



**Our sustainable  
commitment to  
society.**

**ERSTE**   
Group



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# ERSTE Foundation: Renewing the Sparkasse principle from the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the present



Savings book from 1828

## The Sparkasse idea

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the process of industrialisation was experienced as a radical upheaval. People from the countryside streamed into the towns and cities in huge numbers to find work. New social classes emerged, which were without any kind of social cover. Bank services and interest-yielding investment were only accessible to the well-off. From about 1800 onwards, however, the idea of the savings bank, from its beginnings in the UK and Germany, spread all over Europe. As early as 1819, the "Erste Österreichische Spar-Casse" was set up by a clergyman named Johann Baptist Weber and a group of Viennese citizens.

The foundation of the "Erste Österreichische Spar-Casse" at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a pioneering social initiative, which enabled people to take control of their lives by making provision for themselves.

What started out as an experiment in Vienna's second district developed into a successful model in the countries of the Danube Monarchy. Sparkassen arose in many parts of Austria at that time, as well as in Central and Eastern Europe: in Ljubljana, Innsbruck, Bregenz and Split in 1822, in Graz and Prague in 1825, in Gorizia in 1831, in Klagenfurt in 1835, in Dubrovnik and Brasov in 1835, in Budapest in 1839, in Sibiu and Zadar in 1841, in Bratislava and Trieste in 1842 and in Lviv, Kosice and Trnava in 1844.



## The "Erste Österreichische Spar-Casse"

In the deed of foundation, the Emperor officially recognised the benefit to the common good that this savings bank represented. The founders provided security for the deposits paid in out of their own private assets, and the first customers were served by honorary employees. In the following period, factory workers and domestic staff and artisans were for the first time able to save money on an interest-earning basis, thus making provision for their own future. The first savings book was issued to a woman, Marie Schwarz.

In 1993 the "savings association" became a bank with a proprietor, and in 1997 Erste Bank went public. Over the next few years it grew to become one of the largest retail banks in Central and Eastern Europe. In 2003 the proprietor was converted into the ERSTE Foundation. The historical roots of the Sparkasse principle form an important model and inspiration for our present-day social commitment.

The bee is the logo of the ERSTE Foundation. For over a hundred years it was the symbol of the "Erste Österreichische Spar-Casse" – combined with the slogan "work, collect, increase". The industrious bees, gathering and storing honey, became the "heraldic beasts" of saving. As pollinators they also enable others to profit from the fruits of their labours. Financial and social security strengthens the individual and strengthens society.



**ERSTE Stiftung**

**More information:**  
[www.erstestiftung.org](http://www.erstestiftung.org)



# ERSTE Foundation: A shareholder with social responsibility



©Aleksandra Pawloff

## Value-oriented basis

The ERSTE Foundation is the main shareholder of Erste Group, securing the independent future of one of the biggest financial services providers in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe.

Emerging in 2003 from the “Erste Oesterreichische Spar-Casse”, the owner of Erste Group carries the principles on which the original founders based their savings banks right through into the future: people in challenging situations should be empowered. Economic development needs to have a value-oriented basis that will enable all members of society to share in progress and prosperity.

## Strengthening civil society

The ERSTE Foundation therefore also sees itself as being under an obligation, in the face of economic, social and regulatory change, to strengthen the values that form the basis of Erste Group's business model (its Statement of Purpose). As the biggest of the Austrian Sparkasse foundations, the ERSTE Foundation is very much involved in the further development of this Sparkasse model as a strong common basis for the sector. One of its aims is to give the content of the Sparkasse principle a future-oriented framework.

The Foundation devotes part of its revenues to the public welfare of the region in which Erste Group operates. It invests in strengthening civil society, in the inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups, and in contemporary art in Europe. From its beginnings, the Foundation has seen itself as a creative workshop for ideas and innovation, a laboratory for the topics of the future. Through strategic co-operations with partners and networks, the effectiveness of the Foundation's projects is increased.



©Toni Rappersberger

## Three focus points

### Development of social infrastructures

In its aim, the Foundation has three focus points. On the one hand, it develops social infrastructures – from financial services for people who do not have a bank, to “Capacity Building” for NGOs, to digital solutions for social problems. On the other hand, it provides inspiring models of successful social integration, social intervention and social innovation. The Foundation's aim here is to stimulate others to make their own commitment. Its projects are intended to serve as a reference for partnerships with other players – and not just in the not-for-profit sector.

