

Klaus as witness against the state

One of the first things a defense lawyer tells a client is to keep quiet or to deny everything. Czech politicians and customs officials are behaving in the methanol affair as if they had already been arrested for accessory to bootlegging and negligent homicide. Finance Minister Miroslav Kalousek tried keeping quiet for several days but then decided to adopt the second tried-and-true tactic - deny, deny, deny. The state has not failed in his duties, he famously declared. Lawyer Hana Marvanová begs to differ. Speaking on Czech TV's [OVM](#) yesterday, she expressed the hope that the Czech judicial system will take example from the U.S. and other countries and award damages to people who are victims of the failure of the state to fulfil its basic function of overseeing the alcohol market. If she or other lawyers take the matter to court, they could have a powerful witness on their side. [President Václav Klaus](#) declared that it was a "fundamental failure on the part of the state." What better testimony could a court possibly need?

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