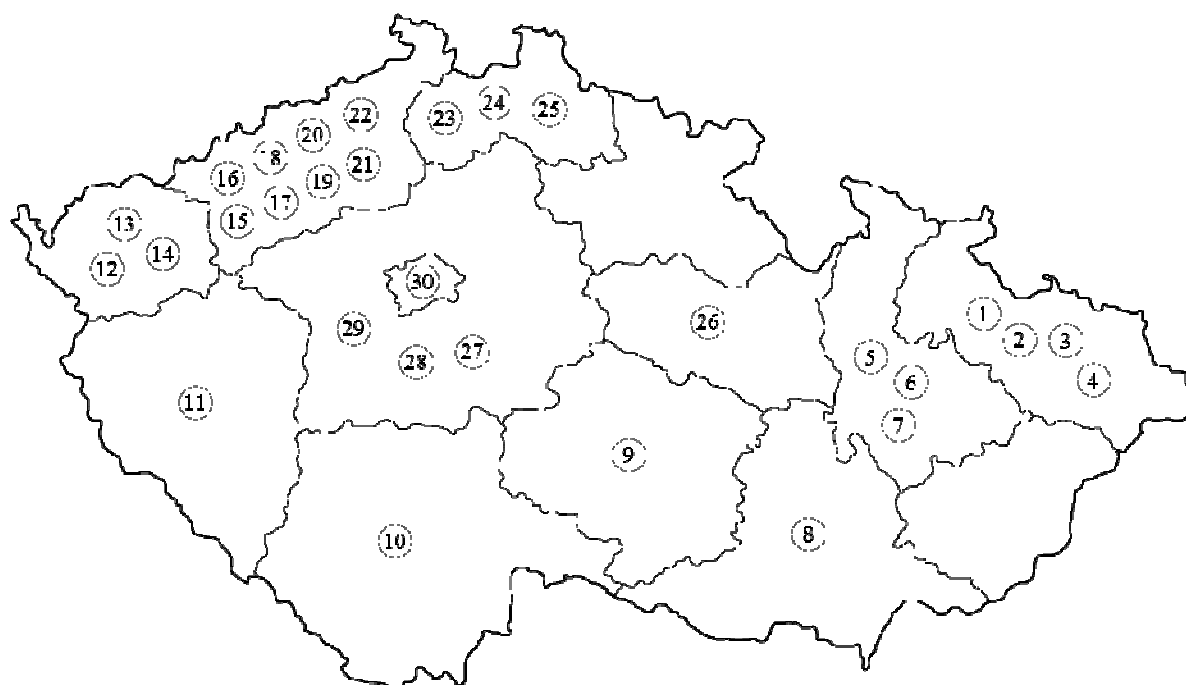


Thirty cases across the Czech Republic, or The shape of governance in regions and municipalities



The Anticorruption Endowment (NFPK) used open sources to compile a far-from-complete list of cases that might elucidate the reader on the intricacies of governance in certain regions and municipalities of the Czech Republic. Most of them are evidence of too close relationships between political figures and businesses, or indeed also dirty political infighting, and shared political and business interests. Some cases overtly or covertly betray corruption and clientelism. Due to their extent, only cases occurring since 2007 have been selected on random basis. However, the list is open-ended.

The Anticorruption Endowment at least partially reacts to the many critical voices calling for better exposure and description of local affairs and cases. Local affairs and cases more closely affect Czech citizens than the “big” scandals evolving on government and similar levels. Therefore the Anticorruption Endowment intends to more closely target such local developments. A description of another “thirty cases” might easily ensue. The Anticorruption Endowment welcomes public inputs in this sense.

Our account of the cases covers the period till March 2016.

Take:	1
Location:	Moravian-Silesian Region
Cast:	Jaroslav Palas (member of KSČM in 1990-1994, member of ČSSD since 1995, Member of Parliament 1992-2005, Minister of Agriculture in 2008-2012, Governor of the Moravian-Silesian Region, elected Senator for ČSSD in 2010, leaves ČSSD at break of 2012/2013, former member of director/supervisory boards of several organizations, including Czech State Land Fund and Czech Railways)
Prospective Nature:	Fails to explain the origin of cash payment of CZK 13,677,030 in connection with building a private hotel
<p>Case Description: In 2007, the former agriculture minister from ČSSD, soon-to-be Governor of the Moravian-Silesian Region Jaroslav Palas starts building a luxury private mansion near Mt. Praděd. He has CZK 246,008 on his private account. He claims funding from family savings. At a later date, experts say the property value exceeds 30 million CZK, but Palas will not tell where he received the money. He pays builders in cash [128], [129].</p> <p>Police took up the issue in 2010. In August 2015, the Bruntál district attorney announced that the criminal proceedings against Palas had been adjourned. However, police minutes say that Palas and his family financed the project with the money they could not have legally earned [129]: <i>"We have discerned after due investigation that Mr. & Mrs. Palas are in possession of far greater assets than indicated by their income declarations. However, in spite of all efforts, it was not possible to ascertain the source of the income with which the said property was acquired."</i> These were no small amounts of money. Police had retrieved documentation about all incomes of the Palas family, as reported by the official authorities. It was ascertained that between them, the Palases had legitimately earned 40,999,152 million crowns, but according to the police information, they at the same time spent at least 50,411,006 crowns [129]. The balance therefore amounted to almost 9.5 million crowns. At the same time the police assumed that the Palases would have persisted, throughout the whole period, solely on the minimal incomes as decreed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, while in reality they pursued a rather lavish lifestyle. They drove expensive Audi cars and Mr. Palas, a dedicated marksman, used to hunt abroad, he and his wife having spent over half a million crowns for air tickets alone [129]. Police concluded [129]: <i>"Final financial balance clearly manifests a deficit amounting to at least 9,411,854 crowns, taking into consideration the existence of a long-term loan amounting to 10 million crowns, and the relevant police authority was not able to disclose the actual provenience of the financial means, paid in cash and amounting to a total of CZK 13,677,030."</i> However, Palas withdrew only 99,000 crowns from his bank account from January 2007 to the end of 2012, and his wife made only one significant withdrawal from her accounts in the same period, which amounted to CZK 500,000, while their son did not withdraw any cash from his bank in the period under surveillance [129].</p> <p>Palas repeatedly lied to the public when stating the following [129]: <i>"I have cooperated with the police for two years now. We have provided what they wanted from us, including expert opinion and tax returns."</i> But according to police, the opposite was true [129]: <i>"Mr. Palas did not cooperate with the police body."</i> Indeed he refused to provide the police with his</p>	

Take:	1
contracts with craftspeople, construction diary and payment documents. He denied access to his house to a police-appointed expert and the investigators had to request a house search warrant. The Palases and their son refused to explain unclear points to the police and cited their right to remain silent. Senator Palas told the press that there was <i>“nothing to talk over with you”</i> and declared that the house was built with <i>“completely transparent financial means”</i> . He also said [129]: <i>“I don’t care what you write.”</i>	
Take:	2
Location:	Moravian-Silesian Region
Cast:	Miroslav Novák (Governor and Chairman of Moravian-Silesian ČSSD), Martin Dědic (lobbyist facing prosecution), Jaroslav Palas (ex-Governor, ČSSD)
Prospective Nature:	Manipulating public procurement orders, bribery
<p>Case Description: Martin Dědic, dubbed “Ostrava Janoušek” in Moravia, is officially known as a political entrepreneur, but he should be really called Godfather. In March 2014, police accused him of influencing public procurement and accepting bribes. His company is said to have pocketed more than 50 million crowns from the public kitty, and police indicated 30 million crowns were bribes. Police investigated also other political figures, including Moravian-Silesian Governor Miroslav Novák [1], due to his close ties with Martin Dědic. Police have prosecuted Dědic since 2014 for influencing many public procurement orders, involving hundreds of millions of crowns, by way of the links he established with local Social Democrat leaders. Regarding Martin Dědic and certain city-owned companies, a supervisor from the High State Prosecutor’s Olomouc office declared [2]: <i>“We have found we are dealing with a very influential person, who had close liaison with several politicians and thus also exercised direct influence on these persons, who are naturally influenced by political representatives in a direct manner.”</i> A total of eight natural persons (managers of private firms) and four legal entities were indicted, each of them for a specific combination of criminal offences, including the taking of bribes, legalizing the proceeds of criminal activity, or bribery. The accused paid bribes in exchange of winning public procurement contracts [2]. A private company, through which the bribes were said to be provided and which belongs to Dědic, according to the police, had a single employee, in the period from 2010 to 2013 (with Novák acting as a deputy for transport, environment and agriculture to Moravian-Silesian Governor Jaroslav Palas until November 2012), namely the wife of the incumbent regional governor, Martina Nováková. The indictment against Dědic states that in the period from May 2012 to September 2013, Dědic had 5,077 phone calls or approximately ten contacts every day, with s Novák [2]. Police have yet to establish how Governor Novák paid for the construction of his opulent private home. The 42-year-old governor has been a professional local-level politician all his life. The built-up area of his house and amenities exceeds 300 square metres. Moreover, the property was built by the Vostav Morava company, whose managers were accused by police of bribing Dědic for manipulating contracts [2]. Secretly made shots from 2010 in an Ostrava casino show Novák “passionately” betting on roulette [2]. Police are checking if he could really afford to pursue such an expensive hobby. Novák thus commented in the media on his hectic phone liaison with Dědic: [3]: <i>“Then I realized I was maybe actually sitting in front of my TV set, watching a tennis game, during which I and Martin Dědic exchanged comments on the game and provoked one another as to who would play better. In such situations one texts another a hundred times an evening...”</i></p>	

Take:	1
Miroslav Novák was one of the nine members of the regional council committee that in 2012 endorsed a 19.4 million crown subsidy to an intransparent civic association for the construction of a luxury sports hotel owned by Governor Jaroslav Palas [3].	

Take:	3
Location:	Opava City Hall
Cast:	Zbyněk Stanjura (member of ODS since 1991, councillor and city father for many years, Opava Mayor in 2002-2010, longtime deputy and councilor for the Moravian-Silesian Region, member of the Czech parliament since 2010, chairman of the ODS parliamentary group since 2011, Minister of Transport from December 2012 to July 2013); former Opava deputies and city fathers (ODS and ČSSD)
Prospective Nature:	Uneconomical management of public funds concerning the acquisition of a building in the Slezanka Shopping Centre in Opava Square for CZK 270 million and a share in a neighbouring building within the same centre

Case Description: In September 2008, Opava city fathers approved the acquisition of a building within the Communist-era Slezanka shopping centre and a share in a neighbouring building in the Opava historical centre for 270 million CZK [44]. The City of Opava purchased the property (or a part of it) from its owner, Jiří Škamrada [43]. The city council hoped to either tear down or rebuild the former department store. Then-Mayor of Opava Zbyněk Stanjura (ODS) said [44]: *“It is an unfortunate solution for the heart of the urban memorial zone. By revitalizing the whole square, we want to return life in the centre of Opava, which has moved to the hypermarket zones on its outskirts.”* Stanjura admitted that the revitalization of the main square might not be the best solution, but the city would acquire an attractive downtown centre [44].

In order to purchase several parts of the Slezanka shopping centre for 270 million crowns and the redevelopment of a city-owned building, Opava loaned 400 million crowns. The sum of 270 million CZK alone was subject to serious doubts. Opposition deputy Pavla Brady said at the time [45]: *“In my math, and I am a court-sworn expert on property valuation, this sum is like the double of the usual asking price.”* Even the mayor of the period, Zbyněk Stanjura, had to admit that the price is quite steep [45]. Asked how the city will handle the Slezanka case, Stanjura explained in the spring of 2009 [45]: *“We assume we will continue to own the land, and find a private investor who’d conduct a sort of architectural competition and ask us—the land owners—to tell which bid we would be prepared to support.”*

Shortly before the local elections, a strange thing happened to a city fathers’ meeting in June 2010. They were supposed to decide which of the two contenders will acquire the plot on which Slezanka was built. But the city fathers had agreed beforehand that the winner is the company that offered a price several millions of crowns lower than the other bidder (close to CZK 190 million versus CZK 206 million, to wit). Moreover, the future contract between Opava and the bidder seemed to be visibly disadvantageous for the former party. Opposition deputy Pavla Brady declared at that time [47]: *“The contract as we saw it entailed exorbitant commitments for the city. It looked as if nothing will happen to Slezanka in the next twenty*

years, but the city will not be able to do anything about it. It had no leverage under the contract. To boot, we as the city might have subsidized a private concern with an interest-free loan of almost 200 million crowns for a period of 13 years, although we have loaned money for and paid the interest on the purchase of Slezanka.” Stanjura withdrew the point from the city council’s meeting shortly before it was called [47].

