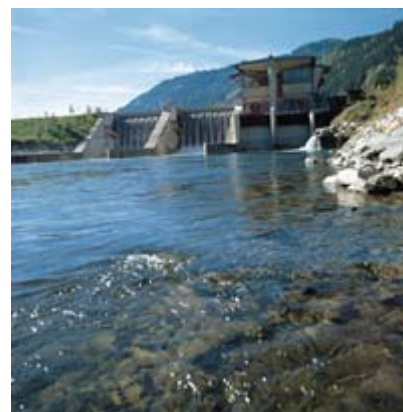


Erste Bank cuts CO2 emissions by more than half

Starting today, Erste Bank and its subsidiaries will buy only green electricity. With the switch to the power utility “Naturkraft Energievertriebsgesellschaft m.b.H. (Naturkraft) Erste Bank will lower its CO2 emissions by more than 50%. Half of the electricity supplied is produced by a small hydropower plant in Styria owned by the bank.

Erste Bank and its Austrian subsidiaries are switching to Naturkraft effective 1 April, therefore, changing to climate-neutral electricity that is free of nuclear power. 389 business locations will be supplied with 43 GWh per year under a contract that runs until 2015. What is special about this switch in utility is that Naturkraft receives 50% of the electricity it supplies to Erste Bank from the small hydropower plant Unzmarkt-Frauenburg, which is owned by Erste Bank. Therefore, Erste Bank indirectly produces half of the electricity it needs itself. Naturkraft supplies electricity to Erste Bank that is generated exclusively from biomass, solar, wind and hydro power. Naturkraft is certified by TÜV Austria as a supplier of green and environmentally benign electricity. “This electricity does not produce CO2 emissions or create any radioactive waste,” explained Thomas Uher, Management Board Spokesman of Erste Bank Oesterreich. This switch in power utility lowers the CO2 footprint of Erste Bank by more than 50%. “By cutting our CO2 footprint in half, we save roughly the amount of fuel needed to drive 1200 times around the world in a family car,” said Mr. Uher.

Naturkraft is one of the three principal suppliers of green electricity in Austria and a subsidiary of EAA- EnergieAllianz Austria. “Demand for green electricity is increasing every year,” Leopold Wanzenböck, Managing Director of Naturkraft described the trend towards sustainable energy. “Households, companies and even municipalities are taking advantage of this possibility to lower their CO2 emissions.” Erste Bank is the largest individual customer of Naturkraft to date.



Hydropower plant in Unzmarkt-Frauenburg

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