

RESEARCH REPORT
ERASING THE TRACES – Historic Centers in Kosovo
September 2015, Prizren

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I. Executive Summary

The purpose of this brief research report is to provide a general overview on the protection status of urban historic centers in Kosovo. In a series of advocacy efforts on urban order, halting heritage degradation and promoting sustainable development for the citizens of Kosovo, EC Ma Ndryshe this time around focuses the discussion on the historic centers of several cities in Kosovo. Due to postwar construction chaos, urbanism regulation violations, institutional neglect, lack of coordination between key central and local institutions in the field of heritage and spatial planning, as well as lack of permanent legal protection, and many other factors, these centers are increasingly suffering irreversible damage and run the risk of erasing the complete collective memory of these cities.

This research, for the moment, is not intended to provide an answer to all the problems emerging from the urban chaos we face in our cities daily, nonetheless it seeks to identify some of the instances that contribute, increasingly day by day, to the degradation of the historic cores in Kosovo. Urban historic centers in Kosovo are disappearing and it is the utter responsibility of all Kosovo citizens to keep them alive, and that of the Kosovo institutions in particular, which should provide mechanisms for preventing the degradation and promote heritage in support of a sustainable development of our cities. Therefore, we hope that this brief report, raising concerns over the state of our historic centers, shall serve as an excuse for further in-depth professional research on problems regarding the protection of historic centers and precipitate the tackling of issues that pertain to the protection and conservation of these common goods in general.

II. Introduction

Urban sprawl represents a growing concern worldwide. A core problem with urban sprawl is the threat it poses to the delicate cultural and environmental heritage, at a state that could escalate to permanent and irreversible damages

Historic urban areas or historic cores represent some of the most important and diverse manifestations of our common cultural heritage, which were created by various generations, thus representing important evidence of the past and the present, of endeavors and aspirations of humanity worldwide.¹ These represent defined city zones, consisting of a concentrated number of buildings/ensembles, which hold one or more values interconnected in the historical, architectural, archeological or cultural aspect.² They represent the main artifacts that shape a city's collective memory and the identity that a community relates to.

Traces of settlements from the earliest periods of civilization are found in Kosovo. Many archeological locations provide evidence of urban centers, long extinct. However, a number of these settlements, due to their geographical position, administration, economy, trade and geostrategic importance continued to develop and grow, and represent the foundation for the cities we inhabit today. One of the basic features of these cities is that they developed spontaneously throughout the ages, to include the period of the Ottoman Empire rule. In their urban structure, we fail to find composed ensembles: planned squares, grouped public buildings, public gardens that

¹ Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, including a glossary of definitions (10 November 2011); http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=48857&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html, accessed on July 21, 2015

² Ibidem

are planted and shaped in a planned fashion, etc. This is how the key feature of the urban structures of these cities emerged: an enormous irregularity in all basic elements of roads, blocks, squares, riverbanks, etc.³

However, the growth and modernization of these cities, since the post World War II period, though this time, in contrast to earlier spontaneous developments, is carried out according to plans drafted by urbanism professionals, among other things, aiming to establish order, introduce basic infrastructure and improve quality of life in the city, start erasing traces of the city's past. Such destructive interventions, in the majority of cases were driven by the ideological reading of the city's memory, and not infrequently such ruthless interventions aimed to accomplish the priorities of a modern urbanization agenda, which were the creation of sufficient spaces for modern developments, such as multi-residential buildings, modern administration buildings, automobile roads, etc. Consequent to these interventions today there are no traces left of the Prishtina Bazaar (Çarshia), Mitrovica Bazaar, Prizren Arasta Bazaar, etc.

