

Bribery at Prague city hall

Ex-Prague Police Chief Vladimír Kotrouš began serving a 5.5-year prison sentence this month for seeking a Kč 1.2m bribe for extending a police-car servicing contract. Despite wiretaps, suspicions that the bribe was meant for his former superior, Rudolf Blažek, were never proven. "To serve and protect" is, after all, the police motto, so bagman Kotrouš clicked his heels together and did the time. Loyalties will again be tested when two more (alleged) bagmen go on trial in Prague tomorrow. As [Česká pozice](#) first reported, František Koudelka has been charged with seeking a Kč 50m bribe from Tesla Properties for a zoning change, and Jaroslav Pošík with helping him. The charge is attempted fraud, because they didn't have the power to secure the zoning change they were promising. However, one of the meetings took place in the office of Prague's planning chairman, Vladimír Schmalz, and he does have this power. The big fish will no doubt slip away again, but the sport of bribe-taking at Prague city hall is getting much more perilous.

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