

Vienna, 3 March 2004

## Erste Bank increases stake in Slovenská sporitelna to 80.01%

In its session today, the Slovak government agreed to sell its remaining stake of 10% in Slovenská sporitelna, a.s. to Erste Bank der oesterreichischen Sparkassen AG. The sale will take place according to the terms of the put option that was agreed between the Slovak Finance Ministry and Erste Bank at the time of the privatisation of Slovenská sporitelna in 2001.

This transaction will increase Erste Bank's stake in Slovenská sporitelna, a.s from 70.01% to 80.01%. The total purchase price amounts to EUR 72 million (approximately SKK 2.9 bn<sup>1</sup>). This corresponds to a price/book multiple of 2.0 and is based on an independent evaluation by the investment bank JP Morgan. The transaction will be settled within the next few weeks.

The remaining stake (19.99%) in Slovenská sporitelna, a.s is held by the EBRD. Erste Bank has the right to buy those remaining shares according to a call/put option agreement which will come into effect on 1 January 2005.

Slovenská sporitelna earned a net profit of SKK 2.1 billion (EUR 50.5 million<sup>2</sup>) for the first nine months of 2003, and is the leading bank in the Slovak Republic, servicing 2.3 million customers. The bank employs approximately 5,300 people in 339 branches and has total assets of SKK 203.4 billion (EUR 4.9 billion<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> EUR/SKK 40.496

<sup>2</sup> EUR/SKK as per 30.9.2003 (Erste Bank's internal exchange rate)

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