At the same time, first efforts are made to place under state protection special buildings, ensembles, bazaars, etc. The 50s of last century, while basic charters for the protection of cultural heritage (Athens and Venice Charters) were already enacted around the world, mark the start of the legal protection of several buildings and ensembles, and the determination of areas referred to as Old Town, old area, or similar. Since then we've had attempts to determine the Prishtina old zone⁴, protection established

³ Kojic, B., *Balkanski gradovi, varosi i varosice*. Zavod za Urbanisticko Arhitektonski Razvoj, Beograd, 1975

⁴ Xërxa, F. Qendra e Prishtinës numëron ditët e fundit, OJQ EC Ma Ndryshe, Prizren, October 2014, http://www.online-transparency.org/repository/docs/141003121711_RAPO

over the House of Emin Gjiku in Prishtina, Peja Bazaar, Gjakova Bazaar, etc.

The late 70s of the last century, mark the making of first efforts to draft detailed urban plans and studies to establish laws and conservation principles for those areas, as well as restricting construction activities within historic city cores, such as the case of the Gjakova Bazaar Study, where a detailed study was drafted, determining the rules and the laws for interventions. At this time period, the "Detailed Urban Plan of the City's Historic Area with the Craft Center" was developed, which also regulates the nature of the urban development of that part of the city.

During the last war in Kosovo, warfare did not spare the architectural heritage. Individual construction and entire ensembles, including the entire historic cores in cities such as Gjakova, Peja, Mitrovica, were targeted for massive destruction. The after war period found Kosovo cities with destroyed infrastructure and entire neighborhoods devastated. The reconstruction momentum, initially pushed by the need for emergency shelter, and later driven by private interests, given the initial legal vacuum, and above all negligence by local government institutions, later proved to have had almost fatal consequences for the architectural heritage, especially in the historic cores. In some cities, what was claimed to be the old part of town was populated with tall buildings, placed in close proximity, without compliance to any urban or construction norms. In many cities, the historical urban landscape was damaged, if not totally effaced, and there are few elements left to reminisce on what that part of the city used to represent. Today we are facing a dramatic situation, which frequently leads to irreversible cultural, social and

economic losses, in the realm of a political and economic impasse that discourages the conservation of these cultural assets that comprise the memory of humanity. The time is nigh for our institutions, and the Kosovo society at large, to undertake serious steps towards the protection, conservation and restoration of urban historic cores in our cities, in addition to their development and adjustment to the contemporary life aspects⁵.

III. Methodology

This report is drafted for 8 cities in Kosovo: Prishtina, Prizren, Gjakova, Peja, Gjilan, Mitrovica, Vushtrri and Rahovec. The selection was conducted pursuant to their urban center development background, historic cores traces of which remain evident, with earlier documents providing evidence of efforts to define and protect them. An important factor in the selection of these cities was also the presence of a larger number of buildings found in the MCYS's list of temporary protection, and those that, though not on that list, hold city history value according to citizens. Basic data on historic cores and the status of their protection has been obtained through communications with the Director of Heritage at the MCYC, KCCH, RCCH, Municipal Urbanism Departments, CHwB, etc. Other data derived from consulting relevant municipality spatial plans, Kosovo's spatial plan, CHwB documents, and other publications.

IV. State of Historic Centers

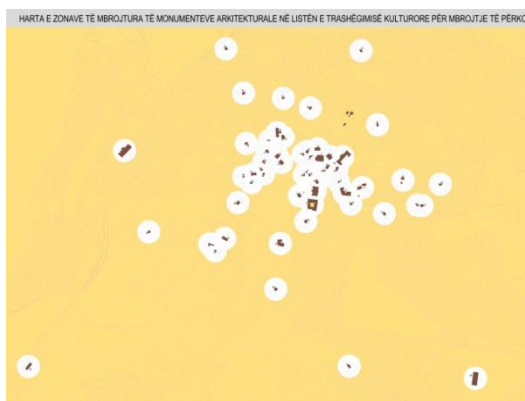
Prishtina Historic Center

Definition of protected zone boundaries: the historic core of the city of Prishtina defined in the Detailed Urban Plan of 1978 was named