Opava’s new city council changed its mind on Slezanka in 2011 and leased the half-empty building for a period of 20 years [46]. However, the lessee proved unable to pay the agreed rent and his contract was terminated in due course. The building was returned to Opava, which rents a part of it [48].

Take:	4
Location:	Frýdek-Místek Townhall
Cast:	Michal Pobucký (former and current mayor of Frýdek-Místek - ČSSD), Dalibor Hrabec (former deputy mayor of Frýdek-Místek - unaffiliated), Eva Richtrová (former mayor of Frýdek-Místek and former ČSSD senator), city council and extras (originally 34 natural persons and six legal entities)
Prospective Nature:	Manipulating public procurement orders, overpriced contract, traffic offences swept under the carpet

Case Description: In 2014, a state prosecutor pressed chargers in the district court against 18 persons and one company. The charge had several parts (manipulation of public procurement contracts, sweeping traffic offences under the carpet). One of the defendants was City Police head Milan Sněhota and then-Mayor Michal Pobucký, who was charged in connection with the latter offence [5]. Pobucký protested innocence [4]: *“I stand accused of providing psychological assistance, which is absurd to me. I say I have not done anything wrong or illegal.”* The investigation originally concerned 34 persons and six companies [5]. The prosecution identified the ringleader – businessman Tomáš Musil, who confessed to hiring other contestants as a cover-up to ensure his firm’s victory in the tender. However, Musil rejected the prosecutor’s assertions that he “doctored” the tender under the tutelage of the former deputy mayor, Dalibor Hrabec, and the head of the City Hall’s IT manager Petr Budínský [4]. The prosecutor indicated that several defendants had admitted criminal action, and subsequently the choice was between guilt and penalty on the one hand and suspended proceedings on the other. According to the prosecutor, 20 public procurement orders were manipulated, the value of which amounted to 12 million crowns, and eight traffic offences were also manipulated [5].

The third part of the file has not yet reached court. In it the police charged the former city council with overpricing a contract on leaning and digging ditches in Frýdek-Místek. The last defendant to hear the accusations was the former mayor, Senator Eva Richtrová. Altogether, 15 people are being prosecuted in this case, including Eva Richtrová, a city clerk, and 13 city fathers [5].

Eva Richtrová left the Frýdek-Místek ČSSD club in January 2015. She did so after hearing Michal Pobucký unveil his concept of a new townhall coalition, which would return him to the post of mayor. Richtrová declared [6]: *“(…) And he presented it in a way that made me walk out. Simply, I had had enough. The problem is not in the Social Democratic Party per se, but I don’t want to see the city led by daisy dukes.”*

Take:	5
Location:	Olomouc Region
Cast:	Jiří Rozbořil (Governor of the Olomouc Region, Olomouc City Father, longtime member of ČSSD, past and present member of many commissions, councils and boards, former deputy director of operations of the Olomouc Faculty Hospital), Karel Kadlec (deputy regional director of Criminal Police and Investigations), Radek Petrůj (director, Olomouc Economic Crime Squad), Ivan Kyselý (businessman, associate of former Interior Minister Ivan Langer – ODS)
Prospective Nature:	Accusations of abuse of official powers, accepting bribe, complicity in abuse of official powers, bribery
<p>Case Description: In October 2015, officers of the Organized Crime Detection Unit carried out raids in the Olomouc Region and Prague, detaining several persons, including Olomouc Region Governor Jiří Rozbořil (ČSSD) and deputy regional director of Criminal Police and Investigations Karel Kadlec. Also detained were Olomouc Economic Crime Squad director Radek Petrůj and businessman Ivan Kyselý, an associate of former Interior minister Ivan Langer (ODS). All detainees except for Ivan Langer were subsequently charged: two of them with abusing official powers, one of them additionally with accepting a bribe, a third person with plotting to abuse official powers, and Governor Rozbořil with bribery. Except for Jiří Rozbořil, three persons thus charged were remanded in custody [110]. Head of the Organized Crime Detection Unit Robert Šlachta announced that the raids had been necessitated by the discovery of clientelist liaison between senior police officers, political figures and businesspeople in the Olomouc area [110].</p> <p>Media reported that Governor Rozbořil had attempted to influence and sweep under the carpet the effects of investigation of a possible subsidy fraud. He was alleged to have offered a bribe to this effect to Olomouc Deputy Regional Police Director Karel Kadlec, in August 2015. The suspected subsidy fraud was associated with the project of a modern riding course and private hotel in the Lazce neighbourhood of Olomouc, inaugurated in 2013. Its costs exceeded 100 million crowns, while the investor obtained 35 million CZK from the European Funds, allocated by the ROP Central Moravia Regional Council under the programme: Development and renewal of sports facilities. Governor Rozbořil is a member of its management, on the face of his high position. Police carefully monitored Rozbořil's meeting with Kadlec in an Olomouc restaurant, where the said illegal conduct was alleged to have taken place. Having been charged, Rozbořil declared [114]: <i>"I was in the wrong place at the wrong time."</i></p>	

Take:	5
<p>In November 2015, Rozbořil said of the police wiretaps from the restaurant [111]: <i>“At long last, I heard those tapes. They proved what I’d been saying from the start. Nothing changed in my protesting innocence. Nothing in them suggests I was offering a bribe. It’s pub talk that can be variously interpreted, but certainly not as a specific offer of bribe.”</i> The accused Rozbořil repeatedly refused to step down as the regional governor, in spite of the appeals of the ČSSD leader, Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka. In October 2015, his future was discussed by the ČSSD’s Olomouc Regional Executive Committee and regional party officials. In secret ballot, 21 of the 29 people attending the meeting voiced support to Rozbořil [112]. Nor did the regional officials recall Governor Rozbořil at a December 2015 meeting, and no vote was held on his future in that post. Rozbořil reiterated at that meeting [113]: <i>“I did not commit any of the offences I am being accused of. My conscience is clear.”</i> He and all three defendants appealed against the criminal charges pressed against them [113].</p>	
Take:	6
Location:	Olomouc Region, City of Prostějov
Cast:	Alois Mačák (veteran member of ČSSD, Prostějov city councillor in 1994-2015, longtime deputy mayor of Prostějov, Olomouc Region councilor in 2008-2012, First Deputy Governor of the Olomouc Region in 2012-2015, former member of the Committee of the Central Moravia Regional Cohesion Council), Miroslav Pišťák (veteran member of the ČSSD, Deputy Mayor of Prostějov in 1998-2010, Mayor of Prostějov from November 2010 to September 2015)
Prospective Nature:	Senior political figures in the region accept gifts from the region’s private businesses
<p>Case Description: Mladá fronta Dnes reported in October 2015 that Alois Mačák, Deputy Governor of the Olomouc Region and Prostějov councilor from ČSSD, and Prostějov Mayor Miroslav Pišťák (ČSSD) received financial donations on their bank accounts from several firms operating in that region. The paper wrote about a total of 1.6 million crowns. Specifically, the firm DT-Výhybkárna a Strojírna of Prostějov forwarded a quarter-million crowns to Mayor Miroslav Pišťák, while Deputy Governor received 1.35 million crowns in 2012 and 2013 respectively, including CZK 1.1 million coming again from DT-Výhybkárna a strojírna, and an additional 250,000 crowns from another three Olomouc-based companies [115].</p> <p>These politicians saw nothing unusual about such gifts. Alois Mačák declared [115]: <i>“The donation was made in compliance with all the applicable legal regulations, including its disclosure under the conflict-of-interests act. These firms had not delivered a single contract to Prostějov and the Olomouc Region; as such business was precluded by their respective production programmes. I used the donation thus provided in support of the election campaign in 2012 and 2013 respectively. These companies provided me with a financial gift in a legitimate way, through a deed of donorship, because we wanted to ensure transparency and legality.”</i> Miroslav Pišťák reacted in a similar fashion [115]: <i>“I have paid tax on this donation and used it in my campaign for the local elections in 2014. In no way does my acceptance of this gift render me feel obliged or influenced, now and in the future. During my term at the townhall, this donor did not compete for, and was not awarded, any city contract.”</i> Chairman of the Board of Directors of DT-Výhybkárna a strojírna Bedřich Grulich (ČSSD) was a Prostějov councilor, and has been a member of the Prostějov City Council since</p>	

Take:	5
2014.	
<p>The Press asked the ČSSD Headquarters to give a statement on the affair, but Lidový dům (name of that body) distanced itself from the gift [115]: <i>“Campaigns are exclusively financed from approved party accounts. All incomes and expenditure are properly registered in the books and included in the annual financial statements. The ČSSD has not have, either in the past or now, any information on how the two persons indicated have handled their donations. These are exclusively their private activities and we reject any and all associations with the ČSSD.”</i> Mladá fronta Dnes tried but failed to make the two men disclose the accounting of the gifts used in their campaigns. However, the events took an unexpected turn. One day later, Prostějov Mayor Miroslav Pišťák tendered his resignation and Alois Mačák rescinded his high posts the day after. However, Mačák instantly landed a job with DT-Výhybkárna a strojírna [116]. But even though, the Prostějov ČSSD conference put Alois Mačák on its ticket for the next regional elections, placing him third on the list. However, the names on the candidate list have yet to be approved by supervisory bodies of the ČSSD [117]. The media said in February 2016 that police had completed the investigation of the gifts received by the two politicians and the case was shelved [118].</p>	
Take:	7
Location:	Magistrát Přerova
Cast:	Jiří Lajtoch (former mayor of Přerov, ČSSD), Josef Kulíšek (onetime deputy to Lajtoch, ODS), Václav Zatloukal (city father, ČSSD), Jaroslav Čermák (councilor, ODS), Pavel Gala (head of Přerov concept and development section), Jiří Raba (from the investment department)
Prospective Nature:	Plotting to influence public procurement, complicity to abuse of official powers
<p>Case Description: In November 2014, the Olomouc District Court meted out suspended jail sentences of between two and three years against three senior Přerov political leaders and two city clerks in a case dating from 2008-2009. The defendants were: former Mayor Jiří Lajtoch (ČSSD), his deputy Josef Kulíšek (ODS), Councillor Václav Zatloukal (ČSSD), Councillor Jaroslav Čermák (ODS), head of the Přerov concept and development department Pavel Gala, and investment department official Jiří Raba. They faced the court in connection with the redevelopment of a winter sports stadium and a home for senior citizens. Both contracts vastly exceeded their budgets and according to the prosecutor, additional jobs that exceeded the legally stipulated 20 percent of the base price were performed by one and the same contractor without the legally required public tender [8]. Moreover, the same company also participated in the building of a swimming-pool in Lajtoch’s place and Zatloukal’s family home, while the investor was in no hurry to retrieve invoices from the two families (Václav Zatloukal only partly paid his CZK 3.1 mn invoice in two instalments, amounting respectively to CZK 290,000 and CZK 500,000, and never paid the balance which the contractor failed to claim until it fell under a statute of limitations) [8]. The defendants were accused of soliciting an advantage over a public procurement contract and abusing their official powers [7]. Václav Zatloukal was facing the harshest penalty of all the defendants. According to the public prosecutor, he had earned considerable illegal profit and could have landed behind bars for between three and ten years: <i>“We deemed it proven that he had a house built by the Přerovská stavební company but never paid for the full amount of work done, the balance amounting to more than two million crowns,”</i> the public prosecutor</p>	

