

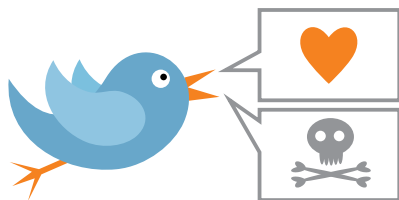
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## Why is Chovanec undermining Sobotka?



Why would Milan Chovanec tell Právo that this year's regional elections will be a referendum on the coalition government? Isn't that the job of the opposition? Indeed, when ČSSD was in the opposition in 2012, Chair Bohuslav Sobotka declared that the regional elections would be a referendum on whether the cabinet of Petr Nečas should continue. ČSSD went on to win those elections, but not even Sobotka expects a repeat this year of his party's strong performance from 2012. ČSSD has four things working against it this time: The strength of ANO, the enduring regional allure of the Communists, the ability of local groups to take a big chunk of the regional vote, and Miloš Zeman's concerted effort to discredit Sobotka in the eyes of center-left voters. It's almost as though Zeman and Chovanec have concluded that the time to replace Sobotka as ČSSD chair - but not PM - is right after the regional elections. Call it the Schröder-Müntefering solution.

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