⁵ Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas (Washington Charter 1987), http://www.international.icomos.org/charters/towns_e.pdf

“Historic Area” or “Old Town”. This area was declared under protection as early as 1951 when the General Plan was developed, and had the same importance extended in the 1964 edition of the General Plan. According to the detailed plan of 1978, the old town area together with the crafts center consisted of 26ha. The name “Historic Center” entails the historic core as defined in the Strategic Plan for the Urban Development of Prishtina, of 2001. Pursuant to the Law on Spatial Planning (No. 2003/4) and Law on Local Self Government in Municipalities of Kosovo (No. 2000/45), in 2006 the Municipal Assembly of Prishtina issued a decision on initiating the development of a regulatory plan for the “Old Town” of Prishtina, whose boundaries were described in Article 3 of said decision, covering a surface space of 26ha. In 2009, the decision from 2006 was augmented, by extending the boundaries, whereby this area, now referred to as “Old Town” covers a surface area of 42ha⁶. In 2014, by MCYS decision and in cooperation with the Department for Urbanism at the Municipality of Prishtina, a working group consisting of heritage experts was established at MCYS, for purposes of final determination of the area with new boundaries and initiating the process of placement under legal protection. This working group remains operational.

⁶ Xërxa, F. Qendra e Prishtinës numëron ditët e fundit, OJQ EC Ma Ndryshe, Prizren, October 2014, http://www.online-transparency.org/repository/docs/141003121711_RAPO_RT_Qendra_Historike_e_Prishtines.pdf, accessed on July 20, 2015.



Pic. 1 Map of protected areas of monuments in the cultural heritage list of temporary protection for the city of Prishtina, developed by EC Ma Ndryshe⁷

Zone Protection Status: General Plan of 1951 refers to this city zone as “Historic Area” or Old Town. General Plan of 1964 granted the same treatment. According to the description in the “Detailed Urban Plan of the City’s Historic Center with the Craft Center”, developed in 1978, the decision to draft the Detailed Urban Plan for this area resulted from the General Plan of 1951. The General Plan approved in 1987 also confirmed the basic principles on the protection of architectural heritage in the Historic Area promoted in earlier acts.⁸ It is expected that the working group established by the MCYS shall determine the final status of legal protection for this zone.

To date, the MCYS list of buildings and ensembles under temporary protection for the city of Prishtina includes around 26 architectural legacy buildings and ensembles. A number of them have protection decisions from as early as the 50s of the past century, and most are located in proximity to the city’s historic core. Some of the important heritage

properties located in the historic core of Prishtina are:

1. King’s Mosque (Xhamia e Mbretit), year 1461, Decision No. 848/1953
2. Residential House (formerly ASAK), 19th century, Decision No. 952/1953
3. Residential Complex (Emin Gjiku) 18th-19th century, Decision No. 953/1953
4. Residential House (KIPM), 19th century, Decision No. 731/1957
5. Great Hammam (Hamami i Madh), 14th-15th century, Decision No. 632/1985
6. Prishtina Old Bazaar Complex with Bazaar’s Mosque (14th century), Jashar Pasha Mosque, Old Fountain (Shadërvani i vjetër), Clock Tower (Sahat Kulla) and Kosovo Museum, Decision No. 02-278/67

The full list of monuments under state protection can be found in the updated version of the List of Cultural Heritage under Temporary Protection.⁹

Regulatory Plans and Conservation: Up to the present time, there has been but one detailed urban plan of the city’s historic area and the crafts center.¹⁰ This plan determines the legal rules for the development of this area. Thus far, there has been no other regulatory plan and it is expected that more will be done in this direction upon the determination of boundary and protection status issues. Nevertheless, a study on conservation measures should precede the development of any new detailed plan for this area.

