

Green passivity



ČEZ has pulled off one of the biggest PR coups in recent years by shifting the blame for higher electricity prices from itself to the Germans. Households and companies are still seething at ČEZ, but politicians are shrugging their shoulders and blaming "market forces" in Germany for the 10-15% price hike. This isn't such a surprise from the free-marketeers in ODS or even ČSSD, which set up the current system, but what about the Greens? Their chairman, Martin Bursík, told Czech TV yesterday that the government - his coalition - can't do *anything* about the wholesale price of electricity. Compare this with his counterpart in Germany, [Reinhard Bütikofer](#), who heaped scorn on CEO Wulf Bernotat of E.ON when E.ON announced a 10% price hike for 2008. Bütikofer called on customers to cancel their contracts and sign up with mid-size utilities. But of course the German Greens are no longer in the ruling coalition and can afford politically to take a principled stance.

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