

# The Hospital of the Future: A Healthy Building

**Hospitals face a huge backlog in the need for ecological design – functionality, comfort and environmental compatibility can all go together.**

Ecological design should come as standard, especially for Health Sector facilities. Such design conserves both resources and the environment and also ensures a feeling of wellbeing for staff, visitors and – above all – patients. Indeed, a feeling of wellbeing can – according to the holistic view – have an extremely positive influence on the healing process. Cutting-edge concepts and technical developments form a central theme of the first European healthcare congress on Sustainable Products and Practices, which will take place between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of October in Vienna. “CleanMed Europe” ([www.cleanmed.org](http://www.cleanmed.org)) is being jointly organised by the Viennese Institute for Sustainable Health Care in partnership with the Wiener Krankenanstaltenverbund (Vienna Hospital Association) and the international organisation Healthcare Without Harm ([www.noharm.org](http://www.noharm.org)).

Among others, the renowned architect Robin Guenther (Guenther 5 Architects, New York) will participate as a speaker on the subject of “environmentally sound building design”. For decades, she has been promoting the environmentally sound design of buildings in the health care sector. She was recently awarded the title of “Environmental Champion” for her visionary understanding of architecture. Alongside ecological compatibility, in her work, Guenther focuses on eradicating stress for all users and supporting the healing process and a healthy lifestyle, as well as better orientation in complex modern health systems.

In building hospitals according to ecological principles, natural lighting and ventilation play an important – but increasingly far too often overlooked – role. “More natural daylight and ventilation can be achieved by using atriums or inner courtyards”, explains Patrick Jung (Jung Ingenieure, Cologne), describing the building options, “and at the same time, with new technical concepts, a large proportion of the energy used in running the hospital can be regained without having a detrimental effect on hygiene requirements.” At CleanMed Europe, Jung will present successful energy efficiency concepts from Germany. Olav P. Jorgensen (Esbensen Consulting Engineers A/S Copenhagen) will report on approaches, projects and successes from Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands and Poland.

“Further essential criteria for comfort in buildings are noise reduction, electromagnetic quality and the air quality inside the building”, stresses Dr. Bernhard Lipp of the Austrian Institute for Healthy and Ecological Building (IBO), thus underlining the significance of the building materials used. International projects and the complete refurbishment of a pavilion in the Baumgartner Hoehe hospital in Vienna show that it is possible to avoid the use of the problematic material PVC and halogenated hydrocarbons without incurring extensive extra costs. Even if there is no chance of reconstruction or new construction, atmosphere can be significantly improved and, therefore, the comfort levels of everyone raised with the use of colours – ecologically friendly ones of course.