Historic Center of Prizren

⁷ <http://www.ecmandryshe.org/?page=1,17,188#.Vd3hPiWqoBc>, qasur më 26 08 2015

⁸ Xërxa, F. Qendra e Prishtinës numëron ditët e fundit, OJQ EC Ma Ndryshe, Prizren, October 2014, http://www.online-transparency.org/repository/docs/141003121711_RAPO_RT_Qendra_Historike_e_Prishtines.pdf, accessed on July 20, 2015.

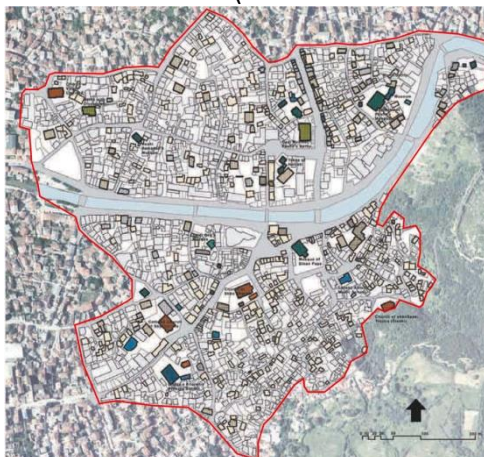
⁹ http://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/LISTA_E_TRASHEGIMISE_KULTURORE_PER_MBROJTJE_TE_PERKOHSHME_2014.pdf

¹⁰ "Planin Urbanistik Detal të Zonës Historike të Qytetit me Qendër Zejtare", developed in 1978, Urbanism Institute of Prishtina Municipality

Definition of protected zone boundaries:

Urban Development Plan 2004-2013 on the Historic Area of Prizren defines its boundaries as a primary protected zone, whereas elsewhere the same may also be referred to as the historic center of the city of Prizren, or the historic zone of the city of Prizren. According to the Prizren Historic Area Conservation and Development Plan, which is a Urban Regulatory Plan (URP) developed and adopted by the Prizren Municipal Assembly in 2009, the boundaries of this zone contain the following areas¹¹:

1. Traditional Market Zone
2. High-rise Building Block Zone
3. Riverbed Zone
4. Sub-Castle Zone
5. Commerce Road Zone
6. Mixed Use and Residential Zone
7. Residential Zone (Organic)
8. Residential Zone (Construction Trends)



Pic. 2 Prizren Historic Center Boundaries according to the Prizren Conservation Plan, 2009

Zone Protection Status: Since the end of World War II, there have been multiple efforts to protect the historic core of Prizren. There were studies and concrete proposals for the protection and revitalization of the historic center during 1968-74. At the time, there was

¹¹ Plani i konservimit dhe zhvillimit të zonës historike të Prizrenit, Përparësitë dhe sfidat e implementimit, Report Series No. 22/2011, CHwB http://chwb.org/kosovo/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/07/Publication_2011_12.pdf

a tendency to place Prizren in the UNESCO list as a city of cultural values, however it bore no concrete results¹². This somewhat affected large-scale damages incurred to the historic core of the city by the modern developments following World War II. Despite multiple studies conducted by many researchers from Kosovo and former Yugoslavia, in both urban development history and housing typologies, in general, there was no single city development plan¹³ defining the directions for the development and expansion of the city.

Serious efforts to put the historic core under protection started in the period following the last war, when the first studies and plans and documents emerged¹⁴, in addition to efforts to inventory monuments and areas for protection by the Institute for Protection of Monuments (IPM) and CHwB in 2006. Earlier (2005), some studies were conducted in coordination with Politecnico di Torino, Italy, outlining some of the norms for the protection of this zone¹⁵. Based on all of the above, the process for the drafting of the Prizren Historic Area Conservation and Development Plan was initiated in 2005 and the plan was formally approved in 2009 as an

¹² Xhibo, J., Implementimi i Planit të Konservimit dhe Zhvillimit për zonën historike të Prizrenit – Sfidat e mbrojtjes së zones historike të Prizrenit, fq. 162, Plani i konservimit dhe zhvillimit të zonës historike të Prizrenit, Përparësitë dhe sfidat e implementimit, Report Series No. 22/2011, CHwB http://chwb.org/kosovo/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/07/Publication_2011_12.pdf

