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## Battle of the budget



Passage of Finance Minister Eduard Janota's package of tax and spending increases (Orwellianly known as a "savings" package) was so tied to the 2010 budget that some people mistakenly thought the budget itself had been passed last week. No siree, the budget is only now entering the approval process in Parliament. Czech politics never ceases to run in circles, and what seemed a sure thing last week could be a nonstarter next week. ODS's [Petr Tluchoř](#) is sending the first signals that his party might not approve the 2010 budget. Under some circumstances, a provisional budget could actually be better for those with their fingers in the cookie jar. ODS, or even ČSSD, might also decide to use an unexpected budget battle to force early elections. Moving the elections up a few months might be the best way to throw the small parties off balance just as they are gaining the most momentum.

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