


## Civil servants must be civil

Politicians like having their attack dogs, and Miloš Zeman's spokesman, Jiří Ovčáček, serves this purpose well. Even his family name ("little German shepherd") fits the bill. Ovčáček's opposite at the cabinet office, Martin Ayrer, is invisible in comparison. Instead, Bohuslav Sobotka relies on State Secretary for EU Affairs Tomáš Prouza for settling scores. Prouza rarely makes a media appearance without directly or indirectly criticizing one of Sobotka's opponents. The targets have included Theresa May, David Cameron, Miloš Zeman, Andrej Babiš, Dan Ťok, Karla Šlechtová and Petr Fiala. This would be politics as usual except for one important thing. Unlike Ovčáček, Prouza is a civil servant and has vowed, by law, to remain neutral in carrying out his duties. If Sobotka ever nominates Prouza to become a minister (Prouza seems to be Radek Pokorný's choice for IT minister), Zeman will have every justification for refusing to appoint him on the grounds that Prouza has systematically violated the neutrality provision of the civil-service act. It's a law, not a recommendation.

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