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Happiness is a full bottle



"Money can't buy happiness," goes the old drunkard's joke, "unless it goes to paying for booze." Such happiness will be in shorter supply as of next year if Finance Min. Alena Schillerová succeeds in raising the excise tax on hard liquor by 13%. The tax on a half-liter bottle of the spirit formerly known as rum is to rise from Kč 50 to Kč 56. Theoretically, at least, this would raise the shelf price from Kč 145 to Kč 152, including VAT. In reality, a bottle of not-rum can often be had as part of a sales promotion for as little as Kč 89. Alcohol is used by the large retail chains in the CR as a loss leader, which means that anyone not addicted to a given brand of rotgut can always follow the age-old millionaire's adage of "never pay retail" and still walk away with a bottle or two of happiness. If Schillerová's goal is to increase tax revenue, she would do better to promote Agriculture Min. Miroslav Toman's idea of limiting the ability of retailers to use loss leaders to bring in customers.

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