

Greens: State must spend ČEZ profits on energy saving projects

Prague, Aug 14 (CTK) - The Czech Greens (SZ), a former government party, believe that the government should invest profits of the semi-state CEZ power company in energy saving projects that will bring new jobs and help small and medium-sized businesses, party head Ondrej Liska said Friday.

Liska was reacting to the company's announcement on Wednesday that it raised its net profit in the first half of this year by 11 percent to 32 billion crowns.

The profits of the largest state-owned power producer should also be invested in education, Liska, who was education minister in the centre-right government of PM Mirek Topolánek (Civic Democrats, ODS), said.

Topolánek's government fell in late March after it lost a no-confidence vote in the Chamber of Deputies initiated by the Social Democrats and was replaced by the caretaker cabinet of Jan Fischer in May.

The Social Democrats said they would give pensioners the "13th pension" if they won the early elections to the Chamber of Deputies scheduled for October 9-10. They would finance them from CEZ profits.

"Political parties are competing with each other in what gifts they would wrap for their voters in the CEZ's bank-notes. However, it would be a mistake to spend the state profits to finance the rash promises which would not bring any benefit in the long-term," Liska said.

However, it would also be a mistake if the state let the CEZ have the additional profit, he said.

CEZ invested over 21 billion crowns in the first half of this year, mainly in the construction of new production capacities and raising nuclear power plants' output.