

URBANISM WATCH**Urbanism of Prizren under
Constant Watch***18 January 2014, Prizren**Communiqué #9***PRESS RELEASE****CENTRAL AUTHORITIES TO ACT IN THE CENTRE OF PRIZREN**

Within the “Urbanism of Prizren under Constant Watch” project, ‘EC Ma Ndryshe’ has requested from the Directorate of Inspections of Prizren Municipality to disclose information on the actions that will be undertaken in regard to the illegally constructed structures within the Historic Centre of the city.

The request was submitted following the notification of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP) dated December 26, 2013, in which states that the Assembly of Kosovo has approved the Law on the Treatment of Illegal Constructions and, upon the entry into force of this law, all municipalities shall legalize structures built without a construction permit in accordance with this law only. However, according to MESP, the present law does not apply to National Parks and Protective Zones.

In this manner central authorities have flushed away all legal ambiguities regarding the issue of illegal constructions in Protective Zones hence the responsible bodies must act as quickly in order to prevent further urban degradation.

‘EC Ma Ndryshe’ reiterates that in the year gone (May 2013) it had requested from the Directorate of Inspections (DI) a list of structures or illegal constructions to be demolished within the territory of Prizren municipality and that the DI’s response was, “we are waiting in the first place the approval of the Law on Legalization of buildings and those structures which do not meet provisions set on the Law on Legalization will be demolished.”

As the Law on Treatment of Illegal Constructions does not foresee legalization of illegal constructions within Protective Zones, consequently DI has to take specific actions towards illegal constructions within the Historic Centre of Prizren. On January 9 ‘EC Ma Ndryshe’ has submitted a request for information about the measures to be undertaken from the DI, however until January 17th it has not received any response from this directorate thereby violating provisions of the Law on Access to Public Documents displaying in this way institutional irresponsibility and the lack of accountability as well.

Given the current situation in the Historic Centre of Prizren, where the existence of earlier adopted laws, followed then with the approval of the Conservation Plan and the recently approved Law on Historic Centre of Prizren did not produce apt results in the preservation of cultural heritage values, EC Ma Ndryshe therefore recommends that central authorities such as MESP, MCYS and MLGA get involved in this Protective Zone in order to ensure enforcement of the applicable laws thus prevent further urban degradation.

We deem that the MESP, as in Prevala case, when it suspended the authority of the bodies of Prizren Municipality due to the lack of willingness to act thus allowing urban degradation and violation of laws, may use the same practice in relation to the Historic Centre of Prizren, in close coordination with the MCYS, which

bears the responsibility for preservation of cultural heritage. Moreover, we do consider that with such move MESP would also offer a proof that Prevala is not a case of the selective enforcement of the law, whereas other government ministries would really convey the example of the existence of rule of law where Protective Zones would be treated truly as such.

In July 'EC Ma Ndryshe' kicked off the implementation of the "Urbanism of Prizren under Constant Watch" project, financially supported by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS). The necessity for overseeing developments in the urbanism sector has naturally emerged as a result of a numerous adverse developments during the post-war and transition period that were manifested in urban degradation and lopsided spatial planning. The project will continue to monitor and publish findings from the field of urbanism and spatial planning, as well as in addressing institutional responsibility.

With regards,

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