



## A fool and his money

"Stanislav Gross's stock deal was clean," blared the evening news. And, indeed, the report that a certain Slovak company, Key Investments, had lent money to the ex-prime minister to buy 31% of Moravia Energo did lend credence to the argument that Gross didn't do anything illegal to acquire the stake. Unless, of course, being a fool is a crime. Whatever the origin of Gross's other wealth, in this case his main misdeed seems to have been to try to mimic the investment bankers and other wheelers and dealers who surrounded him as prime minister. If, say, PPF Investments had spotted the opportunity to buy a share in Moravia Energo on the cheap and to squeeze its majority owner, Tomáš Chrenek, for a hefty payoff, no one would have been surprised. But Gross tried to play with the big boys and quickly got cut down to size. He'll now have to pay the price, which he can surely afford.

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