Take:	5
<p>said of Zatloukal [7]. The judge of the Olomouc District Court noted: [7]: <i>“This court deems it proven that in connection with the construction of a seniors’ home and the reconstruction of a winter sports stadium the accused collectively and knowingly solicited the preferential treatment of one bidder at the expense of the others. We are talking about PSS Přerovská stavební. Such conduct was inspired by personal and business links between most of the accused and the owners of that company.”</i> According to the judge, a stiffer penalty was precluded by the fact that the case of the disputed contracts reached the court only after three years of investigations and due to disputes in the prosecutors’ corps: <i>“The defendants were in a different position at that time, and the manner of possible prosecution would have been different, three years ago. But in our opinion, the three-year delay must be ascribed to judicial protractions, and not the defendants.”</i> Anticorruption police had made four attempts to indict those politicians and officials, but each time the prosecutor halted criminal proceedings and said no criminal action had occurred. Each time the decision was reversed by the Supreme Public Prosecutor. Consequently, the charges were finally brought in April 2014, after a change in the post of public prosecutor. The prosecution officer, who refused to press charges against Lajtoch and company, eventually resigned [7]. The defendants appealed against the verdict, and so did the prosecutor, who disagreed with the penalties meted out against Gala and Raba, as well as the ex-councillor Zatloukal. The court of appeal subsequently voided the sentences and returned the case to the Olomouc District Court [8].</p> <p>In September 2015, the Olomouc District Court confirmed the guilt of all defendants and meted out suspended jail sentences; however, the terms of Lajtoch, Kulíšek and Čermák were reduced by two months for each. The original sentences for Zatloukal, Gala and Raba were upheld. The defendants lodged a fresh appeal [8].</p>	
Take:	8
Location:	City of Brno
Cast:	Michal Štefl (chairman of the board and CEO of the firm OHL ŽS), Roman Onderka (veteran mayor of Brno - ČSSD), Michal Hašek (veteran member of parliament, South Moravian Governor and chairman of the Association of Czech Regions – ČSSD)
Prospective Nature:	Strange circumstances of a one-billion-crown public procurement contract
<p>Case Description: In 2010, Brno’s biggest developer company, OHL ŽS, won a tender for a new, 1.12-billion-crown building for Brno University of Technology’s faculty of Electrical Engineering (VUT Brno). Hospodářské noviny daily found out that one of the contract-specification CDs, distributed to the bidders, contained the source name of the winning firm’s employee, Ivo Uhýrek. Michal Štefl, chairman of the board and CEO of the winning company OHL ŽS, was at the same time a member of the VUT Brno administrative board. The board’s official status stipulates that it <i>“issues preliminary written consent with the administrative steps by which VUT intends to acquire a property. (...) It has a say in particular on the long-term plans of the VUT.”</i> In other words, Štefl must have known in advance of all big projects pursued by that university [18]. However, the administrative board was not supposed to decide about the winning bid.</p> <p>VUT Brno’s President Karel Rais offered the following commentary [18]: <i>“The distance between the order and the administrative boards is enormous and they could not have</i></p>	

Take:	5
<p><i>known the details of the procurement order.” However, some details were obviously known to the employee of the winning firm, whose name somehow emerged in the characteristics of the file containing the contract specifications. Indeed, the chairman of the board and that firm’s CEO was at the same time a member of the VUT administrative board.</i></p> <p>The select proceedings and their winner were subsequently upheld by the VUT Brno administrative board, chaired by Roman Onderka (ČSSD), who was Brno’s mayor at the time. Another member of the administrative board at the time was South Moravian Governor and Chairman of the Association of Czech regions Michal Hašek (ČSSD). The VUT administrative board reacted to the information brought by the media by an uncommonly “hysterical”, seven-page press release, repeatedly warning against attempts to smear the good name of the institution and promising that the VUT Brno management shall <i>“forward its claim for integrity protection to an impartial court, or rather bodies participating in criminal proceedings. To this effect, the case will be shortly referred to a legal settlement through the appropriate legal channels.”</i> [20]. Roman Onderka reacted in a similar vein. Let us quote from an article [19], in which he wrote: <i>“I am not here to be interviewed; I am here to convey the resolution of the administrative board,” Onderka said with a raised voice and left the scene. Other members of the administrative board were even less eloquent and limited themselves to citing a declaration delivered by Onderka, whereupon they left the building in haste.”</i></p>	

Take:	9
Location:	Vysočina Region
Cast:	Libor Joukl (Vysočina Deputy Governor for Transport – ČSSD), Jan Míka (director, Vysočina Regional Road Management and Maintenance Administration – ČSSD), Jiří Běhounek (Vysočina Region Governor – unaffiliated, for ČSSD)
Prospective Nature:	Charged with plotting to influence public procurement proceedings and auction, neglecting duties in the management of foreign assets
<p>Case Description: According to the anticorruption police, the 2009 public tender for 28 Iveco gritting trucks for the Vysočina Regional Road Management and Maintenance Administration (KSUSV) was manipulated and the region lost more than 33 million crowns. However, Vysočina refused to join the claimants and voluntarily gave up raising its claim in future. The move was silently agreed by the regional council at a meeting on 2 December 2014. The decision was signed by six regional councillors [21].</p> <p>Vysočina Deputy Governor for Transport Libor Joukl (ČSSD) and Director of Vysočina’s Regional Road Management and Maintenance Administration Jan Míka (ČSSD) stood</p>	

accused. Regional councillors said in a resolution [21]: *“The Vysočina Region is not aware of any circumstances which would indicate that proceedings pertaining to this contract have led to any damages or that legal regulations were breached; therefore it will not join the other claimants seeking financial reparations of the purported loss as specified by the police document from 25 November 2014.”* Governor Jiří Běhounek (ČSSD) noted [21]: *“The damages were calculated on the basis of an expert opinion that we were not able to read. Moreover, we are convinced that the order was delivered in a proper manner, and no laws were broken and we did not incur any losses. Therefore we are not going to participate in any criminal proceedings in the capacity of injured person.”* However, according to cross-referenced information brought by the Deník daily [21], none of the councillors ever availed himself of the opportunity to check the police file in order to ascertain possible evidence. But having foregone their legal option, they could hardly have established a breach of the law or the absence of it [21].

In March 2015, Jihlava Public Prosecutor Kamil Špelda filed a suit against two defendants at the Jihlava District Court. Libor Joukl was charged with plotting to influence a public procurement process and auction. Facing the same plotting charge, Jan Míka was additionally accused of neglecting his duties in the management of foreign assets. Both men, who have retained their political and professional positions, face prison terms from two to eight years [22]. The public prosecutor has said [22]: *“The loss incurred was calculated as the balance of the price according to the purchase contract and the price usually charged for separate segment of the delivery. Nevertheless, in reality a still lower price could have been achieved if all potential manufacturers had been able to compete for the public contract, as they could have additionally offered a price cut due to the quantity of the units purchased.”* But according to the prosecutor, the said expert opinion is not the only piece of evidence. The file extends to 3,500 sheets, in addition to attachments with data carriers, e-mail correspondence and wiretaps. According to the prosecutor, a brief summary of the complete evidence has 17 pages [22]. The public prosecutor was astonished to learn that none of the injured party’s representatives (i.e. Vysočina Region) availed themselves of the opportunity to check the file to discern the true state of affairs [22].

Take:	10
Location:	České Budějovice
Cast:	Juraj Thoma (veteran member of ODS and longtime councillor of the City of České Budějovice, first deputy mayor in 2002-2006, Mayor of České Budějovice in 2006-2010 for ODS, subsequently Mayor of České Budějovice for the Citizens of České Budějovice movement in 2010-2014)
Prospective Nature:	Sentenced for abuse of official powers, appeal pending
Case Description: In 2012, police charged České Budějovice Mayor Juraj Thoma with abuse of political powers and neglect of duties in the management of foreign assets. Thoma was accused of circumventing city council approval of his signing an amendment, in 2010, to a contract with the BIT SERVICE company on the delivery of more than 37 million crowns’	

Take:	10
<p>worth of computer technologies [119]. His codefendant is the former head of the city council's IT and communications department.</p> <p>According to the police, as the result of Thoma's action the City of České Budějovice lost several million crowns [119]: <i>"The Statutory City of České Budějovice thus suffered a loss of almost 5,000,000 CZK. The investigators invited a court expert in the field of economics, pricing and IT technology price assessment, who confirmed that the contract was overpriced."</i> Thoma turned down the accusations at a news conference and said he would lodge a complaint against his prosecution. He said he had seen no reason to seek a city council approval of the amendment, since the contract had been recommended to him by the department s for IT, public procurement affairs, and a lawyer. But according to the police, all previous deals and amendments between the city and the IT company in question were always discussed and endorsed by the city council [119]: <i>"The mechanism of procedure in such cases was well known to the two defendants."</i></p> <p>In October 2012 the media disclosed the contents of recording predating charges against Thoma, in which he strangely comments on his signing of the contract and is heard saying [124]: <i>"(...) Our problem is stronger in that Bit Service somehow cooperated with us during the election campaign."</i> It is not clear how the recording was made, or who made it and why. Thoma's reaction was resolute [124]: <i>"I think this recording is total nonsense."</i> However, the Plzeň Public Prosecutor's office conditionally halted the criminal proceedings against Juraj Thoma, but police renewed their charges against him in December 2012, this time over the criminal act of abuse of official powers [120], [121]. The police newly estimated the loss for the city to amount to at least 8.7 million crowns [121].</p> <p>In January 2016, the České Budějovice District Court sent Juraj Thoma to jail for five years, for abuse of official powers, and ordered him to pay damages exceeding 12.5 million crowns [122]. He appealed against the verdict. He denied any wrongdoing and attributed his prosecution to a conspiracy hatched by his ex-confreres from the ODS, who had him ousted as mayor in 2010. At that time, Thoma switched allegiances to a new movement, Citizens for Budějovice, which unlike the ODS scored important points in the 2010 elections and won a third of the city council seats. The powerful ODS was said to have planned a vendetta designed to poise the "police machine" against Thoma [123]. Martin Kuba (leader of South Bohemian ODS and former minister of industry and trade) and the "Prince of Hluboká", Pavel Dlouhý, are influential figures in the regional party cells. Juraj Thoma, who spent many years with the ODS in South Bohemia, noted [123]: <i>"South Bohemian ODS has always operated on an Italian-style family basis (...)."</i></p>	
Take:	11
Location:	Plzeň City Council
Cast:	Former Plzeň councillors, Petr Rund (veteran councillor until early 2014, townhall official and deputy mayor for ODS)
Prospective Nature:	Waste of ca. 350 million crowns from public funds for the Rychtářka Parking Building
<p>Case Description: In April 2009, the Plzeň City Council passed a resolution acknowledging a <i>"core strategic study and recommendation of the optimal procedure in building the</i></p>	

Take:	10
<p><i>Rychtářka Parking building in Plzeň</i>”, and the blueprints for executing the Rychtářka commercial parking facility as a PPP project. The city’s mayor was tehdy Pavel Rödl (then a member of the ODS) [39]. One year later, in April 2010, a construction permit was issued and the next day the City Council endorsed an agreement on the provision of services and access to the Rychtářka Parking Building, drawn up by deputy mayor for technical affairs Petr Rund [40]. The investor – Prague company HERMOSA Real Estate – was supposed to complete the project for the price of 250 million crowns and to annually receive almost 18.5 million crowns from the city over the next 19 years, by which time the property would be transferred to Plzeň [40]. A simple calculation reveals that the city contract provided the firm with a revenue exceeding 100 million crowns. However, proceeds from the parking fees would go to the city. Interestingly, only a few months after obtaining the construction permit, the firm HERMOSA Real Estate changed its name to HERMOSA Parking Plzeň, and its sole shareholder from summer 2015 was the Cyprus-based firm AMULO CO. LIMITED, represented in the Czech Republic by lobbyist Ivo Rittig’s law firm, ŠACHTA & PARTNERS (today MSB Legal), which gained media notoriety due to other cases [40].</p> <p>However, a clause exported to the PPP project contract stipulated that profit from renting 1,600 square metres of ground floor area will go, for the period of debt repayment, to the above-mentioned firm, HERMOSA Real Estate (aka HERMOSA Parking Plzeň). Consequently, the city was supposed to repay instalments on what experts said was an overpriced parking facility, where a private company was expected to do business for free. The parking building formally opened its gates in June 2011 [40].</p> <p>The city’s initial estimate of the size of parking proceeds were grossly exaggerated, however, as drivers showed no long-term interest in using the 447-place parking building. In the first months after the opening, only about 40 cars were parked there every day [41]. Deputy Mayor Miloslav Šimák (ČSSD) assured the investor that the city will attempt to spread the gospel on billboards, if need be. But an opposition councillor rightly argued [41]: <i>“Why did you decide so late to promote it? What have you done before?”</i> The city subsequently installed more graphic pointers, and in 2014 (three years into the parking building operation) launched a programme to repair streets in the central area, actually forcing drivers to park outside the city centre. In addition, the city halved the parking prices in the building and it was the synergic effect of these factors that helped to increase the use of the parking building. In September 2015, Deputy Mayor Petr Náhlík was in a position to declare the following [42]: <i>“[We’ve had] an approximately two-thirds capacity filled on workdays and one third on weekends. By the time the cut process were put right, people learned to use the parking building.”</i> It should be noted that in light of the current fees charged by Rychtářka (hourly rates are 10 crowns during the day and five crowns at night, while all-day parking costs 60 crowns and all-night is 40 crowns), it is unpractical to expect that the investment would pay within the reasonable time brackets.</p>	
Take:	12
Location:	Karlovy Vary City Council
Cast:	Ladislav Vrbický (head of the Territorial Planning and Construction Office of the Karlovy Vary City Council, Karlovy Vary City Council (9 members including two from the ODS and five from other local groupings)