### Creating knowledge

The ERSTE Foundation's work is aimed at increasing awareness and creating knowledge among adult, active citizens of Europe. We must ensure that liberal-democratic values and European solidarity can be proclaimed and promoted. Understanding Europe and the crisis it faces is the basic prerequisite for meeting the challenges of today and creating new perspectives together.

### Addressing critical social developments

Finally, the ERSTE Foundation envisages a differentiated approach to critical social developments for those involved in artistic and cultural creativity, acting as a channel between them and the stakeholders of civil society.



**ERSTE Stiftung**

**More information:**  
[www.erstestiftung.org](http://www.erstestiftung.org)



# Social Banking

## For us, what matters is development

### Social Banking as we understand it

For us, the purpose of Social Banking is not to achieve any direct profit, but to facilitate development whereby our customers can participate fully in civil society.



©Daniel Hinterramskogler

Micro loan borrower Mario Lazzer in his restaurant "Marco Polo"

### Our initiatives

Our initiatives are aimed at various target groups, because each of these is faced with certain challenges at some point in their lives. By providing targeted banking services, we want to make a contribution to overcoming these challenges.

#### For Best Students

With our "For Best Students" initiative, students receive the necessary funds to finance their tuition fees, their living costs and similar. In addition, we offer online advisory tools providing information on different aspects of student life.

#### A career with children

Every mother and father has to decide for themselves whether to combine a career with having a family, and if so how to achieve this. We support all career-minded parents who want to make a full return to work and would like to continue their planned career within the family environment. We invest in them, providing support in childcare, children's nurseries, afternoon care, school fees, au-pairs and one-off costs. In return – as in the case of investment in a start-up company – we have a stake in the salary.

#### Micro loans

For people who are emerging from unemployment or who are threatened with unemployment, we offer micro loans (in cooperation with the Social Ministry (BMASK)) for the transition from unemployment to independence. BMASK takes care of the support and preparation of the future entrepreneurs, while Erste Bank assumes the risk and the loan transaction. Customers are given support from the European Investment Fund (EIF) in the form of default guarantees, and from Wiener Städtische in the form of cost-free life assurance.

#### A Bank for charitable organisations

Erste Bank is a bank and partner for NGOs in the social and environment sector. We undertake all donations management for our customers free of charge. Our partnership is not limited to payment transactions, however – we also provide support in generating donations (donation service, Hilfreich app) and numerous individual initiatives (e.g. a "donation bond" for Caritas, acting as paying agent for the "Jugend Eine Welt" bond, etc.). Here too, with the EIF guarantee we are able to facilitate financing for numerous NGOs which are organised as associations.

# Social Banking

## For us, what matters is development

### Social enterprises – a new economic phenomenon

Erste Group is one of the leading bank groups providing finance to social enterprises in Central and Eastern Europe. We support social entrepreneur customers with financing shortly after the formation stage, offering business management advice as well as access to “Business Angels” and pro bono services. In addition, we support this group of customers through the Erste Bank GründerCenter.

Social enterprises often have to cope with less than ideal starting conditions. While conventional start-up entrepreneurs benefit from an extensive range of financial supporters, many support services are not open to social entrepreneurs because they are not profit-oriented.

We aim to be part of the network for social entrepreneurs, and we want to help find effective solutions for the social problems facing our society.

We are therefore continually extending our expertise regarding the growing “social enterprise” customer group. In order to meet their requirements,

- we have created a separate customer management concept and
- a tailor-made process for the decision-making process in regard to risks,
- we provide market-oriented financing solutions which also include a separate credit line,
- and we provide support in the form of advice and training in the effective implementation of business ideas.

### Cooperation with the European Investment Fund

In this area we have recently been cooperating with the European Investment Fund (EIF), in the context of the EU's EaSI (Employment and Social Innovation) programme. Through this cooperation, we are the first bank in Austria to have an EIF default guarantee specially for social enterprises at our disposal. This means that we are able to support social entrepreneurs and NGOs with loans under favourable conditions for the realisation of their business ideas, as well as providing a boost to donations.

