

The Oldest Czech University, Charles University, and the Country's Oldest Bank, Ceska Sporitelna, Are Joining Forces to Strengthen Education and Science in the Czech Republic

- ⇒ **Ceska sporitelna and Charles University signed a Memorandum of Partnership and Cooperation in which they expressed their interest in cooperating on the Elixir for Schools project, managed by the Depositum Bonum Foundation**
- ⇒ **The objective of the cooperation is to provide general support for education and for improving the quality of university graduates**

The two institutions signed a Memorandum of Partnership and Cooperation, in which they expressed their interest in cooperating on the Elixir for Schools project, managed by the Depositum Bonum Foundation. They also want to support the Foundation's other activities aimed at providing general support to education and to increasing the quality of university graduates. Charles University also plans to cooperate with Ceska sporitelna on preparing financial programmes focused on supporting innovation in the Czech economy.

"It is evident that universities in the Czech Republic can achieve sufficient quality if sufficient investment is made into them. That is why I am very glad that Ceska sporitelna has decided to play a role in helping to increase the quality of the Czech university environment and support the efforts of Charles University to continuously improve the quality of its graduates. The main concern is not only the competitiveness of schools and graduates in the EU, but in the global context as well. Support for education must be a shared priority of all of us, for only then do we have a chance to succeed," said the Rector of Charles University, Prof. MUDr. Tomáš Zima, DrSc.

In 2012, Ceska sporitelna established the Depositum Bonum Foundation to make use of extraordinary income from discontinued anonymous passbooks. This is a unique step in the country's history, when a private institution decided not to keep funds to which it is fully entitled by law, but to put them into a foundation, where they will be used for the benefit of the entire society. The mission of the Foundation is to support training in natural sciences and technical disciplines and to increase the Czech Republic's competitiveness. With an endowment of CZK 1.45 billion, the Depositum Bonum Foundation is the largest foundation in the country.

"At Ceska sporitelna, we have viewed education and science as the most successful pillars of the successful development of Czech society for one hundred and ninety years. We are very happy that we can join our efforts to strengthen the level of education with as prestigious a university as Charles University," said Pavel Kysilka, Chairman of the Management Board of Ceska sporitelna. "The Depositum Bonum Foundation focuses on supporting training in natural sciences and technical disciplines that will be decisive in developing the competitiveness of the country and its young people. Charles University is an ideal partner for this."

The Elixir for Schools project that will be supported by Charles University is the flagship project of the Depositum Bonum Foundation. Its objective is to improve the quality of instruction in technical disciplines and natural sciences at schools. The project helps by supporting motivated and inspiring teachers in expanding entertaining and practical instruction, with an emphasis on the acquisition of required knowledge. During its first phase, Elixir for Schools focuses on physics, using the expertise of the specialised educational initiative known as Heuréka. The Foundation has initiated the establishment of 21 regional centres across the Czech Republic, in which physics teachers meet and exchange their experience. Over 400 teachers have visited the centres.

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Ceska sporitelna's profile

Ceska sporitelna is the largest bank in the Czech Republic • More than 5 million clients use its services: individuals, small and medium-sized enterprises, and municipalities, but we also finance large corporations and provide financial market services • Ceska sporitelna has been a member of Erste Group since 2000, and under that brand, it serves affluent and corporate clients • It boasts the most extensive branch and ATM networks in the Czech Republic • It also plays an important role as an innovator: for example, it was the first bank on the Czech market to start issuing contactless cards comprehensively, and to develop a network for their use • *For additional interesting information about Ceska sporitelna, read here.*

Ceska sporitelna – A Responsible partner of the Society

We have invested **CZK 26 000 000 000** into projects for electricity generation from renewable sources and energy-efficient projects • We endowed the Depositum Bonum Foundation with **CZK 1,450,000,000** to support education in the Czech Republic • Together with the Ceska sporitelna Foundation, we donated **CZK 76,000,000** to publicly beneficial projects in 2014 • In 2014, we divided **CZK 2,000,000** among 35 charitable projects on the basis of votes taken in our employee and client grant programmes • **10,000** seniors attended our "Seniors Communicate" educational courses in **900** Czech towns and cities • **2,092** of our employees participated in the Sporitelna Days for Charity. This means that we donated **14,440** of our employees' work hours • **359** of our branches are wheelchair-accessible and over **250** of our ATMs are adapted for use by visually impaired clients • Each employee can use **2** work days for public benefit activities thanks to Sporitelna's Days for Charity • *For additional interesting information about Ceska sporitelna's corporate social responsibility, read here.*

Erste Group's Profile

Erste Group is the leading financial services provider in the Eastern part of the EU • Approximately 46,000 employees serve 16.5 million clients in around 2,900 branches in 7 countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia) • As of YE 2013 Erste Group has reached EUR 199.9 billion in total assets, a net profit of EUR 61 million and a cost-income-ratio of 52.5%.