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## Paroubek's choice



Since the regional and Senate elections, ČSSD Chairman Jiří Paroubek has gone from being one of PM Mirek Topolánek's biggest foes to being one of his biggest allies. It's not an open alliance, of course, and neither is it exactly the grand coalition that Paroubek is so quick to denounce. It's more like first aid to a dying coalition. Paroubek was faced with a choice: Support the Klaus-Zeman-Bém blast to the past and actively help to sideline Topolánek, or strike a deal with Topolánek that allows him (Paroubek) to remain his own man, without undue interference from Klaus or Zeman. Paroubek waited until it was clear which way the wind will blow at the ODS congress. He can now win points for being constructive during the rotating EU presidency. And by strategically supplying "defectors," he can help ODS to pass reform laws that will cook Topolánek's goose in the next parliamentary elections.



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[info@fleet.cz](mailto:info@fleet.cz)