### Impact Hub Vienna and Social City Wien

We are a strategic partner of Impact Hub Vienna, which brings together social entrepreneur businesses in Vienna. The members of this community are made up of businesses, social investors, lawyers, advisers, coaches and many more. The Hub in Vienna offers like-minded people a platform for the exchange of knowledge and for coaching, and is part of an international community working in close cooperation.

We also support Social City Wien. This independent platform for social innovation establishes links with private philanthropic funding bodies and facilitates co-operations with businesses that want to invest in corporate social responsibility (CSR).



# Die Zweite Sparkasse

## Help for those who struggle to manage on their own

Die Zweite Sparkasse is for people who “need a helping hand”.

### Not for profit

Die Zweite Sparkasse does not aim to make money. Its sole aim is to support as many people as possible by providing them with bank services that would otherwise be unavailable to them.

### Helping people to help themselves

Our aim is to provide competent advice so that our customers can solve their financial problems and get back on their feet. We only accept customers who are referred to us by a **social organisation** which is also providing **support** to them at the same time.

### Honorary activity

Die Zweite Sparkasse is managed exclusively by around 330 employees who work on an honorary basis. The basis for the success of Die Zweite Sparkasse is that our employees deal with their customers in a respectful manner and on an equal footing, building up trust and allowing plenty of time to give them the advice they need.

### Services

The most important product offered by Die Zweite Sparkasse is a **basic account** provided **free of charge** for three years, which includes a debit card and access to online banking, but does not provide any overdraft facility. Any customer who is not on a secure financial footing after three years will be provided with more intensive advice and support.

A very important aspect as far as the customers are concerned is the security of livelihood in the context of any damaging event, provided by the **insurance package** from Wiener Städtische Versicherung: this includes free legal advice on a quarterly basis, free accident insurance and a micro household insurance policy with an affordable premium.

The **managed account** – which is for anyone who has difficulty managing their money – ensures that rent, gas and electricity bills and other vital payments are paid as a priority, leaving only the remainder to be disposed of freely.

### Prevention – the “I €AN” workshop

In workshops on handling money properly, our staff teach young people about debt prevention, so that they never have to become customers of Die Zweite Sparkasse.

**Video:**

[www.sparkasse.at/diezweitesparkasse/I-CAN](http://www.sparkasse.at/diezweitesparkasse/I-CAN)

### Aim

The aim of Die Zweite Sparkasse is to provide our customers with advice and support, in such a way that they are able to achieve their own financial stabilisation. If they succeed in doing so, they will be offered an account at Erste Bank or one of the Sparkassen.

Over the last 10 years this project – which is probably the only one of its kind in the world – has proved so successful that even the European Union, in its discussions on the “right to an account”, has repeatedly named Die Zweite Sparkasse as a model example.

**More information:**

[www.sparkasse.at/diezweitesparkasse/Zweite-Sparkasse](http://www.sparkasse.at/diezweitesparkasse/Zweite-Sparkasse)





# Time Bank

## The volunteering portal of Erste Bank und Sparkassen

Time Bank is based on the idea that money is not the only currency in which we can donate. Personal commitment and practical help are often needed much more. The time donated by our employees can be used and devoted to good purposes by our partner organisations.

*Time Bank is a concept that brings people who have spare time into contact with people who need time urgently.*



Unlike donating money, donating time leads to personal contact with other people's lives. Donating time can be a very moving experience. Through Time Bank, we bring our employees into contact with NGOs all over Austria.

**More information:**  
[www.erste-time-bank.org](http://www.erste-time-bank.org)

### What makes Time Bank so special

#### It's meaningful

Our employees who use Time Bank work for organisations that stand for an inclusive society and the value of the individual.

#### It's worthwhile

Working with Time Bank is a satisfying experience. Time is being used for a good purpose, our employees are doing something important for society, and that feels good.

#### It offers a new perspective

Donating time is direct. Our employees are not just helping from a distance, they are in direct contact with life. They have an opportunity to get to know interesting people and gain profound experience.

#### It can fit in with the individual

Through flexible planning, our employees can combine voluntary work with their job. A few hours a month, perhaps 2 days a year, are a good start. Most people get a taste for it and want to give more of their time.



Employees at the Kolpinghaus – home baking in a care home



# FLiP

## Erste Financial Life Park

*“An investment in education pays the best interest.”*

So said Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), one of the founding fathers of the United States, inventor of the lightning conductor, and founder of the first American lending library.