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ Europa Nostra Forum and Preparatory Meetings 2006; Plani Zhvillimor Urban - Kuvendi Komunal i Prizrenit dhe Nixha Partners, 2003, fq. 12, Plani i konservimit dhe zhvillimit të zonës historike të Prizrenit, Përparësitë dhe sfidat e implementimit, Report Series No. 22/2011, CHwB http://chwb.org/kosovo/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/07/Publication_2011_12.pdf

¹⁵ Plani i konservimit dhe zhvillimit të zonës historike të Prizrenit, Përparësitë dhe sfidat e implementimit, Report Series No. 22/2011, CHwB http://chwb.org/kosovo/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/07/Publication_2011_12.pdf

Urban Regulatory Urban Plan for the Historic Center of Prizren.

The city of Prizren has the biggest number of heritage properties under state protection. The full list of monuments under state protection can be found in the updated version of the List of Cultural Heritage under Temporary Protection¹⁶.

Conservation Plan: The process of drafting the Prizren Historic Area Conservation and Development Plan started in 2005 and it was formally approved in 2009 as an Urban Regulatory Plan for the Prizren Historic Area. Prizren Historic Area Conservation and Development Plan is a legally approved Urban Regulatory Plan (URP), which covers the space described as “Prizren Historic Area”. This plan provides protection and/or conservation measures for the historic core of Prizren and determines directions for its further regulation and development. This URP establishes planning objectives and construction guidelines for this zone. Prizren Historic Center is classified as a Special Protected Area, additionally protected by Law No. 04/L-066 that determines the rules on protection, administration and sustainable contemporary development as a property of cultural and historic heritage under permanent protection, with values of local, national and international interest¹⁷.

It must be noted that the historic center of Prizren also houses the heritage site of Church of Holy Friday – Levishka (Kisha e Shën Premtes – Levishka), protected by UNESCO, as part of the Medieval Monuments in Kosovo. This property was placed under protection in

2006, with ID 724-003bis sponsored by Serbia¹⁸.

Prizren Historic Center Today: Currently, with the most recent update to the MCYS list of cultural heritage under state protection, there are 87 buildings recorded in the city of Prizren alone, which are protected and included in the MCYS’s heritage database. Though, in contrast to other cities covered by this study, the existing conservation plan, as well as the law on this special area, should have provided and determined the rules for construction, development and above all protection of this area, today, 6 years after the approval of this plan, degradation continues at the historic center of Prizren. To date, local and central level institutions, RCCH, as well as IMC, have failed in preventing damage or destruction to entire parts of the area. Additionally, they have also failed in implementing the norms determined for construction in this area. To ensure implementation and development in this area, the next step should be the development of a management plan¹⁹ for this area, in addition to mobilizing heritage inspectors²⁰, who would engage in regular monitoring of construction activities, and even other interventions that may occur in the area.

Historic Center of Gjakova

Definition of protected zone boundaries: City Bazaar, the very site that has been under state protection for quite some time, inter alia, characterizes Gjakova historic core. The

⁸ http://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/LISTA_E_TRASHEGIMISE_KULTURORE_PER_MBROJTJE_TE_PERKOHSHME_2014.pdf

¹⁷ Gazeta Zyrtare e Republikës së Kosovës / Nr. 20 / 18 korrik 2012, Prishtinë; Ligji Nr. 04/L-066 Për Qendrën Historike të Prizrenit, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=2836>

¹⁸ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/724>

¹⁹ A management plan identifies objectives, actions and practical strategies for the protection and management of a building/ensemble. Among other things, this drives and provides for a more comprehensive city development and promotes community awareness on heritage issues.

