


## The nonpartisan president

With the election of Miloš Zeman as the first popularly elected Czech president, the ideal (or perhaps illusion) of a nonpartisan head of state is quickly vanishing. Zeman has surrounded himself with top officials of the party that bears his name, SPOZ, and will soon undertake a tour of the country to support his Zemanites in the elections. The possibility has also been raised by [HN](#) that his image will grace SPOZ's billboards. Yet Zeman's chief of staff, Vratislav Mynář (who is also a top figure in SPOZ), told MFD today that Zeman is a nonpartisan president. Why the charade? Other presidential candidates also had direct party backing, including Karel Schwarzenberg. What is more, there is nothing in the Constitution about nonpartisanship. In fact, the presidential oath is almost identical to that of MPs and Senators, who clearly are not expected to be impartial. Perhaps the only real reason at this point for Zeman to maintain the pretense of nonpartisanship is if he sees himself as the de facto boss of all the parties, not just of SPOZ.

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