This principle forms the basis of the Erste Financial Life Park. Here, **children and young people** from the age of 10 upwards learn about the importance of planning a budget, knowing about price and value, making informed decisions and being aware of global interdependence. Because without a knowledge and understanding of these complex connections, they will find it hard in their lives to handle money sensibly.

### Conveying knowledge in a fun way

Over the course of a two-hour tour the groups, under the guidance of professional knowledge presenters, interact with five topic stations.

Supported by a **“Wallet”** (a specially configured tablet computer), the attendees “play” interactively with the content. In addition to the knowledge stations, the FLiP offers an interactive knowledge store, a collection of historical saving aids, a library and a workshop/seminar room.

**Tours** are available **for three age groups**: 10-14 years, 15-17 years and over 18 years. The tours are designed to correspond to the level of knowledge and understanding of each age group.

An **academic panel** of independent experts ensures that the content is not only factually correct but also reflects curriculum requirements.

### Aims

The FLiP is an installation which is the only one of its kind anywhere in the world. Its aim is to improve the **financial skills** of children and young people and to arouse their interest in financial matters. In the economic, social and global context, financial knowledge is conveyed at multimedia-based, digital and personal levels.

### Enhancing personal financial responsibility

Learning how to handle money responsibly cannot start at too early an age. The FLiP aims to enhance **risk awareness** among young people, to increase security in dealing with money, and to increase personal financial responsibility. In so doing it contributes to the prevention of indebtedness and ultimately also to the **prevention of poverty**.

### Supporting the education system

The FLiP supports the education system in the provision of financial education.

Even during the development stage for the FLiP, there was close cooperation with representatives of a wide variety of types of schools and educational institutions. There is extensive teaching material on the website for teachers to use both before and after a trip to the FLiP.

The Erste Financial Life Park has no structural or communication barriers of any kind. Its facilities are integrative and are aimed at **all types of school and all educational levels**.

**More information:**  
[www.financiallifepark.at](http://www.financiallifepark.at)

FLiP | Erste Financial  
Life Park



©Andreas Keller

# MehrWERT

## Our sponsoring programme

For us, sponsoring means any voluntary promotion and support of institutions, initiatives and projects in the social, cultural and educational spheres.

### Our commitment to social responsibility

The *MehrWERT* sponsoring programme is our commitment to social responsibility and to values which the company regards as worthy of promotion and support. Values that extend beyond the direct business sphere of the company. Sponsoring, as we understand it, is not concealed self-advertising, or a marketing tool, or a form of initial business contact intended to provide profit or business advantage to the company in one way or another, but an added value – a “*MehrWERT*” – freely given by the company. Added value which we have gained from our business activity and which we give back to society.

#### Human, social, cultural

It is therefore intangible values – human, social, cultural – that we as a company are committed to. Values that have not been created by us, but which we consider valuable. This *MehrWERT* is passed on to people through the support and promotion we give to institutions, initiatives and projects, and is ultimately intended for the good of the individual with his or her social and cultural needs.

For us, the *MehrWERT* sponsoring programme of Erste Bank is a **visible** acknowledgement of our responsibility towards society and the individual. It is an expression of the way we see ourselves. We see it as a matter of course that we as a company should give this added value, this *MehrWERT*.

We also support the ZOOM children’s museum, the Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art, the Secession, the Jeunesse, the International Children’s Film Festival, the Viennale, Kulturtransfer, Hunger auf Kunst und Kultur, the Caritas Kulturbuddy Initiative, lobby.16 and much more.

# Vermehrt Schönes!

More information:  
[www.sponsoring.erstebank.at](http://www.sponsoring.erstebank.at)



Erste Bank is part of Erste Group, and the *MehrWERT* sponsoring programme is part of the *ExtraVALUE* programme which has been defined for Erste Group.



# Being aware

## For the sake of the environment

*“... sustainable development means using our existing natural resources in such a way that future generations will also be able to use these resources in the same way ...”*

Erste Bank is committed to this principle in its environmental strategy.

### Our strategy is based on four pillars

1. The setting up of an environment management system
2. The establishment of a supply chain management system which covers all products and services necessary for bank business
3. The inclusion of ecological criteria in our bank products and services
4. Cooperation with NGOs operating in the environment sphere

### Paper reduction

Modern paper-saving solutions are used in our offices. In addition, our digital platform

“George” – electronic banking with various apps for mobile phones – enables our customers to carry out bank transactions anywhere, any time without paper documents. As a matter of principle, throughout the Group we use 100% recycled paper as copy paper, both for internal purposes and for customer purposes.