²⁰ Article 4.12; 4.13, Law No. 02/L-88 (Law on Cultural Heritage), http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/2006_02-L88_al.pdf

boundaries of the Bazaar are determined in the Study on the Renewal and Revitalization of the Grand Bazaar of Gjakova ("*Studimi i Regjenerimit dhe Revitalizimit të Çarshisë së Madhe në Gjakovë*"), in December 1979. The decision for the regulatory plan on the Grand Bazaar (Çarshia e Madhe) was issued in 1982²¹.

These boundaries and the decision for the regulatory plan were made pursuant to the decision for the protection of the Gjakova Bazaar on February 19, 1955²². The zone extends, as defined in the abovementioned study, in the North-South direction at approximately 1000 m', and the surface area is 34.000 m². According to Osmon Gojani, Architect, the local institutions in Gjakova are considering the enhancement of the boundaries of this area, and studies are already ongoing to this end.



Pic. 3 Layout of the Gjakova Bazaar²³

Zone Protection Status: The decision for the protection of the Gjakova Bazaar was issued on February 19, 1955, (Decision No. 59/55). Named *Urban Ensemble – Grand Bazaar* ("Tërësia urbanistike - Çarshia e madhe"), this zone is listed under No. 390, in the MCYS's list of cultural heritage under temporary

protection, and holds the unique database number 000334²⁴.

Conservation Plans: The Study on the Renewal and Revitalization of the Grand Bazaar of Gjakova, of December 1979, inter alia, has determined the conservation aspects for parts in this area. This study preceded the decision issued in 1982 for the regulatory plan on the Grand Bazaar of Gjakova. In early 2015, the Office of CHwB in Kosovo in cooperation with local and international partners and institutions started the development of the strategy for the functionalization of the Gjakova Bazaar titled "Urban Historic Space – Gjakova Grand Bazaar Functionalization Framework".²⁵

The Municipality, respectively the Urbanism Department, has initiated the procedures for the development of the Detailed Regulatory Plan for the Grand Bazaar Area. Upon completion, it is expected that the plan shall be approved by the Municipal Assembly and determine precisely the functional areas within the Grand Bazaar Area, such as: the Bazaar Core; the area surrounding the Bazaar Core (extending from the Bazaar Core to the area boundaries); and the Bazaar Protective Area – Buffer Zone²⁶. These rules and conditions shall be determined in detail in the Detailed Regulatory Plan (DRP). According to CHwB, a detailed conservation study must take place prior to DRP development, determining rules and measures for the

⁸ http://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/LISTA_E_TRASHEGIMISE_KULTURORE_PER_MBROJTJE_TE_PERKOHSHME_2014.pdf

²⁵ Draft: Grand Bazaar – Functionalization Framework, Author: CHwB, June 2015 and Interview with MSc. Dukagjin Bakija, Project Manager, Kosovo Office, CHwB

²⁶ According to Law on Cultural Heritage, a heritage monument must have a protective belt of 5-100m, http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/2006_02-L88_al.pdf

²¹ Decision published on Official Gazette 25/ 82 – from Interview with MSc. Dukagjin Bakija, Project Manager, Kosovo Office, CHwB

²² Decision No. 59/ 55 – Interview with Architect Osmon Gojani, Director, Gjakova RCHC

²³ Gjakova RCHC document

conservation of heritage in this area in general.²⁷

Historic Center of Mitrovica

Definition of protected zone boundaries:

