

Ceska Sporitelna accepts UnionPay Cards

From June 2016, UnionPay cardholders are able to withdraw money from the largest ATM network in the Czech Republic. All of Ceska Sporitelna's 1 390 withdrawing ATMs are starting to accept UnionPay cards, which are the most broadly used payment cards in China. UnionPay, the bankcard association serving the world's largest cardholder base, is also strong in Asian countries and grows significantly in Russia. Apart from withdrawing cash UnionPay card holders can also check the balance on their account. They can use this service not only using the withdrawing ATMs but also using another 208 machines that allow customers to deposit money or make transactions.

“Cooperation with UnionPay International is a business opportunity for us as the number of payment cards issued by the UnionPay is growing rapidly. Furthermore, the number of tourists using these cards who come to the Czech Republic is also growing, and we want to accommodate them and make their stay here easier for them,” said Juraj Chomo, the director of Card center at Ceska Sporitelna. Thanks to partnerships with more than a thousand institutions, UnionPay cards are issued in over 40 countries and regions and accepted in 157 countries and regions globally.

„UnionPay cards have become the Chinese outbound tourists' most commonly used payment option. Ceska Sporitelna has a remarkable market advantage, and we will deepen our cooperation in improving UnionPay's acceptance environment in the Czech republic in order to deliver convenient and cost-effective payment service to our customers,” said Wei Zhihong, General Manager of UnionPay International Europe. UnionPay International is a subsidiary of China UnionPay focused on UnionPay's global business.

According to CzechTourism statistics, nearly 300 000 tourists from China visited the Czech Republic last year, which is approximately 35% more than in 2014. Chinese social customs demand that while on vacation, people do not buy presents only for themselves but also for their extended families and friends, which makes them the greatest consumers of luxury goods. Last year, the Chinese became the highest-spending tourists in the Czech Republic. The average value of their tax free purchases amounted to CZK 19 712. Most of their spending is on fashion and clothing, watches and jewellery, and glass. The Chinese accounted for about one quarter of total tourist purchases, which is nearly a 100% year-on-year increase.

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Ceska sporitelna's profile

We boast the longest tradition on the Czech banking market. Our roots go back to 1825. We are a modern bank with a focus on retail clients, small- and medium-sized enterprises, municipalities and cities and we play an important role in financing large corporations and providing financial market services. Since 2000, we have been able to rely on the strong backing of Central Europe's Erste Bank financial group. Our aim is to offer clients precisely those services they need. Our position enables us to be a trend-setter in modern banking services and technology innovation.

- With almost 5 million clients, we are **the largest bank** in the Czech Republic.
- We are **first in terms** of the total loans to clients (a 20% share); mortgages (a 27% market share); consumer loans, including credit cards and overdraft facilities (a 30% share); and total deposits (a 20% share). We have the widest network of branches and ATMs.
- We strive to make our **services barrier-free**: we have the first barrier-free website www.bankabezbarier.cz, 239 barrier-free branches, 26 branches equipped with simultaneous transcription for the hearing impaired, and more than 700 ATMs that can be operated by visually impaired clients
- **We educate for competitiveness**, among other things by fostering financial literacy and by long-term partnerships with universities. Through the Depositum Bonum Foundation, we work on improving the teaching of science and technology.
- Thanks to Česká spořitelna Foundation **we stand with those whom society ignores** – we support the seniors, people with mental disabilities, and the prevention and fighting of drug addiction.

Erste Group's Profile

Founded in 1819 as the first Austrian savings bank, Erste Group went public in 1997 with a strategy to expand its retail business into Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Since then Erste Group has grown through numerous acquisitions and organic growth to one of the largest financial services providers in the Eastern part of EU in terms of clients and total assets:

- The number of customers has increased from 600,000 to approx. 15.8 million in Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, Croatia and Serbia.
- Erste Group's key business is the retail business, covering the entire spectrum from lending, deposit and investment products to current accounts and credit cards.
- Besides the traditional strength in serving private individuals, Erste Group's core activities include advisory services and support for corporate clients in financing, investment and access to international capital markets, public sector funding and interbank market operations.