavours to use the best available methods and an international standard of diagnosis and therapy. One of the last achievements was the use of a new ultrasonography machine and the modernization of the blood analysis.

The success shows clearly, that the services on offer meet the demand of the people living in the greater community, but it also makes it necessary to grow the capacity of the centre and enlarge the building.

Plans for new buildings exist since a couple of years and were changed many times. But this year the ground-breaking ceremony was the most important birthday present for Dr. Werner and for the Medical Centre itself on the occasion of its 11th birthday: white lines on the ground and a special spade made it clear for everybody attending the „birthday party“, that the work would soon begin. After short remarks from the two founders Dr. Abouleish and Dr. Werner the first cut was made with the spade. Then the party left the ground for the workers, who better know how to dig the foundations and celebrated the events in the Mahad, where Mrs. Abouleish had prepared a birthday cake. Everybody is now looking forward to the topping-out ceremony and the inauguration of the new building.

*Dr. Sigward von Laue*



## Former German Interior Minister visits SEKEM



During his visit to Egypt the former Minister of the Interior, Dr. Otto Schily, visited SEKEM on the 6th of March. The preparation already suggested, that there would be a cultural exchange, when the German Embassy had to match the needs for flexibility on the one side and the demand for fixed time schedules on the other side. Dialogue was the main topic of the day. After a detailed introduction about the vision of SEKEM and a short visit to the showroom and store at the head office, lunch

was served at the SEKEM Farm followed by a tour through the compound. Dr. Abouleish explained to his visitor the details of the different factories as well as the social enterprises like the school, the Vocational training Centre and the hospital. During a short performance in the hall of the SEKEM school the pupils had the opportunity to meet the guest and to show him their abilities in arts, languages and science. Dr. Schily showed great pleasure in the performance and stressed the importance of speaking foreign languages in today's globalized world. After seeing the farm there was time for discussions on various topics like organic cotton and the problem of hypersensitivity of skin that is growing in Europe; on healthy food and the problem of diseases, the political situation in Europe

and the Middle East and the possibilities of growing a better future due to better dialogue and understanding.

The most important topic was the founding of the SEKEM University.

At the end of a day rich of impression Dr. Schily had to depart. But an Egyptian proverb says: who has ever drunk from the Nile will always return...



*Dr. Sigward von Laue*

## New Reservoir Improves the Water Supply



**The reservoir shortly before completion**

To supply the companies, hospital and houses on the farm with high quality water at any time, SEKEM has erected a large concrete reservoir.

With its height of 6 meters it holds almost 100cbm of water which equals a reserve for three days, in case the normal supply should be cut.

The reservoir supplies two pumps which send the water to a pressure tank holding 500 liters and supplying the houses for the employees. This way, three smaller pumps could be saved, change that will lead to less problems than before.

*Dieter Marienfeld*

## Conytex Enlarges the Production Facilities

SEKEM's textile company „Conytex“ has enlarged its production facilities in order to meet the fast growing demand from USA and Europe.

The area to be used for production was enlarged by 540m<sup>2</sup> in the last weeks. A second building phase is planned to begin in summer and shall bring another 290m<sup>2</sup>.

The extension brings several improvements for the workflow. The sewing will be done on a single floor and together with the consecutive steps of production.



Inconvenient spreading of the production to two floors will no longer be necessary. The production manager will greatly profit as it will be easier to oversee the production as a whole. The packaging unit has already moved and is now on the ground level. A spacious area allows a better overview and the loading of

the vehicles for shipping will be much easier from the ground floor.

The new building also allows space for the production of the dolls and carpets which used to be done in a different building altogether. The new location greatly improves the cooperation between the departments as the dolls

are now made under one roof from cutting to sewing and packaging. All in all Conytex employs now 220 people and integrated part of the sewing education of the Vocational training Centre in the new building. New work places will follow by the end of the year.

*Konstanze Abouleish*

## Atos Receives New Machine

SEKEM's pharmaceutical company Atos received a new machine. The used „IMA C21“ from Organic Flavour Company/ Piramide was delivered end of February and immediately taken over by the production team, in

order to respond to the fast growing demand for herbal tea on the Egyptian market. The machine was originally used by SEKEM's partner company „Euroherb“ in The Netherlands.

*Christophe Floride*



## Announcement



The Society for the Support of Cultural Development in Egypt invites all friends to a „SEKEM day“ in Stuttgart:

Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish will give a lecture on the latest developments in SEKEM on Saturday, 6th of May at the Eurythmeum in Stuttgart and there will be opportunities for discussion, information on the latest projects, some SEKEM products for sale and a time to meet up again with friends. Please note the date and invite your friends to join - we are looking forward to meeting you!

At the same day the society will hold its annual members meeting, a separate invitation will be sent to all members.

Further information and details for the day will soon be available at [www.sekem-freunde.de](http://www.sekem-freunde.de)

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