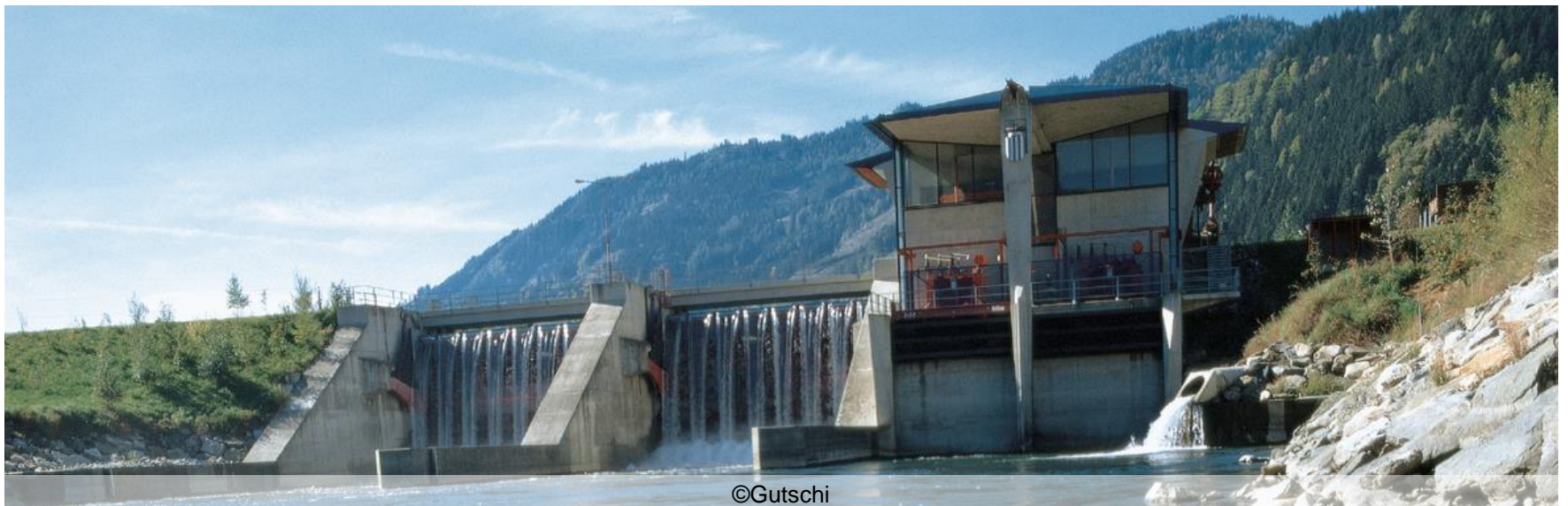
### Environmentally friendly electricity

Since 2012 Erste Group has been procuring electrical energy for its Austrian premises which is exclusively derived from biomass and solar/wind/water power.

#### The Unzmarkt-Frauenburg small hydroelectric power plant

Reducing our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Austria by 70%.

We are proud that around 50% of our consumption comes from the **Unzmarkt-Frauenburg small hydroelectric power plant** in Styria, which is owned by Erste Group. We are therefore producing a significant portion of our electrical energy requirement ourselves. We also encourage our subsidiaries in the CEE countries to use renewable energies. Our subsidiary in Croatia has been using 100% electricity from renewable sources since June 2014.



