


Czech energy czar



Industry Min. Jozef Síkela has been criticized for not being very visible in the media, but he compensated for it somewhat yesterday by revealing incredibly good news to viewers of [Czech TV](#) who are worried about a shutdown of Russian natural gas: "Shutting off the gas to households is not on the table at all," he said. "Not to critical infrastructure either, or to hospitals, because we will always have gas in the quantities we need. We already have alternative supplies." He didn't say whose gas he has already contracted, but he spoke in early April about using Norwegian supplies through the Netra pipeline to cover [25-33% of Czech winter needs](#). That would still leave non-critical industry to fend for itself. The [Financial Times](#) reported 10 days ago that many companies in Germany desperately want to be considered "systemically relevant" and are hiring lawyers to advocate on their behalf. This same battle is playing out in the CR, which is one reason Síkela has avoided the media. He has become a sort of energy czar, with the power to decide who survives and who does not. "Critical infrastructure" can be a flexible concept.

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