

Dear Reader,

it is often said that the dialogue between Europe and the Middle East should be intensified to bridge differences. It is claimed that this applies particularly to the need of furthering the encounter of the religions. Politicians both in Germany and Europe frequently underline the importance of discussing what keeps our cultures apart and what unites them.

While this assessment is certainly correct, something is obviously missing. *"Everything is language, but language is not everything"* the German philosopher and political writer Karl Jaspers used to say. As vital as the political and societal exchange of the cultures is: the encounter often proclaimed will only become an encounter proper if it encompasses everything that cannot be expressed through oral dialogue. And that, as every traveller knows, is quite a lot.

Discussion in the traditional sense is also a very European tradition. But it is the independent experience with all senses of what is truly different that can incite us to develop the courage to let the aforementioned encounter become a proper one.

In this edition of SEKEM Insight you will find a notice on the traditional Islam seminar to be held in SEKEM in April. Your editorial team would like to invite you to experience the dialogue of the cultures yourself. In Egypt and with all your senses.

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Centre for Curative Care Receives New Wood Workshop



Childrens' wooden toys production at the centre of curative care in SEKEM

SEKEM's centre for curative care has just received a new workshop for woodwork training. Five adults are currently being trained in the workshop by one teacher. They produce wooden toys that are being sold in the SEKEM school or at exhibitions in Cairo.

The adults generally carry out most of the steps of their work independently: the sawing of wheels, filing and sanding of the parts and also the oiling with bees wax or natu-

ral oils of the finished toy. The teachers take particular care that the trainees will encounter a diverse set of small challenges during their work including different kinds and sequences of work. In the production of the toys, only local wood is used that actually grows on the SEKEM farm: Persian lilac, Neem and mulberry tree wood. A second workshop focussing on paper production is under construction.

Constantin Court



Better Quality Through Advanced Technology

ISIS increases tea-bag production, creates workplaces

SEKEMs ISIS, market leader in Egypt in the field of tea-bagged herbal teas, has introduced a new tea-bagging machine in February after overcoming many obstacles and almost a year of preparation.

The new „IMA C27“ ist double as fast as its predecessor and increases the production of tea bags for the Egyptian market significantly. The outstanding advantage of the new machine is the lack of need to rely on aluminium staplers for sealing the tea bags. This does not only reduce potential environmental pollution but also the cost for buying and transporting additional resources.

The machine which had only been introduced in April 2005 at the Interpack fair in Düsseldorf, represents the epitome of industrial technological design in tea-bag production. The C27 can produce up to 250 tea bags per minute and is based on a traditional two-chamber tea bag for maximum quality and flavour.



The new tea-bagging machine C27 at ISIS

For Christophe Floride, General Manager of ISIS, a dream comes true with the purchase of the new machine. Its acquisition brought a year of preparatory work for him and his team. To allow only the best technicians to work on and maintain the new facility, two of SEKEMs technicians spent time

with the machine's manufacturer in Italy to receive special training.

The new machine creates 4 new workplaces at ISIS the teas of which have become a much sought-after commodity in Egypt with double-digit growth rates.

Bijan Kafi, Christophe Floride

Traditional Islam Seminar in SEKEM

Annual Seminar for European Visitors in April

The traditional Islam seminar that has already been held for several years on SEKEM's mother farm is going to take place this year 8-13 April on the initiative's premises near Belbeis.

The one-week event that gives visitors from abroad the chance to experience Islam not only theoretically but also practically in Egypt through direct exchange with leading personalities from SEKEM will again offer a wide

selection of activities throughout the 7 days.

The seminar that will as always be held in the presence of Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish is comprised of an introduction into Arabic scripture and song as well as participation in the weekly school reunions at the SEKEM School. In addition to the regular seminar sessions on the Qu'ran and history of Islam itself, the week will include

visits to Old Cairo, several mosques and churches and the conclusive participation in the ritual prayer at the SEKEM mosque.

Registration is still open at:

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Bijan Kafi, Regina Hanel



SEKEM at the Biofach 2007

From 15-18 February SEKEM participated in Europe's biggest professional fair for organic food production and trading, BioFach 2007.

The tradeshow for organic produce from all parts of the world received almost 50.000 visitors this year and was an excellent chance for SEKEM to exhibit its wide range of products and present new developments and assortments.

SEKEM staff at the event usually take the chance of meeting professionals in the organic food market from all over the world. This time, the initiative's representatives met specialized importers and manufacturers,



Egypt's main booth at BioFach 2007

salespersons from organic supermarket chains, health food shops, and wholesalers, textiles producers and even cosmetics manufacturers. All of them were keen on collaborating with SEKEM's 6 firms, particularly in the field of demeter and fairtrade produce such as vegetables, fruits, cereals or SEKEM's product of all-times: high-quality, fairtrade-certified cotton.

SEKEM's representatives experience an excellent and personal atmosphere at the fair and realized that the market is growing steadily and thus offers best opportunities for SEKEM products to grow at the same pace.

Bijan Kafi

Impressions from SEKEM



Bombax Tree

The Bombax or kapok tree, botanically the bombax ceiba, offers a spectacular sight throughout its short blooming time on the premises of SEKEM's Cairo branch offices. The huge, Magnolia-shaped buds during this time develop into extraordinarily bulky flowers that, depending on the region, change their colour from light rosé to dark red. The stem of the

Bombax tree is covered with large, cylindrical thorns and the fully developed fruits contain a fiber called kapok that is well-known in Europe too for bed fillings and other uses. The "Bombax" is an excellent example for how exotic the diversity of the flora in Egypt can be, even in artificially irrigated desert areas.



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