©Gutschi

# Being aware

## Environmentally friendly headquarters

### Vienna headquarters

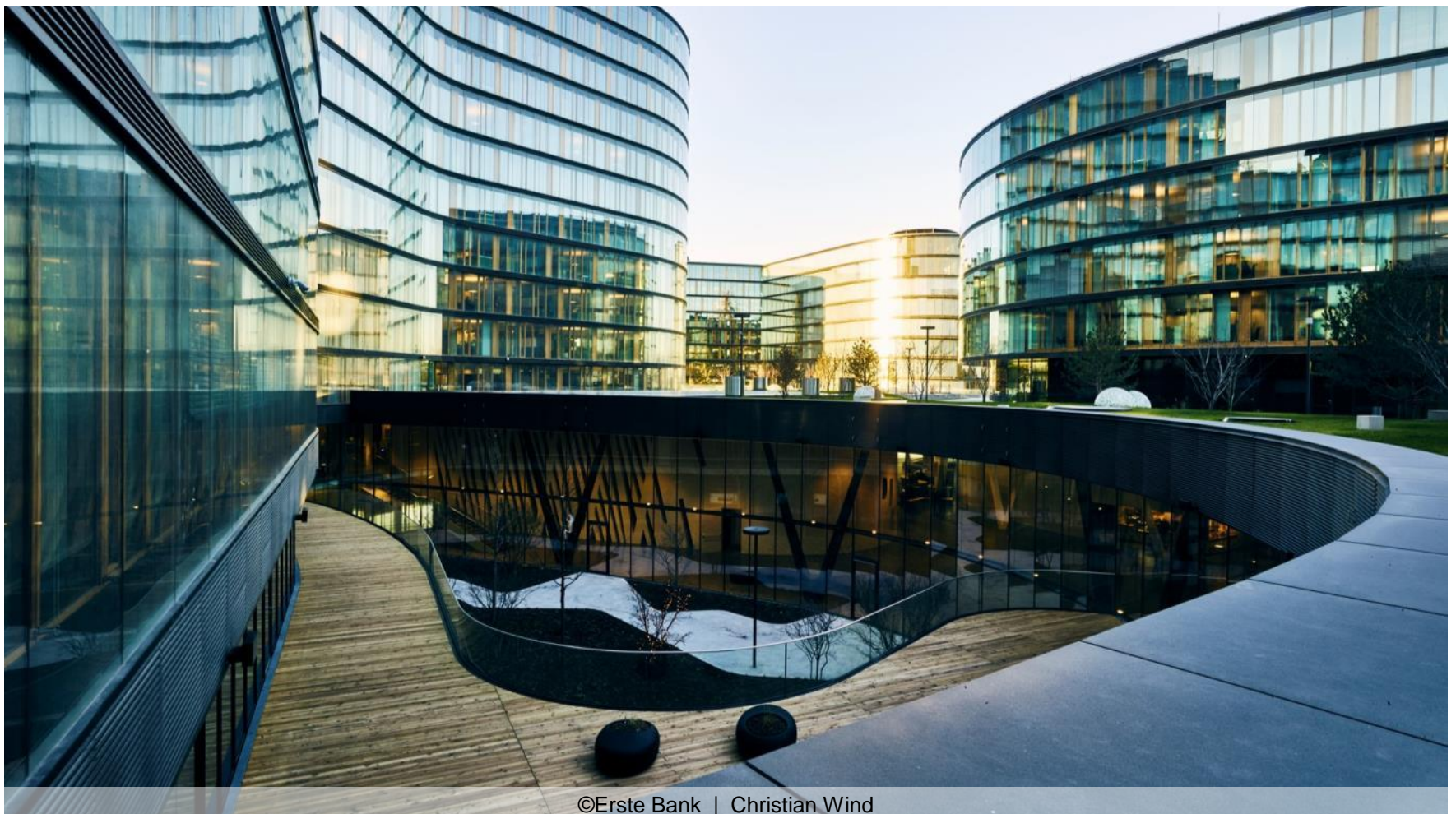
Since the beginning of 2016 approximately 4,500 employees of Erste Group, Erste Bank Österreich and their subsidiaries have been brought under one roof in our new headquarters in Vienna.

#### Award for ecological quality

Following its completion, “Erste Campus” was awarded the “Platinum DGNi” certificate for its ecological qualities. The location is in the direct vicinity of the new main railway station in Vienna and many tram, bus and underground lines, which encourages our employees to switch to public transport.

#### Energy efficiency and sustainability

The building is very energy-efficient, and great importance was attached to ecological sustainability during planning and in the choice of materials. For example, the timber for the façade was sourced from sustainable forest management in Austrian and Central European forests. The rooms are fitted exclusively with energy-saving LED lighting. The heating/cooling is provided entirely by district heating and cooling and by geothermal energy. We therefore do not use any fossil fuels at all. Rainwater is collected and used for the WC systems.



