

## Blinds not removed: Contract disclosure according to government plan won't happen before elections

*In accordance with the government plan, the Chamber of Deputies stood the last chance in July to pass the bill on the register of contracts so that it becomes fully effective during the current cabinet's term. Although parliament pressed through a second reading of the bill one month ago, it cannot possibly be passed by the end of July.*

The organizations associated in the Reconstruction of the State platform have warned that the government is in arrears on its plan for the introduction of a register of contracts and unless it alters its schedule, it will actually refer the bill to the next government.

The government planned to have the legislation in place within 21 months: the Ministry of the Interior asked for nine months for technical implementation, and a 12-month delay was requested for the introduction of a mechanism of sanctions, during which time the disclosure is to be more or less optional. Adding the expected time for Chamber and Senate debates, the law would not be fully applicable until after October 2017, according to the government timetable, i.e. in time for elections if held according to schedule. (For details see <http://bit.ly/1J4dxtJ>.)

Although a second reading commenced after three futile attempts in June 2015, when it was enforced on the Chamber of Deputies by MPs for ANO and KDU-ČSL in conjunction with parts of the opposition from TOP09/STAN (see <http://bit.ly/1TiiZjS>), the Chamber of Deputies cannot possibly proceed with its passing earlier than in September.

*"The Coalition does not reject the bill, but it is in no hurry to pass it, because this regulation affects politicians and officials, not citizens. However, it is necessary to appreciate the efforts of several MPs for ANO and KDU-ČSL, and some opposition deputies, who have pressed the bill into the Chamber of Deputies after three adjournments,"* notes Pavel Franc, head of Frank Bold, one of the five NGO guarantors of the Reconstruction of the State platform.

*"The lower house is certainly in no hurry to debate the bill. We have ascertained after interviewing various MPs that most of them don't realize that because of foot-dragging on the bill, automatic disclosure of contracts may not happen during the present cabinet's tenure,"* Franc observes.



Exactly one year ago, [Prime Minister Sobotka predicted](#) that the bill will be passed in September 2014.

Deputy Prime Minister [Babiš planned](#) that the bill will be passed in April 2015.

In March this year, the [Premier announced](#) that he wants the bill passed in the first half of 2015.

After a year-and-half-long dramatic debate, the Coalition found consensus on the said bill and scores of objections were processed. Interior Minister Milan Chovanec also confirmed that the contract register will be the province of the Ministry of the Interior.

**Details about the last-known version of the bill are available in the following press release:**

<http://www.rekonstrukcestatu.cz/novinky/udalosti/informace-pro-novinare-k-registru-smluv-2.pdf>

Reconstruction of the State today supplied members of parliament with information (see <http://bit.ly/1UAu0yO>) about a recent Slovak study that assesses the impacts of similar legislation, enacted in January 2011. According to the authors of the study, exposure of contract contents helped, among else, to boost public confidence in the State and increase the number of companies bidding for public procurement contracts. The costs of the Slovak register of contracts were many times lower than the estimates offered by the Czech interior ministry.

The Reconstruction of the State platform marked the said bill by a public campaign with the participation of the likes of Bára Poláková, Simona Babčáková, Jan Budař, Marek Taclík, Martha Isoová, Otakar Černý, Vilém Čok and other notable artists. A series of **happenings with a live countdown** alerts the public to the fact that every week, more than 13 billion crowns of public money are spent, but no one is compelled to say how. The total since the start of the year exceeds CZK 312 billion. The latest score is available on [www.odtemneni.cz](http://www.odtemneni.cz).

**Videos produced in cooperation with Družina Studio can be seen here:**

<https://www.facebook.com/events/847721198645247/>

**How much the State spends in a hidden way every year can be discerned from an analysis provided by the Centre for Applied Economics:**

[http://cae.zindex.cz/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2015-05-18\\_registr\\_objem-smluv.pdf](http://cae.zindex.cz/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2015-05-18_registr_objem-smluv.pdf)

Reconstruction of the State considers the bill a stripped-down version of its original expectations. Its basic principles were left intact, some objections to the original draft have been resolved, but the bill envisages many opt-outs and delays that the expert group thinks have no reason. According to the government plan, the bill, if passed, can take full effect as late as 1 July 2017, when sanctions voiding undisclosed contracts come into force. In the case of small municipalities, applicability will be delayed for two years.

**General information about the bill is available in the Encyclopedia of the Bill on the Register of Contracts:** [www.nejnejzakon.cz](http://www.nejnejzakon.cz)

Apart from being the most frequently postponed legislation; the Encyclopedia authors regard the bill also as the simplest and most often debated motion (having been discussed by two successive governments and the committees of two successive lower houses and earning two separate cost studies).

**More information available from:**

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## **About Reconstruction of the State**

The anti-corruption project Reconstruction of the State was launched in March 2013 with the aim to promote nine key legislations, which would dramatically reduce room for corruption and prevent the ongoing state capture. Commitment to promote the legislation was confirmed in writing before the elections by more than 160 incumbent members of parliament, including the leaders of the main political parties. Reconstruction of the State brings together citizens, experts, politicians and businesspeople of different political hue, united in support of the rules of fair political competition and open governance. [www.rekonstrukcestatu.cz/en](http://www.rekonstrukcestatu.cz/en)