

## Bakala and sanitized journalism

Today's two-page interview in [HN](#) with Zdeněk Bakala is a timely example of the [demise of independent news](#) that we wrote about yesterday. Bakala is the owner of HN, through Eco-nomia, but even more importantly, he is [chairman](#) of the publishing house. He is the boss of the two journalists to whom he gave the interview. One of the two, Petr Šabata, is the editor-in-chief of HN and was hand-picked for the job by Bakala. Šabata can be removed by Bakala at any time, and, indeed, we have been told that a replacement is being sought. How, under such conditions, can Šabata be expected to ask hard questions about Bakala's treatment of tenants at RPG, about the role of ČSSD Chair Bohuslav Sobotka in the sale of OKD, or about Bakala's evident attempt to appease the parts of the political and criminal elite that are opposed to him? We can't expect this, and the result is sanitized journalism. It is all the more insidious coming from Bakala, because he, unlike his fellow oligarchs, talks often about the need to instill Western values in Czech society.

*Read this later today in [Czech](#)*

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