©Erste Bank | Christian Wind



# Return on investment – with responsibility

## Sustainable investment

### Socially responsible investments

More and more investors are thinking not just about the financial key figures when they invest their money, but also about ethical, social and environmental factors. Sustainable investments, also referred to as “Socially Responsible Investments” (SRI), are therefore becoming increasingly important.

The environment, society and the economy are part of a whole picture – they depend on each other and need each other.

*Our role as a responsible company consists in taking the environment, society and the economy into consideration in all our decision-making.*

### The funds we offer meet the ESG criteria

Our investment company ERSTE-SPARINVEST has been offering sustainable funds since 2001, based not only on revenues, security and liquidity but also on environmental, social and governance considerations (the “ESG criteria”).

Thus our investment decisions are made on a broader, future-oriented basis. As a result, investors have the opportunity to invest in companies that share their ethical values. One thing has become clear: acting responsibly and getting a good return on investment are by no means in contradiction. Our sustainable investments cover the following investment types:

- bonds,
- shares,
- asset allocation (mixed funds),
- microfinance and
- speciality funds focused on the environment (green bonds)

and are managed according to strict rules and clearly defined investment approaches.

For all investors who are interested in matters relating to the environment, society and governance, our specialists publish a quarterly ESG letter which is devoted to a specific topic within this area.

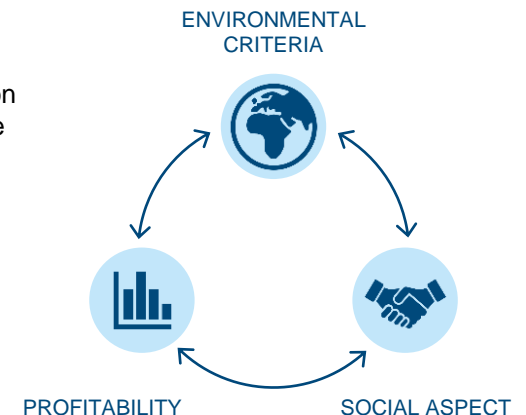
**ESG letter at:**  
[www.esgletter.at](http://www.esgletter.at)

### Investing in sustainable property

ERSTE Immobilien KAG has brought Austria's first sustainable public real estate fund on to the market. The new ERSTE RESPONSIBLE IMMOBILIENFONDS gives investors the possibility of investing in sustainable properties.

With this fund we are pursuing a long-term investment strategy based on sustainable value creation. As well as technical and legal purchase criteria, the “sustainability list” forms the decision-making basis for investment in property.

We base our decision to invest in a new property on environmental criteria, the social aspect and the economic viability of the property.



**Sustainability list at:**  
[www.ersteimmobilien.at](http://www.ersteimmobilien.at)



## Important legal information

This is an advertising communication. Unless otherwise stated, the data source is ERSTE-SPARINVEST Kapitalanlagegesellschaft m.b.H., Erste Asset Management GmbH and ERSTE Immobilien Kapitalanlagegesellschaft m.b.H. Our communication languages are German and English.

The prospectus for UCITS funds (and any amendments thereto) is drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the Austrian Investment Funds Act [InvFG] 2011 as amended, and is published in the "Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung". The simplified prospectus for ERSTE Immobilien Kapitalanlagegesellschaft m.b.H. is drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the Austrian Real Estate Investment Funds Act [ImmoInvFG] 2003 as amended, and is published in the "Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung". For the Alternative Investment Funds (AIF) which are managed by ERSTE-SPARINVEST Kapitalanlagegesellschaft m.b.H., Erste Asset Management GmbH and ERSTE Immobilien Kapitalanlagegesellschaft m.b.H., "Information for investors pursuant to § 21 AIFMG" is drawn up in accordance with the provisions of AIFMG in conjunction with InvFG 2011.

The prospectus, "Information for investors pursuant to § 21 AIFMG", the simplified prospectus and the Key Investor Documents/KID as amended can be downloaded from the websites [www.erste-am.com](http://www.erste-am.com) and [www.ersteimmobilien.at](http://www.ersteimmobilien.at) and are available for interested investors free of charge at the registered office of each management company and at the registered office of each custodian bank. The precise date of the last publication of each prospectus/simplified prospectus, the languages in which the KID is available, and any additional places from which these documents can be obtained are listed on the websites [www.erste-am.com](http://www.erste-am.com) and [www.ersteimmobilien.at](http://www.ersteimmobilien.at).

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