Take:	10
Prospective Nature:	Ex-post legalization of illegal buildings by the Construction Office
<p>Case Description: In February 2013 the Karlovy Vary City Council unanimously appointed Ladislav Vrbický [26] the head of the Territorial Planning and Construction Office of the Karlovy Vary City Council. The vote was upheld by all nine members of the council, with ODS and TOP 09 having two votes each, while the five remaining councillors hailed from other local groupings. Before that, however, Karlovy Vary had probably the most notorious chief of a Czech construction authority, in the person of Ivana Doubová: Not only did she not take action against the rise of a complete “Russian village” in the outskirts of the city, built without a construction permit, but Ivana Doubová later earned tens of millions of crowns due to an area plan change that increased the value of her land property [27]. Ladislav Vrbický had many liaisons with the illegal Russian village projects, as he was its designer. The “Russian Derevnja” did not have the needed construction permits until September 2014, but they were working on it. Paradoxically, the case was entrusted to the new chief of the Karlovy Vary building authority, that same Ladislav Vrbický, who designed the village prior to taking office. By his appointment as head of the Territorial Planning and Construction Office of the Karlovy Vary City Council came full circle concerning illegal construction in Karlovy Vary. Vrbický said in September 2014 [27]: <i>“I was that designer who put it all together, this village. Okay, if you need to have this information, not from the angle of the construction office, but in regard of the work one, well then, I am also in a position to give you that, because I was in close touch with Mrs. Smirnova, the new owner,, and we basically legalized these buildings.”</i> It comes as no small surprise that yet another illegal project saw light under the tenure of Office chief Ladislav Vrbický [27].</p> <p>In spring 2014, a historical spa house was nearly torn down in the posh Zahradní Čtvrť residential area in Karlovy Vary, a protected memorial zone. In breach of the initial building permit envisaging an overhaul of the building, a brand-new ferroconcrete edifice preserved only the front wall of the original house [27]. Ladislav Vrbický laconically stated [27]: <i>“It kind of happens quite often that like in this case, I mean at this moment, when a building contractor exceeds the limits of his work, the construction authority is the last to know. Actually, as the project continued, the limits of the construction permit were exceeded.”</i> The monument conservation department carried on-site investigations and found out that apart from the building permit the builder also actually ignored the position of that department. Administrative proceedings against him ensued and he was fined 1,200,000 crowns for an administrative offence against the protection of memorial sites [27]. Consequently, the owner of that property had to pay the historically steepest fine ever meted out by the Karlovy Vary Region, but he still came clean. He did not have to repair the historical parts of the building and was able to legalize his previous action by obtaining predated building permits: his new wellness centre can thus come complete with a swimming-pool, whirlpool and other attractions, which it would have not been possible to install in a period building [27]. Vrbický comments on his past and present role [27]: <i>“Nobody would be able to do anything new, because all building projects would have been called controversial. Now then, things are happening in town. And if things happen, there will be consequences and impacts.”</i></p>	

Take:	13
Location:	Karlovy Vary City Council
Cast:	Incumbent councillors of the City of Karlovy Vary
Prospective Nature:	Out-of-court settlement makes the city halt action to recover claims of between CZK 50 and 120 million, concerning the sale of the Karlovy Vary Golf Course
<p>Case Description: In March 2015, the Karlovy Vary city fathers approved an out-of-court settlement with the company, Golf Resort Karlovy Vary, to which the city sold a golf course in 2004 for the price of five million crowns. The townhall was controlled at the time by a council made up of ODS, ČSSD and Karlovy Vary Coalition. The golf course was sold to a renting party for 50 million crowns, although an earlier affidavit set the value of land to about 80 million crowns, and the value of the property to about 25 million crowns. The selling price was never recovered in its full extent. City detracted CZK 25 million in technical appreciation during a former sublease by the-ten lessee (who later became owner), and provided a price cut amounting to another 20 million crowns, as the result of which the new owner ultimately paid only five million crowns (having been granted a CZK 20 million price cut against his promise to further invest in his property!) [29]. Why the city voluntarily cut its profit from the sale of the golf course, was a hard nut to crack, in 2015, even for the chairman of the Golf Resort Karlovy Vary board, Vlastimil Argman [28]: <i>“I say openly I don’t have the answer, but that’s the way the city sold its assets. And when I asked why this thing or that paragraph must be there, the city said it must be so. Nothing could change that, as the city sort of had its claims (...).”</i></p> <p>The city’s new council, elected in 2010, set itself as its core task to amend for old irregularities and to try to retrieve tens of millions of crowns that Karlovy Vary lost in the past. In November 2013 the city council (TOP 09, KOA and ODS) filed a lawsuit over the ownership of the golf course. They contested the inadequately low price for a prestigious set of land and property. They charged that the buyer must return the property to the city and the city must return the buyers’ purchase price [28]. Their case was based on circumstances including a ČVUT affidavit from April 2013 that set the total value of the golf course somewhere between 141 and 179 million crowns. Therefore a price between 30 and 50 million crowns would seem to be unusual [29].</p> <p>Shortly before the end of 2014, the chairman of the board of Golf Resort Karlovy Vary, Vlastimil Argman, suggested an out-of-court settlement, offering to pay an additional 18 million crowns for the golf course in question. By then, another approximately nine million crowns landed on the city account from the sum, which was due in the next 10 years, or should have been invested. Consequently, if the city had accepted such settlement, the owner of the golf course complex would have to pay a total of CZK 5+9+18 = 32 million crowns. But this is still less than almost 50 million crowns that the city could have earned for the lease of the sports complex in 2004, according to an expert opinion from the same year (after a CZK 25 mn cut in the price due to technical evaluation commissioned during the lease period by the lessor-turned owner) about 120 million crowns less than the worth of the sports grounds (minus technical evaluation by the lessee at that time and later owner), cited by the ČVUT estimate). On 24 March 2015, the City Council agreed with the out-of-court settlement. The resolution was voted in by 18 councillors (5 for ANO, 3 ČSSD, 5 Karlovaráci, 2 KOA, 1 KSČM and 2 for ODS) against 11 councillors (including 1 for ANO, Jiří</p>	

Kotek for Alternativa and 5 for KOA); four councillors abstained and one did not vote. The out-of-court settlement required 18 votes, which were duly cast [30].	
Take:	14
Location:	Karlovy Vary City Council
Osoby:	Incumbent councillors of the City of Karlovy Vary
Prospective Nature:	Agree to out-of-court settlement by which the city renounces the setting of market price of selling the Lázně III building and selling property to a dubiously identified bidder
<p>Case Description: At the end of their term, on 2 November 2010, Karlovy Vary councillors (ODS/ČSSD coalition) asked the Mayor of Karlovy Vary to sign a purchase contract with Lázně III-Veso, involving the sale of historically valuable Lázně III building for 95 million CZK. Ex-Mayor Werner Hauptmann (ODS) signed the contract when new city councillors had yet to be elected, but the new city representatives had been voted in. The purchase contract was to be signed under a letter of intent concerning a future contract, approved by a resolution filed by the “old” Karlovy Vary council of 29 June 2009 [31]. The premises had been leased by Lázně III-Veso since 1994, and ex-ČSSD deputy and Karlovy Vary councillor Jaroslav Fiala was a CEO and co-owner until December 2009.</p> <p>However, the newly elected councillors, including the townhall’s vocal critic, Jiří Kotek from the Alternativa movement, sharply disagreed with the conduct of the “old townhall” and the outgoing mayor. Kotek filed suits against several persons [32]: <i>“I sued them and I say, this transaction is illegal and the future owners should know that they cannot treat the property as their own.”</i> The transaction was deemed unlawful (the new city council did not approve the purchase contract) and the price was seen as unusually low (the building occupies 5,000 square metres in the centre of the spa district and some said the area alone would have fetched many times the asking price) [33]. The outgoing mayor, Werner Hauptmann (ODS), reacted by issuing a press release that certainly did not spare Jiří Kotek [37]: <i>“The man could awaken from his slumbers in court. But who will pay for his jihad, court expenses, damage compensations and damages sustained by his opponents? The costs will be naturally shouldered by the citizens of Karlovy Vary. He will be a costly ‘goodie’ of the piece.”</i> Other members of the outgoing city council duly sued Jiří Kotek. However, the Karlovy Vary management hired lawyers and filed a suit, on the basis of which the sale of Lázně III could be halted.</p> <p>In August 2011 the Karlovy Vary District Court declared the sale of Lázně III and the respective purchase contract null and void. The former mayor had signed the contract before it could be endorsed by the city council [34]. But the old-new city councillor Jaroslav Fiala (ČSSD), had approved the approach of the former city management as recently as in February 2011 [34]: <i>“Everything is transparent. There are contracts on all of it.”</i> In March 2012 the district court’s ruling was upheld by the appeals instance, namely the Plzeň Regional Court [36]. However, its ruling was without prejudice to the lend/lease agreement between Karlovy Vary and Lázně III-Veso, concerning the spa and thought to stay until 2059. This tenancy arrangement was also the subject of a lawsuit pending while the appeal court ruled to void the purchase contract. But Lázně III-Veso company also sued the city. It argued that due to the expected duration of the dispute, the city had offered a settlement deal [35]. This would entail selling the real estate owned by the Lázně III-Veso for 180 million crowns. Mayor Petr Kulháněk declared [35]: <i>“If we win litigation over the voided lend/lease</i></p>	

agreement, the Lázně III building will be open to market-style sale. But if the tenant accepts mutual settlement, both parties will withdraw their litigation suits.” In September 2012, the city council passed the settlement bid by a majority of 24 votes (including councillors from ČSSD, ODS, TOP 09 and local parties) [38].

Take:	15
Location:	Ústí Region
Cast:	Pavel Kouda (councillor in 2000-2012, Ústí Region deputy for ČSSD in 2004-2010, Deputy Governor of the Ústí Region under ČSSD Governor Jana Vaňhová in 2008-2012), Petr Vráblík (head of the Office of the Regional Council of Cohesion Region North-West in 2006-2009), Petr Kušnierz (head of the Office of the Regional Council of Cohesion Region North-West from late 2009 to September 2011), Pavel Markvart (ODS, head of the Internal Affairs Department of the Office of the Regional Council of Cohesion Region North-West, head of the Office of the Regional Council of Cohesion Region North-West since January 2012), other officials and business leaders
Prospective Nature:	Charged with abuse of official powers and harming financial interests of the European Communities in connection with manipulating the collection of subsidies within Regional Operational Programme North-West

Case Description: In late 2013, the public prosecutor filed a suit with the Ústí nad Labem Regional Court against eight persons, accused in connection with manipulating subsidies under Regional Operational Programme North-West (“ROP North-West”). One of them was former Deputy Governor Pavel Kouda (ČSSD), alongside three former officials of the Office of the Regional Council of Cohesion Region North-West (“Subsidy Office North-West): Petr Vráblík, Petr Kušnierz and Pavel Markvart [54]. They were accused of abusing official powers and harming the financial interests of the European Communities. Due to extensive police investigation and suspected manipulations, the European Union suspended the payment of subsidies under ROP North-West in 2012 [54]. Eight defendants were suspected of manipulating projects with a value totalling 1.4 billion CZK. Of the total, 992 million CZK had been refunded.

The defendants went on trial in September 2014. The injured parties, comprising the Ústí Region, Ministry of Finance and Subsidy Office North-West, claimed to have sustained damages in excess of two billion crowns. The list of the projects the defendants were suspected of manipulating included projects filed by towns, municipalities and private investors. Thus, former deputy governor Pavel Kouda (ČSSD) had a list of the projects he insisted should be subsidized. He reportedly fetched a list of selected projects to the home of the official Kotlanová [55]. *“His instructions came complete with the threat to sack an unidentified number of employees of the regional council office, by which action he gravely impaired the impartiality and independence of assessing the projects and their eligibility to receive subsidies,”* Public Prosecutor Vladimír Jan stated in his indictment. Ms. Kotlanová duly conveyed the threats to other clerical personnel. The external reviewers, who played a pivotal role in the evaluation of ROP North-West projects, were unlawfully appointed in a direct way, without a lottery [55]. In several instances, Kušnierz reportedly presented selected appointments to Kotlanová, who was ordered to fake the reviewer lottery protocol [55].

