

Statement from CEO Bernd Spalt

25 March 2020

We're in this together – and we'll get through this together!

The coronavirus crisis is impacting all of us, across all borders, sectors, and regardless of age. Supporting each other in tough times is a key human quality and societal goal. The fight against the #coronavirus must be in a united and determined manner. All of us are very much aware that we need to be able to rely on each other. After all, this crisis is a challenge that can only be tackled by all of us together.

Across the globe, the current situation is a uniquely difficult one, with literally billions of people worried about their jobs, their finances and investments and – most importantly of all – their own health, as well as that of the people they love. At Erste, we have put in place measures to ensure the health and well-being of both our 47,000 employees and 16 million customers, ranging from extensive hygienic measures at our branches to the social distancing made possible by having most all of our staff work from home office whenever possible.

Customers can count on Erste to remain up and running

Banks have an important role to play in helping individuals and companies face the many challenges raised by the current crisis. In these challenging days, our banks across Austria and CEE are continuing to service customers: our client advisors, risk managers, IT specialists, analysts ... absolutely everybody in this company is committed to helping our clients – and by doing so, the societies which we are a part of. It's great to see that spirit, dedication and determination!

Our banking services have remained up and running, also thanks to our digital banking offerings, our 24/7 call centers, and the contactless payment solutions we offer. Our customers can continue to make purchases, transfers and securities transactions like they are used to doing. Even as we encourage customers to avoid branch visits if at all possible, all of our branches in Austria and the large majority of our branches in our other markets remain open, partly under shorter hours.

A common challenge demands a joint response

As an integral part of the real economy in Central and Eastern Europe, we are fully committed to helping businesses, entrepreneurs and households in the region get through this crisis. We know that speed matters even more than usual, but we also believe that the most effective and sustainable responses to the challenges businesses and households are facing are not ones that pursue a simplistic "one-size-fits-all" approach. The coronavirus is a shared challenge. So, too, is the economic downturn it has caused. It must be addressed with practicality, well-informed decisions and coordination among all stakeholders.

That is why we are working closely with governments, central banks, international financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders to make sure that our customers receive the direct and indirect financial or non-financial support they need as quickly and effectively as possible. That support will help keep our customers' businesses running, their staff paid and their bills taken care of. This is what we are already doing by postponing installments, offering bridge loans, and providing tailored advice and individual solutions for our customers across all our markets. Not everything we are doing may run perfectly from the very start -- but our commitment is to make sure the help we provide our clients gets better, faster and more effective each and every day.

As part of our response to this unique crisis, we have also chosen to postpone our annual general meeting to a later date this year and to review the 2019 dividend proposal we had made.

We will get through this crisis only together today and tomorrow. Because apart from meeting the demands of daily crisis management, it is more important than ever not to lose sight of the future we want to live in. Together.

To find out in more detail what specific steps our subsidiaries in seven markets in the CEE region are taking to help their retail and business customers, please visit the banks' websites:

www.erstebank.at
www.csas.cz
www.slsp.sk
www.erstebank.hu
www.bcr.ro
www.erstebank.hr
www.erstebank.rs

Press department

Carmen Staicu
Peter Klopf
Martin Wende

Tel: +43 50100 – 11681
Tel: +43 50100 – 11676
Tel: +43 50100 – 11680

Email: carmen.staicu@erstegroup.com
Email: peter.klopf@erstegroup.com
Email: martin.wende@erstegroup.com

This press release is also available at: www.erstegroup.com/pressrelease