Mitrovica city core, initially composed of two neighborhoods, was developed around public buildings and places of worship: Masjid, respectively the Mosque with the Madrassa (erected by Gazi Isa-Beg), the Inn (Hani), Hammam, and watchtower. The Bazaar came along with the establishment of the neighborhoods, which initially extended from the Ibar Bridge and up Lushta and later expanded to the South of the bottom flow of Lushta up to Bair Hill. Mitrovica Bazaar burgeoned with the construction of the Mitrovica-Skopje-Thessaloniki railroad around the 1870s, by reaching 100 shops before the Balkans Wars. At that time, the Bazaar was expanded on the left bank of Ibar River, to the Neighborhood of Bosnian Muhajirs, where the “New Bazaar” was created, and to the East toward the Orthodox Church of nowadays. After World War II, specifically in the 50s and 60s of last century, as in Prishtina and elsewhere in Kosovo, many parts of the Bazaar are damaged. Whole parts are destroyed “to make way” for new collective housing and administrative buildings. However, parts of the Bazaar from Lushta toward Bair Hill shall remain for a long period of time, though with altered facades. Mitrovica Bazaar suffers full destruction in the War of 1999²⁸. Its reconstruction bears no resemblance to what it used represent. Additionally, there are very few monuments left in this area.

²⁷ Draft: Grand Bazaar – Functionalization Framework, Author: CHWB, June 2015 and Interview with MSc.

Dukagjin Bakija, Project Manager, Kosovo Office, CHWB

²⁸ Mulolli, E., Graduation Paper, Çarshitë në qytetet e Kosovës, koncepti urbanistik dhe arkitekturor, FACE, UP, 2013, Mentor: MSc Shqipe Nixha

Currently, in the city of Mitrovica, buildings under state protection that are part of the MCYS’s list of cultural heritage under temporary protection, are the following:

1. Old Hammam Building, 18th Century; inventory code No. v.E.K. 685/57 – nationalized in 1959.
2. Residential House P+1, Koroglu, 19th Century; inventory code no.v.E.K. 02-354/78.
3. Hotel Jadran, currently Latif Voca Library, 20th Century
4. Residential House, Xhafer Deva’s House, 19th Century
5. Kulla of Sherif Gashi, 18th Century
6. Kulla of Tupelli Family, 20th Century
7. Spiro Budimir’s House, 19th Century
8. Florim Zeneli’s House, 19th Century
9. Kulla of Ymer Ymeri, 19th Century
10. Kulla of Avni Boletini, 20th Century
11. Nevzat Abrashi’s House, 19th Century
12. Arsim Leniqi’s House, 18th Century

Despite this number of buildings that are on the list of temporary protection by the state, Mitrovica lacks a historic core/old town defined by boundaries and an official protection status²⁹.



²⁹ Conversation with Ms. Rrezarta Loxha, Director, Mitrovica RCCH

Pic. 4 Mitrovica – Layout of heritage buildings, which are on MCYS’s cultural heritage list for temporary protection³⁰

Zone Protection Status: In the first spatial plan on evidence (1960) for Mitrovica Municipality, the topic of cultural heritage is not addressed at all. Some of the destructive activities in support of creating space for modern developments (collective housing and administrative buildings) take place during this period, as was the case elsewhere in Kosovo driven by the ideological interpretation of this heritage.

The Municipal Spatial Plan of 1988 addressed the issue of cultural heritage to a little bit bigger extent. Following the War of 1999, municipal authorities started the process for the development of the Municipal Development Plan, which was approved in 2009 upon endorsement by MESP. This document also fails to provide any indication pertinent to the definition of the protected old part of the city, either by determining the boundaries or by granting any particular importance to the treatment of heritage in general³¹. The Center Regulatory Plan document of 2010, notes that reference the field of “cultural, historic and architectural heritage, the City Museum and Hammam including the surrounding parts up to the roads represent the only ensemble of special value in the Center urban space. In addition to this ensemble of special value, the Center urban space also includes a smaller potential of other buildings of cultural heritage value, that stand on their own”³².

