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Marginalizing seniors



The cabinet is to address Finance Min. Zbyněk Stanjura's austerity package today, including an increase in the VAT on printed newspapers from 10% to 21%. Chair [Libuše Šmuclerová](#) of Czech News Center told her publishing company's Blesk tabloid earlier this month that to say that newspapers don't interest us anymore is to say that the target group of senior citizens doesn't interest us anymore, and esp. those in the regions and in small towns. They treat newspapers as a ritual and as something that puts the world into context for them, she said. This is in fact probably the main reason for the VAT increase on newspapers. The ruling coalition is trying to dilute the voice of socially conservative voters and can do this by making newspapers less accessible to them, by pushing through absentee balloting from abroad and by [increasing the funding](#) for progressive public media. Seniors do in fact interest the ruling coalition, but mainly as a target voting group that needs to be marginalized.

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