



**Non-governmental Organization Emancipimi Civil Ma Ndryshe
EC MA NDRYSHE**

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PRESS RELEASE

Transparency in Prizren Municipality still depleted

As part of the project of monitoring the work of the municipal executive of Prizren, EC Ma Ndryshe, in the second half of January, has reviewed aspects related to the transparency of the municipality towards the public.

Months ago, EC Ma Ndryshe has several times mentioned that transparency of Prizren Municipality suffers from structural shortcomings and, despite humble efforts from the municipal leadership, it remains at rather low levels, which is manifested with inadequate information, inappropriate inclusion in decision-making and nil accountability towards the citizens.

In order to scaffold these findings, EC Ma Ndryshe, during the reporting period, has analyzed specific cases which lead to the conclusion that the municipal executive should engage in many and sincere efforts to improve the transparency and communication with the citizens, towards whom it bears responsibility.

After numerous requests submitted, EC Ma Ndryshe has obtained the research paper conducted by MPR Consulting on the "Improvement of municipal services, accountability and local economic development." Based on the tender announced in September of last year by the municipality, the purpose of this research was to identify the problems and possibilities to improve own source revenues of Prizren Municipality. However, albeit the research was conducted in November of last year, and having the aim to improve the revenue collection, Prizren Municipality, respectively the Directorate of Economy and Finance (*hereinafter* DEF) has not made public the findings of this research.

Based on the invoice of MPR Consulting, DEF has paid for this research a sum of €9,950. For EC Ma Ndryshe it is unacceptable the attitude that the report of the project paid by the taxpayers' funds remain in the drawers of DEF and the findings be unveiled to the public. The issue becomes even more serious when knowing that the project has been drafted with the main purpose of increasing the collection of revenues, while businesses have not been notified on the contents of this research, and, as a consequence of miscommunication between the municipality and businesses, the first one is required to recover 2/3 of the debts already written off. Also, in the research is emphasized that, "regarding transparency, the citizens, in general, are not well informed about the transparency of local administration."

Another issue that must have an accentuate transparency is that of a wastewater plant construction. In March 2012, the Municipal Assembly has authorized the mayor, Mr. Ramadan Muja, to obtain a loan or a borrowing in the amount of three million Euros, with the purpose of expropriation of private land parcels in village Vlashnja, where the implementation of this project is foreseen. In his Annual Report of 2012, mayor Muja has not provided any information on the situation of the loan or borrowing. He has neither reported before the members of the Municipal Assembly, from whom he was borne with such authorization.

Moreover, during monitoring in these months, EC Ma Ndryshe has observed lingering flow of information and documents from all the directorates to the Office of Information and Communications, which leads to non-publication of decisions in real-time and inadequate information of the public on

different matters of relevance. This occurrence causes the Online Transparency of Municipality to witness serious deficiencies, which does not correspond with the commitments of municipality for the governance which is accountable.

Taking into account all these data, EC Ma Ndryshe finds that transparency in the municipality of Prizren remains in unsatisfactory levels. The mayor and the municipal executive should step up efforts to timely inform the public about the decisions, plans, projects, budgets, researches and other issues of public importance.

EC Ma Ndryshe recommends the municipal government to enforce strictly the provisions of the MLGA's Administrative Instruction 2008/09 on Transparency.

EC Ma Ndryshe calls upon the local executive to report in the media more frequently on matters related to the use of the municipal budget, economic development, the use of municipal property, urban planning, investments, municipal revenues and other matters.

EC Ma Ndryshe requires from the mayor, directors and the Head of Information Office to hold periodic press conferences, but also to organize Q&A sessions with public at large or stakeholders.

In addition, it is required the amendment of the Regulation on Transparency and to explicitly include the obligations of the mayor and of municipal executive in relation with the transparency.

Furthermore, EC Ma Ndryshe calls for the empowerment of the Office of Information and updating the municipality's official website with relevant information for the citizens of Prizren municipality.

The project of EC Ma Ndryshe on transparency monitoring of the executive branch shall continue on publicizing monitoring findings through regular press releases and project's website, where the findings are posted directly from the monitoring staff. By now, all the monitoring findings, including regular press releases and other information relative to local government of Prizren, are published on regular basis on the project's website: www.online-transparency.org.

Thank you for your cooperation,

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