

Raise wages, or save jobs?

For months the labor unions have been threatening to stage protests in early Sept. if the government doesn't heed their wage demands.

Leading the way on this is ČMKOS Chair Josef Středula, who has been able to combine it neatly with his own plans to run for Czech president in Jan. 2023. The current president, Miloš Zeman, has given Středula (and also Andrej Babiš) his support in the presidential race and told [MFD](#) late last month that Středula's big anti-government demonstrations might grow into a general strike. Středula told [HN](#) in early May that never since 2009 has he been asked by so many people to call such a strike. So the cards seem to be dealt: The unions want a big pay raise for public workers, the government is balking, and protests or a strike will likely follow. Yet a week is a long time in politics, and four weeks are even longer. No one knows for sure when the economy will buckle under the weight of high energy prices and high interest rates, but it can't be far away. Středula should probably prepare two separate speeches for his big event: One demanding higher wages, and one pleading to save jobs.

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