


## Babiš's secret weapon



With great fanfare, new owner Andrej Babiš of Mafra signed a [publisher's code of ethics](#) last week that is meant to ensure the independence of MFD, LN and the company's other media entities. It's laudable that Babiš signed the document, but it's a real pity that Jaromír Soukup didn't put his name to it as well. He owns one of the biggest media-buying agencies in the country, Médea, and uses it to exert enormous influence on the media. He also happens to be the person buying all those billboards and four-page ads for the ANO election campaign. This makes Babiš one of Soukup's biggest customers. Theoretically speaking, if Babiš wanted to influence the editorial stance of MFD or LN, he could delegate the task to Soukup without getting his own hands dirty. It doesn't help that Mafra has people on its [board of directors](#) who are responsible for both the commercial success of the business and the editorial content, notably Editor-in-chief Dalibor Balšínek of LN. The best way to neutralize Soukup is to separate the boardroom from the newsroom.

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