In February 2015, former clerk Jana Šeflová testified in court. She had told police in 2012,

among other things [56]: *“VIP projects were assigned in advance to the reviewers, who would give them enough points to pass through.”* At that time she described other manipulations to the police. However, a disturbed Šeflová then recalled her earlier testimony [56]: *“I cannot explain why I said it (...). I was disturbed, it was stressful, I was under psychological pressure, I talked about things that never happened (...) I meant to talk differently about the many things that appeared in the police protocol.”* Defendant Pavel Kouda used her testimony in his defence and duly testified: [56]: *“So let me repeat what I’ve been saying from the start: I have not committed any unlawful action.”*

Take:	16
Location:	Ústí Region
Cast:	Petr Kušnierz (head of the Office of the Regional Council of Cohesion Region North-West from late 2009 to September 2011), Jiří Šulc (veteran ODS member, Ústí Region deputy in 2000-2012, Ústí Region Governor in 2000-2008, Chairman of head of the Office of the Regional Council of Cohesion Region North-West in 2007-2012, member of the Czech Parliament in 2010-2013)
Prospective Nature:	Sentenced for accepting bribes and abuse of official powers in connection with the allocation of subsidies
<p>Case Description: In March 2011 the Organized Crime Detection Unit raided the headquarters of the head of the Office of the Regional Council of Cohesion Region North-West in Ústí nad Labem (“Subsidy Office North-West”), headed by Petr Kušnierz at the time. The police unit acted on reports indicating corrupt conduct in the selection of projects and collection of funds. Subsequently the Regional Prosecutor’s Office in Ústí nad Labem announced it was prosecuting seven suspects, three of whom were accused of bribery, four of accepting bribes, and one person was additionally charged with extortion [58]. Five defendants, including Kušnierz, were remanded in custody. The State Prosecutor brought charges against them in August 2011 [58].</p> <p>According to the public prosecutor, Kušnierz and three other persons charged a 10-percent commission from EU subsidies granted. The Ústí nad Labem Regional Court had dealt with the case since December 2011 and stated in June 2012 that the Kušnierz-led quartet had demanded at least 1.7 million crowns and actually received a large part of that amount. The court duly found the former head of Subsidy Office North-West, Petr Kušnierz, guilty of accepting bribes and abusing his official powers, and sent him to jail for 7.5 years. He was also fined CZK 750,000. [58]. Three other codefendants - Václav Poláček, Roman Švec and Ukrainian Vladislav Hleba – received five-year unsuspended jail sentences and CZK 300,000 fines each. The subsidy applicants received jail sentences from one to two years. Justice Kamila Elsnicová also noted that Kušnierz received bribe promises while he held the post of deputy to Agriculture Minister Petr Gandalovič (ODS). She declared [58]: <i>“This is the first anticorruption case of this type, where a sentence was passed. I must praise the police for doing a very good job in safeguarding evidence.”</i> Justice Elsnicová also noted the case had a political background [58]: <i>“The office occupies a building owned by Ústí ‘Godfather’ Patrik Oulický; he couldn’t possibly have been closer to the source. (...) Moreover, Kušnierz’s appointment was agreed in advance and most probably, such practice was not used for the first time. (...) It is necessary for those exposed to temptation to realize they will pay dearly for their action.”</i> Patrik Oulický was for many years an influential member of the ODS in Ústí nad Labem. The pre-negotiated nature of appointing Kušnierz as the head of the subsidy</p>	

office is further corroborated by seized e-mail exchanges, which must have been known also to the then chairman of Regional Cohesion Council North-West, ex-Governor Jiří Šulc (ODS) [58]. The court also debated unusual operations in the regional office and the Most City Council, designed to make Kušnierz provide for the endorsement of bribery-laden projects in part by issuing antedated documents. Earlier the court heard police wiretaps [57]: *“Make it so it’s 8.5 [million crowns] and one million goes down the drain.”*

In early 2013, the appellation High Court in Prague reduced the sentences meted out, placing Petr Kušnierz’s prison term below the lower limit of the applicable scope of punishment, i.e. to five years. The court reasoned that shorter sentences are normally meted out in similar cases, and a higher penalty would be too harsh. Justice Minister Robert Pelikán filed a complaint against the reduction of sentences for the six convicts. The Supreme Court ruled on 1 December 2015 that the high court’s verdict broke the law in favour of the defendants. However, the high court’s verdict cannot be reversed as yet [59].

Take:	17
Location:	Ústí Region
Cast:	Jiří Šulc (veteran member of ODS, Ústí Region Councillor in 2000-2012, Ústí Region Governor in 2007-2008, Chairman of the Office of the Regional Council of Cohesion Region North-West in 2007-2012, Member of Parliament in 2010-2013), Jana Vaňhová (Ústí Region Governor for ČSSD in 2008-2012, Deputy Governor from 2012), Patrik Oulický (businessman, ‘Godfather’ and influential member of the Ústí ODS until 2013), Alexandr Novák (businessman, former ODS Senator, sent to jail for taking bribes)
Prospective Nature:	Circumventing the law in leasing lucrative property on former border crossings

Case Description: In circa 2007, information started to “leak” about the Ústí Region’s intention to lease lucrative vast real estate near the now-defunct border checkpoints with Germany to private bidders. The ARMEX Oil company showed interest in renting a part of the property [70]. Therefore it often checked the official desk of the region, but neither that desk nor the region’s website revealed anything about the plan, until the company heard that the lucrative property had been leased. Among the “chosen” bidders were the company REAL ESTATE with a board member and later co-owner in the person of ODS ex-Senator Alexandr Novák (who was later sentenced for four years for accepting a bribe amounting to approximately 40 million crowns: he spent only two years in prison, where he went in spring 2013) and the firm Energetické a dopravní stavby, which has long been associated with not only ODS lobbyists (its past and present co-owners being longtime ODS member and ‘Godfather’ Patrick Oulický, and the above-mentioned Alexandr Novák, but also several officials who later made it big in town, such as the future Mayor of Ústí nad Labem, Vít Mandík from the ČSSD). It is quite simple to see why the region’s intention to lease the said property never appeared on its official announcement desk [70].

In the spring and summer of 2008, the Ústí Region Council voted in favour of transferring property pertinent to the now-defunct border checkpoints in the cadastral territories of Český Jiřetín, Cínovec, Hřensko, Horní Jindřichov, Jiříkov and Mníšek v Krušných horách to the care of the funded organization, Správa a údržba silnic Ústeckého kraje (Ústí Regional Road Administration and Maintenance Company, hereinafter “Road Management”), established by the Ústí nad Labem Region. The Regional Council shortly agreed that Road

Management can lease the said property to third persons ([71]-[73]). Jiří Šulc (ODS) was governor at that time. The Ústí Region's official desk, located in the regional office building in the centre of Ústí nad Labem, betrayed nothing, either, as the case was "referred" to Road Management (whose official desk normally sits in the borderland municipality of Dubí) [70]. So it came to pass that the "unchosen" bidders never learned about the plan.

The "unchosen" firm, ARMEX Oil, contested both contracts in court (notably: lease contracts on real estate in the Jiříkov/Horní Jindřichov cadasters, signed on the same date in February 2009 between REAL ESTATE and Road Management and/or Energetické a dopravní stavby and Road Management). In spring 2011 and spring 2012 respectively, the Děčín Court and the appeals Regional Court in Ústí nad Labem cancelled these lease contracts [74]. However, the Ústí Region of Governor Jana Vaňhová (ČSSD) was adamant that no mistake was made as the region's funded organization no longer faced the *"responsibility to announce its intention to lease the property, whereas the funded organization is entitled to lease it in a direct way, without the consent of the regional council, in this case"* [75]. However, the Supreme Court defeated Road Management's appeal [74]. The remaining lease contracts stayed in force (nobody challenged them). By summer 2015 lease contract remained in place concerning the lease of three border crossings by Alexandr Novák's firm, REAL ESTATE [76].

Take:	18
Location:	Ústí Region
Cast:	Jan Lami (alternative member of the ODS Executive Council, ODS candidate for the Karlovy Vary Regional Council in 2004, elected member of the supervisory board of the Karlovy Vary branch of Všeobecná zdravotní pojišťovna ČR health insurance company in 2004, ran for ODS in 2006 elections to the Karlovy Vary City Council, later appointed PR manager of Krajská zdravotní, a.s., and communications manager of Most and Teplice hospitals, chairman of the administrative board of the Krajská Zdravotní Endowment), Eduard Reichelt (longtime director of Krajská zdravotní, a.s., sacked in 2013)
Prospective Nature:	Illegal dismissal of Head Surgeon Sáša Štembera for alleged gross breach of professional ethic due to his media statements

Case Description: February 2011 saw a doctors' protest campaign against the sorry situation of the Czech healthcare system, advertised as "Thank You, We Are Leaving". Almost 4,000 doctors were prepared to walk out from their hospitals. Sáša Štembera, head surgeon at the Most Hospital, a subsidiary of the Krajská zdravotní Ústeckého kraje hospital group, told the media [106]: *"Doctors will survive one month on the dole, but the healthcare system will collapse and people will be dying."* He was duly served a notice from the Krajská zdravotní, for a gross violation of work discipline. The company cited an internal directive preventing employees from speaking out in the media [106]. Štembera's dismissal was orchestrated by Krajská zdravotní's director Eduard Reichelt and his HR manager, Jan Lami [106]. Lami had run in several local council polls on the ODS ticket and was a member of the supervisory board of the Karlovy Vary branch of the Všeobecné zdravotní pojišťovna health insurance company.

A surgeon with 35 years' hands-on experience sued the hospital and sought a reversal of his notice. Manager Jan Lami told the court [107]: *"He [Štembera] raised a negative wave in public opinion. People asked me if patients will die as the doctors have now sent their*

notices. His dismissal was not an overnight decision; it was discussed by the management.” Štembera was deemed to have disobeyed a directive that prohibited employees from providing information to the media and his remarks had supposedly harmed and thrown bad light on the company [108]. However, the district court in Most had a different opinion and declared the dismissal null and void, in February 2012. Justice Jiří Zelenka stated [108]: “Head surgeon Štembera did know he was talking to the press, but it was plain to see from the article published that he was not speaking on behalf of Krajská zdravotní, but on his own accord. No directive can prevent him from doing it, for a breach of the Constitution would occur.” The Krajská zdravotní management appealed against the verdict, but in March 2013 the District Court in Ústí nad Labem dismissed their appeal and upheld the verdict [108], [106]. Krajská zdravotní subsequently had to compensate Štembera for the loss of income for two years and reinstate him, which he rejected and filed a notice instead [106]: “The organizational change Krajská zdravotní had to introduce in order to comply with the court decision and employ me back would hardly be good for the surgical ward.” In February 2014, Sáša Štembera received a Czech Medical Association prize for courage and he reiterated that his instant dismissal had been driven by his criticism of the hospital’s management [109]: “I am convinced that this article was used as a smokescreen. I never shied of saying it’s thievery out there. I was the only Most Hospital employee to talk to the police in the course of investigation and to furnish them with what’s going on there. (...) The thing to do lately is to resist, excuse my French, the riffraff who don’t shy away from looting the healthcare system. We know that 30 percent of the money that goes into health care gets stolen. Just as we only fought disease in the past, now we must protect patients against the theft of money allocated for their healthcare.”

