

Deals or no deals



New center-right parties are springing up like daisies in the Czech Republic, and Finance Minister Miroslav Kalousek is the latest to ready the ground. He's threatening to break away from KDU-ČSL if his favored candidate, MEP Jan Březina, isn't elected to head the party. Some people are convinced that Kalousek is bluffing. We'll only know for sure if Březina loses, but one thing does indeed seem certain. Kalousek is sending the message to his fellow Christian Democrats that if he forsakes them, their financial future will be less than heavenly. Kalousek is thought by some to be a state-budget genius, but his real talent lies in watching over his own party's coffers. As KDU Chair Jiří Čunek himself has noted, Kalousek wants to be where all the big deals are. Kalousek the dealmaker is forcing KDU to choose between him and Čunek, who got nabbed for (allegedly) taking a trifling bribe of Kč 500,000.

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