Take:	19
Location:	Ústí nad Labem City Council
Cast:	Vít Mandík (Councillor, City Father and Mayor of Ústí nad Labem, ČSSD), Jiří Šulc (veteran member of ODS, Ústí Region Councillor in 2000-2012, Ústí Region Governor in 2007-2008, Chairman of the Office of the Regional Council of Cohesion Region North-West in 2007-2012, Member of Parliament in 2010-2013)
Prospective Nature:	Dubious subsidy granted for the completion of a hotel in lieu of a company whose CEO was Ústí nad Labem Mayor, Vít Mandík

Case Description: In late August 2010, the company EKOFIN PC approached Regional Operational Programme North-West (ROP SZ) with a request for subsidy. They filed a project called *Completion of Větruše Hotel Complex*. The firm’s CEO was ČSSD member Vít Mandík at that time. Two and a half months later, on 11 November 2010, Mandík became Mayor of Ústí nad Labem. Within the next two weeks (on 26 November), the Regional Council Committee endorsed a subsidy totalling about 80 million crowns (with about 68 million CZK coming from the European Union), for the project. In reaction to the disclosure of such strange circumstances by the media (on 6 December 2010) the Regional Council said in a press release concerning EKOFIN PC [50]: “According to the latest certificates of incorporation, the firm’s CEO, Ing. Vít Mandík, was elected Mayor of Ústí nad Labem.” The press release quoted Regional Council chairman Jiří Šulc as saying [50]: “In this case it is not possible not to grant a subsidy to a company that has successfully presented a project application only because its CEO was subsequently elected to a public post, as this would contravene the principles of equal access to the allocated European funds, and the applicant

could successfully defend himself, citing discrimination.” However, Šulc declared he saw it proper for “*Mayor Mandík to extricate himself from the activities of this firm, which probably would be hardly conceivable due to time constraints following his election*” [50]. Vít Mandík did so after he became mayor. His position of CEO of the firm EKOFIN PC was deleted from the Business Register on 13 December 2010 (but 27 October 2010 was formally indicated as the date of winding up his post). The new CEO of the firm EKOFIN PC, businessman Jiří Dušek, had liaison with several members of the Regional Council Committee, which endorsed the subsidy. The ČSSD was the committee’s strongest element, represented among others also by that party’s regional chief Petr Benda, former deputy mayor Pavel Kouda, ex-Mayor Jana Vaňhová and regional councillor Arno Fišera [49]. According to media reports, Fišera was closely associated with the new CEO Dušek, the former having supported the latter in local politics thanks to his many contacts and helped him to land at the Ústí townhall in 2006 [49]. Fišera and Dušek also had shared business interests. The books of one of Dušek’s firms had long been kept by Fišera’s wife, and the new mayor, Vít Mandík, that firm’s CEO in 2005-2010.

And that was not all. In due course, EU auditors found out that EKOFIN PC had supported its application for subsidy by a statement from an account on which 60 million crowns were deposited, although at that time the firm’s assets were negligible and it had no employees (according to its own financial statements, its 2010 economic figures were in the red and its assets amounted to only 1.8 million crowns. Moreover, it was repaying an almost six-million-crown bank loan.) [49]. The firm has yet to explain how it could have 60 million crowns at hand and how it had acquired the sum, provided it was really on its account. Said former city councillor Pavel Dlouhý (ČSSD) [49]: “*I have no opinion about that and don’t want to have any.*”

Take:	20
Location:	Ústí nad Labem City Council
Cast:	Vít Mandík (Councillor, City Father and Mayor of Ústí nad Labem, ČSSD), Josef Macík (Ústí Region’s ČSSD councillor since 2008, member of the Regional Cohesion Council North-West till 2012, city councillor from 2009 and member of the Ústí nad Labem City Council in 2010-2014), Zuzana Kailová (Ústí nad Labem deputy and councillor for ČSSD in 2006-2014, Deputy Mayor in 2008-2014, Member of Parliament since autumn 2013)
Prospective Nature:	Charged with abuse of official powers and neglecting duties in the management of foreign assets, concerning “Welcome Newborns” project
Case Description: In spring 2011 the city called a public tender for the organization of a Welcome Newborns ceremony, the terms of which were approved by council member Josef Macík and Deputy Mayor Zuzana Kailová. On the initiative of Mayor Vít Mandík the city addressed several mutually related firms, including later winner Darothore. However, one of the bidders was not addressed – the Atlantic advertising agency, which actually quoted the lowest price. Chairman of the select commission Josef Macík subsequently had the tender called off. Atlantic’s CEO told the media [51]: “ <i>We were pressed to withdraw, but I didn’t do that and the tender was voided.</i> ” However, the city cited economic reasons and said it would itself organize most of the details of the welcoming ceremony [51]. Initially the city was looking for a firm, which would help them organize the event in 2011, and addressed Darothore, and not the bidder offering the lowest price. However, Darothore’s ownership structure was not transparent and it was related to a firm that financed the ČSSD in 2008-	

2010 and whose representatives were sitting in the city council at the time the contract was awarded.

Consequently, Darothore won a contract amounting to 148,200 crowns without VAT (or almost 180,000 CZK with VAT) to manage the project in 2011. In the same year, the city called a tender for the coming years, and Darothore registered as a single bidder. The city council unanimously approved its offer and Mayor Vít Mandík signed the contract in December 2011. The city was supposed to pay Darothore CZK 2.22 million (including VAT) [51], [52]. Compared with the costs of organizing the 2011 event (for one year), the price thus increased about tenfold. Eventually the city paid only CZK 1.74 million to Darothore, as it withdrew from the contract in March 2013 [52].

In April 2014 police charged Mayor Vít Mandík, in this connection, with neglecting his duties in the management of foreign assets and abusing his official powers. Police also asked the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament to extradite Ústí councillor Zuzana Kailová (a ČSSD MP) to face prosecution in the case [53]. However, the lower house voted 42 to 81 and the request was turned down (extradition was contested by all members of parliament from ČSSD and TOP 09, some abstained from the vote, similarly as the Communists, and Kailová's indemnity was not lifted) [51].

Mandík and Macík on trial in October 2015. Although the city eventually paid only 1.74 million crowns, the state prosecutor discerned a overpricing by at least one million crowns. Macík told the court [52]: *"We were told by the head of the respective department that it was the usual price by comparison with the previous years."* Former Civic Democrat (ODS) city councillor Tomáš Nedvěd, who also voted for the contract, told the court [52]: *"I did not study the adequacy of this expenditure."*

Take:	21
Location:	Ústí Region Office
Cast:	Petr Fiala (veteran member of the ODS, deputy to Ústí Region Governor Jiří Šulc from autumn 2004 to autumn 2008, incumbent councillor of the Ústí Region, deputy chairman of the supervisory board of Všeobecná zdravotní pojišťovna ČR health insurance company in 2007-2011, deputy for economic and HR management from summer 2012 to February 2014, and general manager of Krajská zdravotní a.s.; chairman of the regional ODS association of the Ústí Region since March 2013, former members of the Krajská zdravotní board of directors, deputies from the Ústí Region
Prospective Nature:	Charged with neglecting duties in the management of foreign assets and plotting to influence public procurement competition and public auction

Case Description: In late 2010 the Ministry of Finance led by Miroslav Kalousek filed a suit over suspected waste of funds for the purchase of healthcare technologies by Krajská zdravotní a.s. in 2008. The complaint concerned also other orders made by that company. The company was founded at the decision of the Ústí Region Council of September 2007 and associates the region's five largest hospitals. The task of transforming them into a single whole was delegated to the Regional Council, headed by ODS Mayor Jiří Šulc at the time. The Regional Council acts as the Krajská zdravotní general meeting and the Ústí Region is a single proprietor [77], [78].

Although Krajská zdravotní was investigated by police in 2011, this did not hamper the career of the former deputy chairman of its board of managers in 2007-2008, veteran city councillor of Ústí nad Labem Tomáš Indra: In January 2012, he became a member of the supervisory board of the company Severočeské doly, a subsidiary of electricity giant ČEZ, the chairman of the supervisory board of which he was elected in February 2012. Severočeské doly's annual turnover is in the vicinity of 10 billion crowns [83].

In summer 2013, police pressed charges against five former members of the Krajská zdravotní board in 2008, responsible for the contracts under investigation. They were Eduard Reichelt (Krajská zdravotní CEO in 2013), Petr Fiala (deputy director for economic management in 2013 and chairman of the ODS Regional Association in Ústí nad Labem from spring 2013), Tomáš Indra, René Budjač, and Miloslav Řehák [79]. Police said the accused had caused damages amounting to about 82 million crowns by purchasing instruments and healthcare equipment from a consortium of the firms Hospimed and Puroklima, while the company lost another 38 million crowns due to a tender for expert advisors in formulating applications for funding—grossly overpriced jobs the quality of which did not meet required standards, yet the accused were said to have agreed with the payment of unreasonably steep invoices [80], [81]. However, despite these accusations, the Ústí Regional Council voted to re-elect Petr Fiala director of Krajská zdravotní, in February 2014. The regional council consists of six members of the KSČM and five Social Democrats (ČSSD). The new director was selected by a special commission, and eight candidates presented their projects in closer select hearings. The region's spokesperson declared [80]: *“Based on these presentations and following private interviews the commission's conclusions were unanimous.”* Less than three weeks later, the Unit for Combating Corruption and Financial Crime completed their investigations and submitted the file to the public prosecutor [81].

The Ústí District Court started proceedings in September 2015. Former chairman of the Krajská zdravotní board of directors René Budjač turned down all accusations [82]: *“I am convinced no guilt was proven. Actually I believe we have saved money.”*

Take:	22
Location	Ústí Regional Council, Ministry for Regional Development
Cast:	Milan Zemaník (secretary of Ústí nad Labem City Council in 1994-2008, head of the Ústí Region Office from 15 April 2008), Patrik Oulický (businessman, “Godfather” and influential member of ODS in Ústí nad Labem until 2013)
Prospective Nature:	Later authorization of illegal building projects, non-enforcement of fines for illegal construction projects and their misuse

Case Description: Media reported in 2009 on an unauthorized construction projects underway in Moravany near Ústí nad Labem, where an opulent family seat of businessman, “Godfather” and influential member of ODS in Ústí nad Labem Patrik Oulický was being built since 2008 [60]. Without a building permit, work continued on massive perimeter walls with surveillance cameras, a large swimming-pool, a tennis court and a roofed access road. Moreover, Oulický engaged in an illegal building project in the Czech Central Mountains Protected Landscape Area, where only simple buildings are allowed [60]. In September 2008, the construction office in Trmice started proceedings to make Oulický remove illegal buildings. But he applied for an additional building permit, although he presented only documents concerning the roofing of his driveway. He never bothered to legalize other parts of the project [60]. Even before the Trmice office issued its ruling, Oulický referred his case

to the Ústí Regional Office (“Regional Office”), which received a new head on 15 April 2008 in the person of [61]. He was appointed by the council of the Ústí Region, then chaired by ODS Governor Jiří Šulc (whose appointment had been approved by ODS Interior Minister Ivan Langer) [61]. Zemaník reports to the regional governor concerning the implementation of tasks entrusted to the regional office and attends city and regional council meetings.

In June 2009, shortly before the decision was announced by the Trmice building authority, the Regional Office announced that Patrik Oulický’s request was favourable received, the case was being referred to it, and intimated the Trmice office [62] that *“this case is complicated and requires an expertise the building office has failed to demonstrate.”* However, according to the secretary of the Trmice Municipal Office, *“at the time it issued its ruling, the Regional Office did not have the file at its disposal, since the document was still sitting in our office”* [68]. Shortly after that, in August 2009, the Regional Office again helped Oulický and sent his dossier to the Ústí nad Labem City Council, with which Oulický fostered very close friendly relations [62]. The Council’s building department halted proceedings to remove the illegal buildings, in October 2009 [62]. Ombudsman Otakar Motejl noted in April 2010 that the *“Ústí Regional Office and Ústí nad Labem City Council [had] made mistakes”* ordered the continuation of proceedings and upheld the position of the Trmice building office [62]. In summer 2010, Prime Minister Petr Nečas (ODS) strongly condemned Oulický’s illegal construction efforts [64].

In December 2010, the construction department of the Ústí nad Labem City Council ordered Oulický to remove the roofed driveway to his residence (smallest of the illegal projects), which duly happened in spring 2011 [65]. In May 2011, Oulický was ordered to remove also the massive perimeter walls [66]. However, the same department issued Oulický a few months later with additional building permits to complete the remaining illegal efforts (swimming-pool, rest and recreation area and landscape changes) [67]. Furthermore, he did not have to pay a one-million-crown fine. Nor was he fined for the execution of illegal buildings (court having missed appropriate deadlines) and their use. The Ministry for Regional Development, then led by Kamil Jankovský (Public Affairs, LIDEM) put it to the Ombudsman that usage is not determined by the functionality of buildings, and in case of, say, the swimming-pool or tennis court, its officials would have to actually catch Oulický in the act of swimming or playing tennis. The ministry did not say how the support walls were used [69].

Take:	23
Location:	Liberec Region
Cast:	Martin Půta (councillor, then Governor of the Liberec Region from November 2012, head of NUTS II North-East Regional Council in 2012-2014, chairman of the Mayors for Liberec Region movement in 2008-2014, deputy chairman of Association of Czech Regions from April 2014, Member of STAN movement since March 2014 and chairman until December 2015), Jiří Zeronik (Liberec businessman and veteran former Liberec councillor for ODS)
Prospective Nature:	Abuse of official powers and accepting a bribe, harming EU financial interests, corruption, instigating abuse of official powers
Case Description: August 2009 saw the founding of public-benefit organization Geothermal Energy for Citizens, whose management comprised also of Liberec businessman and veteran former Liberec councillor for ODS Jiří Zeronik. A few months later the organization applied	

for a subsidy for the revitalization of the decrepit Church of Saint Mary Magdalene in Liberec, to be converted to an information centre on environmental energies and a multipurpose public centre for exhibitions, lectures, concerts etc. Total redevelopment costs of almost 65 million crowns were to consist of about 55 million crowns' worth of EU funding [100] and the remaining 10 million CZK were to be invested by the public-benefit association. The allocation was supervised by NUTS II North-West Regional Council and the subsidy was to be refunded after the completion of the revitalization project, scheduled to take place in 2011-2014 [100]. Tender for investor was won by the company Metrostav. Zeronik, who was previously convicted of corruption, noted in 2012 [101]: *"Rumour affecting the restoration of the church was that brisk business will happen there. This is not true. We will open the centre to NGOs for a token rent, and we have contacted many of them."*

In April 2014 police arrested eight persons, six of whom were remanded in custody [102]. Among them were the head of the Liberec office of ROP North-East Bořek Machatý, director of Metrostav in Liberec Jan Petráně and businessman Jiří Zeronik. In November 2014 police brought charges against two other persons including Liberec Region Governor Martin Půta, who was at the same time the chairman of the NUTS II North-East Regional Council. [102]. Police said Půta had been promised an 800,000-crown bribe in exchange for ensuring, in his capacity of subsidy council chief, the allocation of the CZK 20 mn subsidy for the reconstruction of the church while the project is still only underway, although the full 55-million-crown subsidy should have been released after the completion and final inspection of the project. Police had monitored the accused and it was ascertained that Governor Půta, head of the subsidy board, had met with people from the building circles at a petrol station. Having been warned by a reporter that a meeting at a fuel station does not look too good, he said [103]: *"Well, maybe it doesn't. But on the other hand, a meeting in a parking lot with cameras rolling might be more public than anything in an office with a jammer rolling. But this is no excuse."*

The media reported in October 2015 that the accused businessman, Jiří Zeronik, had started to talk to the police against the promise of gaining a crown witness status. Zeronik testified how the project costs were fraudulently raised, pointed at certain people from the building circles, who were allegedly to help him ensure project funding, etc. During earlier house searches the police discovered documents proving that real costs of the church renewal amounted to 39.2 million crowns [104].

Take:	24
Location:	Liberec- city and region
Cast:	Jiří Kittner (veteran member of ODS, Mayor of Liberec in 1999-2010, regional councillor in 2004-2011, member of statutory bodies of several firms partly owned by Liberec), Josef Nadrchal (member of Liberec City Council for Democratic Regional Party in 1998-2002, later a member of the administrative board of Liberec Housing Development Fund and a commission for investments and selection of investors on behalf of the Liberec City Council, at present the CEO and partner of INVESTING CZ)
Prospective Nature:	Fraud, credit fraud, breach of economic conduct rules, breach of rules in the management of foreign assets
Case Description: For 12 days from 18 February and 1 March 2009, Liberec hosted FIS Nordic World Ski Championships as a grand event. Liberec Mayor Jiří Kittner welcomed visitors	

during the opening ceremony, saying: *“Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the Czech Republic, welcome to a city in the north, welcome to a city under Mt Ještěd, and welcome to Liberec.”* FIS President Gian Franco Kasper jubilantly declared at the end of the games [86]: *“We have experienced a great championship here in Liberec.”* But neither the visitors nor TV viewers did know how “great” it was and what “Welcome to Liberec” actually meant. Now we know.

The costs of this sports undertaking exceeded two billion crowns, including CZK 1.5 billion from the national budget; Liberec paid around 400 million crowns and the region expended some 165 million. The organizing committee’s budget topped 632 million crowns, but the state suffered a debt exceeding 108 million crowns without penalization. The championships were organized by the civic association, OC FIS NORDIC WSC, led by former Czech Nordic Skiing Champion Kateřina Neumannová. Her association filed a bankruptcy [90]. The same happened to the company Media Flow, which took care of the publicity campaign [91].

The management of funds allocated for the development of sports facilities and background provisions was later subject to keen investigations by the quarters including the Supreme Audit Office (NKÚ). Its findings were summed up in a final report. The NKÚ president of the day, František Dohnal, commented on the outcomes [88]: *“Concerning the work and materials that were not supplied in actual fact, the final loss runs into tens of millions of crowns. (...) Evidently, attempts were made to split individual jobs among smaller orders (...). In other words, this was to ensure that individual contractors are chosen off hand and not in business competitions.”* Contracts were thus awarded also to the firm SYNER (virtually all big construction projects in Liberec are carried out by them), or to INVESTING CZ, whose CEO and partner is a former member of the Liberec City Council and member of the commission that selects investment policies and investors for Liberec, Josef Nadrchal.

Jiří Kittner, then Mayor of Liberec, adopted a truly original approach to the NKÚ report [88]: *“Well, it might be a problem for the NKÚ; I have no explanation, because actually I don’t have time or stamina to solve such things.”* Josef Nadrchal was even more vocal about the NKÚ findings [92]: *“This report is gibberish. I told Žabka, who did the audit, that it doesn’t make sense, but he’s, you know what, queer that way. He ridiculed me. I know it was a political assignment. Prague hates Liberec.”*

Several persons were accused and charged in this case, but nobody has been convicted yet. [90], [93]. The championships accumulated a debt in the environment of 100 million CZK [90].

Take:	25
Location:	Liberec- city and region
Cast:	Jiří Kittner (Jiří Kittner (veteran member of ODS, Mayor of Liberec in 1999-2010, regional councillor in 2004-2011, member of statutory bodies of several firms partly owned by Liberec), Martin Sepp (ČSSD, former deputy governor of the Liberec Region) and 21 Liberec city fathers (mostly from ČSSD and ODS)
Prospective Nature:	Sentenced for neglecting duties in the management of foreign assets, appeal pending
Case Description: This case is a pristine demonstration of stubborn attitudes on the part of	

lower instance courts towards the positions held by public prosecutor's offices nationwide and the postures of the Supreme Court. State institutions play games against the background of criminal proceedings against senior Liberec political figures from ČSSD and ODS.

In April 2007, 23 Liberec councillors voted in favour of transferring city-owned building plots in Liberec-Dubí to private hands, a deal in which a site near the South Industrial Zone, on an area of 3,400 square metres, went Karel and Libuše Volavka for the price of 1.49 million CZK [94]. Prices were determined on the basis of the proceeds from the sale of municipal property in 2004. Mr. and Mrs. Volavka consequently paid 847 crowns per square metre and 350 crowns per square metre for another part of their lot. The case was highlighted by a deputy for the Open Society Party, and later an economic assistant to the mayor, Jiří Šolc [94]. Police launched an investigation and in November 2008, 23 political figures, predominantly from the ČSSD and ODS, were accused of breach of rules in the management of foreign assets [96]. In February 2011, the public prosecutor sued those political figures for plotting to cause damages to the City of Liberec in excess of 3.5 million crowns. According to that public prosecutor, the selling price of plots in that area at that time was around 1,500 CZK per square metre and consequently the total price should have exceeded five million crowns. Public prosecutors held that selling the land for less than 1.5 million crowns did not tally with the usual price in the given place and time. The city had also sold land without a tender. However, Liberec District Court Justice Lukáš Korpas halted the prosecution [97]: *"I halted the prosecution in the course of preliminary proceedings on the part of the prosecuting party, since I had not discerned signs of criminal activities in terms of subjective manifestations, i.e. guilt."* The public prosecutor lodged a complaint with the Regional Court which, however, dismissed it. Eventually, Supreme Public Prosecutor Pavel Zeman launched an appeal to the Supreme Court to find a remedy [98].

Media reported in January 2013 that the Supreme Court had overturned the exculpatory resolutions of the lower-instance courts and returned the case to the Liberec District Court to review and rule on the case [98]. Consequently the court started reviewing the case in October 2013, and none of defending judges agreed with the prosecution of the defendants [95]: *These criminal proceedings are an unwarranted intrusion by state power into the constitutionally guaranteed territorial self-rule. (...) No criminal complaint was filed in this case and the state reacted to a media story."*

In February 2014, the Liberec District Court repeatedly ruled that no criminal offence had been committed and relieved all the accused of their indictments. Public Prosecutor Martina Dědková appealed against the verdict [99]. In October 2015, the Liberec District Court passed sentences on all 23 former councillors of the City of Liberec (including former mayor Jiří Kittner and incumbent Liberec councillor Zuzana Kocumová), some of whom instantly appealed [94]. According to the public prosecutor, the defendants repeatedly ignored reasonable objections against the price as the transaction was scrutinized, and nobody took up these objections [94]: *"The sale was approved as it is."*

Take:	26
Location:	Pardubice Region
Cast:	Miroslav Petržilek (Deputy Chairman of ČSSD)
Prospective	Fraud charges

Nature:	
<p>Case Description: Miroslav Petržílek was the second highest-ranking Social Democrat in the Pardubice Region. In late 2011 he asked the chairman of the board of the Enteria Holding (also comprising building contractors Chládek & Tintěra Pardubice), Libor Joska, for a multimillion-crown commission on public procurement contracts, suggesting that they be overpriced. Joska taped the conversation and handed it over to anticorruption police [23]. For instance, Petržílek says in the recording [24]: <i>“Increase the airport by twenty mega; no matter how you’ll do it. But we want ten. I know it’s a lot. Make it 21 or 22.”</i> In that moment, Petržílek and Joska discussed a quarter-million-crown refurbishment of Pardubice Airport, carried out by Chládek & Tintěra Pardubice. The said commission would arise from extra work invented by the builders [24]. In December 2011, Petržílek requested “something ahead” from Joska [24]: <i>“What about a kind of advanced payment? Say, a million, it’s Christmas, like,”</i> Petržílek suggested. Surprisingly, in June 2012 police accused Petržílek of fraud, but not corruption, as would have been expected.</p> <p>However, Miroslav Petržílek was confined to a wheelchair by that time, fighting cancer. According to news website iDnes.cz, the Hradec Králové public prosecutors halted proceedings against him in summer 2012 because he was gravely ill [24].</p> <p>It is certainly worth noting that less than a year later, businessman Libor Joska was one of eight persons detained by police in May 2013 in connection with a suspected plot concerning the Kladruby nad Labem stud farm. He spent 25 days in police custody [25].</p>	

Take:	27
Location:	Příbram Municipal Office
Cast:	Josef Řihák (ex-Mayor of Příbram, ex-Governor of Central Bohemia, ČSSD), Věra Černá (head, Příbram Real Estate Administration Department), Zdeněk Škaloud (head, Department of Investments, Příbram), Tomáš Samek (Attorney-at-Law), Jan Oulický (businessman, owner of Triticum), Pavel Brejcha (businessman and close friend of Josef Řihák), Emil Mašanka (former police investigator, head of Public Procurement Department of the Regional Office after Řihák’s election)
Prospective Nature:	Soliciting benefit from public procurement, public competition and public auction
<p>Case Description: In December 2011, the Příbram townhall approved the sale of a clinic and an adjacent building, housing a sobering station and homeless dormitory to the firm Triticum, the winner of a public procurement tender. Josef Řihák (ČSSD) was Příbram’s mayor at the time and the sale of the municipal clinic was approved in spite of public opposition. Doctors operating from the clinic building also protested against the transaction [10]: <i>“We would pay you the rent we are now going to pay to that firm, so why are you getting rid of it?”</i> The economic results of the clinic were good, according to the available data, but the ODS and ČSSD councillors, who formed a majority in the townhall, supported the selling option. The winning bidder, Triticum, acquired the building for the price of CZK 20.5 million [9]. Two of the unsuccessful firms subsequently challenged the tender, citing its intransparency. Their officials had not been invited to the opening of the envelopes, which proceeded only in the presence of a lawyer, who interacted with the town hall. Police found</p>	

out, among other circumstances that the winning bidder, Triticum, had ties with Řiháka and the way the envelope commission arrived at its conclusions was also found controversial. However, investigator Emil Mašanka ditched the case in November 2012, saying that some of its circumstances were despicable but not criminal [12]. On the date of electing Řihák governor, i.e. 20 November 2012, investigator Emil Mašanka asked to be relieved of his service duties and before long, he was appointed head of the Regional Office's Public Procurement Department [11], [12].

Following the former investigator's arrival at Governor Řihák's team at the Central Bohemia Office, police reopened their investigations of the sale of the clinic. Their efforts resulted in charges being pressed against four persons. They were the winning bidder Triticum's CEO Jan Oulický, officials Věra Černá and Zdeněk Škaloud, and lawyer Samek. Škaloud, Černá and Samek were the only witnesses to the opening of the envelopes, in which the bidders were supposed to insert the price they offered for the acquisition of the building [13]. According to the article [9], police cited irregularities during the envelope-opening act, which the source described as follows: *"All companies competing in the tender for the acquisition of the clinic building presented their bids enclosed in legal size A6 envelopes. The same applies to the winner, Triticum PLC. It was ascertained, on the basis of technical inspection of the documents and other written materials by the Prague Institute of Criminology, that the sheet of paper containing that firm's bidding price, presented in the size A4 format, was folded only once. This means, of course, that it would never fit in the said size A6 envelope."* The envelope format issue was indirectly confirmed by the police resolution, which says in part [9]: *"As ascertained in the course of verification, the Triticum company's bid was included in a specifically unascertained way among the envelopes delivered in this fashion, by the commission for the opening of the envelopes. Although it was declared in the envelope-opening protocol that the bid was delivered within the prescribed time brackets, it was not so delivered in the envelope under scrutiny."* As it later turned out, the sum nearing 20 million CZK was provided to the firm's owner, Oulický, by businessman Pavel Brejcha, a close friend of Josef Řihák. The latter actor hurried with the sale of the building. In October 2014, the Regional Prosecutor's Office in Prague stopped the prosecution of the four above-mentioned persons. It based its decision on the complaints lodged by the accused parties [13].

Take:	28
Location:	Central Bohemian Region
Cast:	Zdeněk Štětina (former director of the Central Bohemian Regional Office and an official from the David Rath era), Josef Řihák (former Governor of the Central Bohemian Region – ČSSD)
Prospective Nature:	Suspected of misuse of information and position in trade

Case Description: The spring of 2014 saw the resignation of the director of the Central Bohemian Regional Office, Zdeněk Štětina, one of the prominent officials during the tenure of Central Bohemian Governor David Rath. He stepped down on the face of growing criticisms of his conduct, several suits levelled on him, and the results of police investigations. Chief among the Zdeněk Štětina cases is the dubious economic management of the regional Central Bohemia Tourism Information Service (STIS), where Štětina was the chairman of board in 2011-2014, the economic audit of his office (which revealed serious problems); his office also increased payments to a private company directed by Štětina's girlfriend who received 290,000 crowns from Štětina's office without revealing the reason

why [14], [15], [16]. Following Štětina's resignation, the Region made him the director of Domov Velvary, an organization funded by that region. The then Governor, Řihák, described Štětina as a person well earning his position at the Regional Office, while his errors emanated from "material fatigue" [17].

The original mission of STIS was to help develop tourism in Central Bohemia. The company was established in 2007, under the tenure of David Rath's predecessor, Petr Bendl (ODS). Shortly after incorporating STIS, the Central Bohemian Region built its headquarters in the historical city centre of Prague and employed seven people to run the organization. STIS faced devastating criticisms after the arrival of David Rath. *"I don't know if Mr. Bendl had any premonitions, and I sincerely hope he did not, but all indications are that STIS worked to launder money and fetch European money to private concerns,"* Rath claimed at that time. In 2009 this organization placed orders concerning the "Personality of the Year" competition, designed to promote 57 selected historical figures from the Central Bohemian Region. Since STIS was penniless at the time, it applied for a 9.9-million-crown loan from the funds designed to pre-finance European Union projects, tapped by the various departments and organizations of the region. STIS director Šárka Alexa (ČSSD) on 19 June 2009 applied for the provision of almost 10 million crowns to the STIS account. However, Zdeněk Štětina ordered Alexa to split the order to several items of smaller scale, which duly happened, and all select hearings concerning orders for the printing of maps, personality folders, and monographs and postcards, were subsequently awarded to the firm, HZ Group, represented by businessman Milan Zevl. The Office for the Protection of Competition (ÚOHS) expressed reservations about such approach. ÚOHS eventually closed the protracted litigation case in March 2013. Its head, Petr Rafaj, noted that *"in this case, an object of public procurement was unlawfully split to parts, even though all there was a material, local and time-related coincidence of these orders,"* noting that in all these cases the same body of contractors was addressed in August 2009, but the organization selected the same company and signed the contracts on the same date [14].

At the beginning of 2013, Štětina signed an amendment to the contract on the protection of the governor's office, on the basis of which the monthly payments to the firm A-ROYAL were increased by 72,711 crowns to a total sum exceeding 332,000 CZK [15]. By that time, Štětina's girlfriend Romana Jochová assumed the leadership of that company. According to the auditors, however, Štětina was not entitled to sign the amendment and it is not clear how it helped to improve the region's economic performance [15], [16]. In addition, Jochová in 2013 cashed 290,000 crowns from the region (CZK 20,000 in January and February and CZK 25,000 every month for the rest of the year), but she was not an employee of that office and nobody knows for what she received the money [16].

Take:	29
Location:	Central Bohemian Region
Cast:	David Rath (ODS member in 1991-1994, Deputy chairman of Free Democrats-Liberal National Social Party in 1996-1997, President of the Czech Medical Chamber in 1998-2005, Minister of Health from November 2005 to September 2006, Member of Parliament for ČSSD in 2006-2013, Central Bohemian Governor in 2008-2012), Petr Kott (Member of Parliament for ODS and later a member of the US-DEU faction in 2002-2006, head of the Central Bohemia branch of Všeobecná zdravotní pojišťovna health insurance

	company in 2006-2007, subsequently coordinator of Rath's plan for transforming five Central Bohemian hospitals to NGOs, Deputy Director of Kladno Area Hospital a.s., Central Bohemian Hospitals), Kateřina Pancová (member of the ČSSD's Central Bohemia Regional Executive Committee, head of Kladno Area Hospital a.s. in 2008-2012, member of boards of Central Bohemian regional hospitals in 2008-2009), representatives of companies
Prospective Nature:	Accepting bribes in connection with manipulating public orders for especially healthcare technology supplies and building contracts
<p>Case Description: In April 2015, President of the Senate of the Prague Regional Court Robert Pacovský passed sentences on nine defendants. They heard indictments concerning a range of verdicts, from sentences pending appeal (and financial fines and professional ban) to 7.5 years in prison (and confiscation of assets). Two defendants were sent to jail for 7.5 years, two for 5.5 years, and two for five years each. The harshest penalties were meted out against David Rath's former associate, former ODS deputy Petr Kott and the head of Oblastní nemocnice Kladno, nemocnice Středočeského kraje hospital, former ČSSD member Kateřina Kottová (Pancová), who were both sentenced to 7.5 years behind bars and the confiscation of assets in a total amount of about 40 million crowns (in cash, on bank accounts, etc.) [130]. Kott was officially employed as a coordinator for five Central Bohemian regional in order to help establish not-for-profit hospitals and supervise the communication with health insurance companies, for which he received a monthly remuneration of CZK 20,000 for each, as a part-time worker. But the court found that Kott's "working interests" were differently geared towards contracts on the delivery of healthcare technologies. Building contracts were taken care of by the Kladno Hospital manager, Kott's girlfriend and supervisor rolled in one, Kateřina Pancová (married Kottová). Although they were officially not supposed to have anything in common with these orders, they nonetheless geared them so they went to the concerns with pre-negotiated agreements. These manipulations were made possible by a "control contract", which turned the Kotts virtually into the sovereign masters of regional hospitals in Central Bohemia. Their contract allowed them to decide about strategic investments. Kott collected bribes from the managers of consenting companies. According to the verdict, he collected 41 million crowns in this way, while the Kotts were not able to pocket another 10 million CZK on account of being detained by police. Police collected a massive set of evidence against the whole gang, including wiretaps from various localities. The Kotts appealed against the verdict. But according to the prosecutors they manipulated tenders with the consent of Governor David Rath, with whom they shared the bribery proceeds [130]. Rath himself was sentenced to 8.5 years in jail and partial confiscation of assets with a value exceeding 21 million crowns, in July 2015. The former administrator of select proceedings, Lucie Novanská, was sentenced to a five-year prison term and a financial fine. The two appealed [132].</p> <p>In July 2015, David Rath told DTV television that the two million crowns in cash the police found on the various defendants might or might not have been designed for ČSSD election campaigns [133]. He said his sentence was in contravention of the evidence gathered [133].</p>	
Take:	30
Location:	Prague 6 City Borough
Cast:	Tomáš Chalupa (ODS member since 1992 and member of the ODS Executive Council in 2011-2013, elected Deputy Chairman of the ODS in November 2012, retained his post until January 2014, veteran deputy and councillor of

	Prague 6 Borough in 1998-2002 and Mayor of Prague 6 in 2002-2011, Prague city councillor in 2006-2010, Deputy in 2010-2013, Minister of the Environment in Prime Minister Petr Nečas's cabinet in 2011-2013), Dušan Macháček (former premium oarsman, businessman and unsuccessful candidate for SPOZ deputy in 2010, member of the Czech Rowing Association since 2000, elected its chairman in 2014)
Prospective Nature:	Disadvantageous 30-year lease of a clinic complex to a private subject
<p>Case Description: Prague 6 Borough administers Pod Marjánkou Clinic in Břevnov under City of Prague aegis. The property comprises a clinic building (nonresidential area of ca. 6000 sq. metres) and land (area of around 5300 sq. metres). Prague 6 used to lease the clinic to private doctors, laboratories etc. for an annual rent of ca. 3.7 million crowns. However, in November 2010 Prague 6 Mayor Tomáš Chalupa entered into a 30-year lease contract with the private firm Comitia Medical (now renamed Poliklinika Marjánka), with annual rent amounting to half a million crowns (i.e. CZK 7,00 per square metre of nonresidential floor area per month!) [125].</p> <p>The new operator undertook by contract to operate a non-state healthcare facility in the building (e.g. in the form of sublease for doctors) and to invest his private funds, amounting to CZK 90 million in the reconstruction of the clinic. In return, Prague 6 undertook to pay insurance fees for the building for the duration of the contract, which is estimated to amount to five million crowns for a period of 30 years. However, the proceeds from sublease contracts with the doctors and laboratories would go to the new operator, and their amount was estimated to be somewhere between 185 and 300 million crowns (in 2013 the operator's revenue from the said sublease contracts was about 6.1 million CZK with a 63-percent use of clinic spaces). Prague 6 lost the chance to retrieve these amounts by subletting the operation of the clinic, for it would have collected only about 10 million crowns during the 30-year lease of the compound [125]. Moreover, the lease contract was clearly biased in favour of the new operator, while the business risk was actually transferred to Prague 6. Furthermore the agreed value of the construction part of the building overhaul project did not tally with the figures the operator initially agreed to deliver under the lease contract. In 2014, the new operator faced a situation when he was not able to meet his obligations, amounting to 26 million crowns, by the end of the year and had to resolve the financing of the remaining part of reconstruction of the clinic building. The strange circumstances of the funding expended for the reconstruction project are corroborated by the following quotation from an invitation to the general meeting, organized by the operator (Comitia Medical) in October 2014 [125]: <i>"The Board hereby states that at the date of this General Meeting, the said commitment towards Prague 6 was met in an extent of about 45 million crowns (...). All these works were delivered in 20011-2014 and were financed by the company's own resources (...) in a total amount of CZK 34 million."</i> How to do a 45-million-crown reconstruction with only 34 million crowns at hand, remains to be explained.</p> <p>In summer 2015, the new Prague 6 townhall voted to resume the operation of the clinic complex and withdraw from the contract. Having received about 40 million crowns in compensation the other party (private operator) accepted the deal [126], [127].</p>	

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