³⁰ Mulolli, E., Graduation Paper: Çarshitë në qytetet e Kosovës, koncepti urbanistik dhe arkitekturor, FACE, UP, 2013, Mentor: Shqipe Nixha

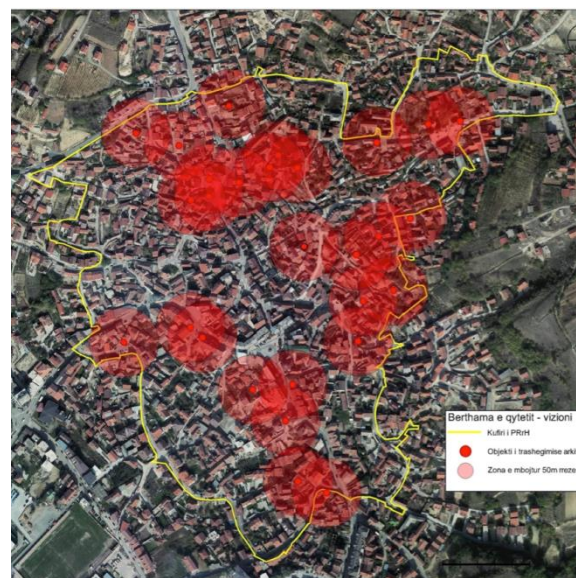
³¹ Studim: Përfshirja e trashëgimisë në planifikim hapësinor, Instituti për Planifikim Hapësinor dhe CHwB, shkurt 2011

³² Plani Rregullues Urban “Qendra” 2010 – 2025+, Kuvendi Komunal Mitrovicë, <http://kk.rks.gov.net/mitrovica/getattachment/Projects/Planet-regulluse-komunale-2010---2015/Plani-Rregullues-Urban--QENDRA--2010-2015---Pjesa-tekstuale.pdf.aspx>

Today, there doesn’t seem to be any action by local or central authorities toward putting what is left of either the old town, or Mitrovica Bazaar under protection. Meanwhile, city heritage is constantly degraded, with the most recent egregious case being that of Xhafer Deva’s House, which was on MCYS’s list of temporary protection, burnt almost to the ground.

Historic Center of Rahovec

Definition of protected zone boundaries: Urbanism, Planning and Environmental Protection Department (UPEPD) in cooperation with CHwB, are in the process of preparations for the development of the DRP ‘Old City Center’³³. The area to be covered by the Detailed Regulatory Plan (DRP) has been defined by the Planning, Urban and Rural Development, and Environment Department and covers a surface area of 27.50ha³⁴.



³³ Priority emerging from the Local Heritage Plan for Rahovec Municipality, Project implemented by NGO CHwB

³⁴ Interview with Mr. Dukagjin Bakija, Project Manager, Kosovo Office, CHwB

Pic. 5 Protected Areas of Cultural Heritage Monuments in the City of Rahovec³⁵

Zone Protection Status: Rahovec Municipality approved its MDP in 2012. According to the new Law on Spatial Planning, the development of the Municipal Zoning Map is expected. Due to the degraded state of heritage in Rahovec, in this case, it was found reasonable to not comply with the regular procedures for developing a DRP upon approval of Municipal Zoning Map. Therefore, the development of the DRP for Rahovec Old City Center is already ongoing³⁶. According to research conducted by CHwB, around 30 cultural heritage buildings classified as monuments have been identified – tekkes, mosques, kullas, houses, inns and public fountains. Of this list of monuments, 9 (nine) are recorded in the list of Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, and in the Regional Center for Cultural Heritage in Prizren.

1. Old Fountain
2. Melami Tariqah's (Order) Tekke
3. Watchtower
4. Sokol's Mosque
5. Halveti Tariqah's Tekke
6. Kulla of Ismet Qemega
7. Kullë-House of Qamil Vuçitërna
8. Kasum's Mosque
9. Kulla of Hajrulla Qanta

Municipal Development Plan (MDP) for Rahovec Municipality approved in 2013, recommends the identification and conservation of the city core, and restoration and maintenance of the Halveti Tariqah's Tekke. In this plan, this action is recommended for the preservation of municipal cultural values and for purposes of

³⁵ <http://chwb.org/kosovo/news/drp-old-city-centre-rahovec-is-being-finalised>, accessed on August 26, 2015

³⁶ DRP Rahovec Old Center is being developed by NGO CHwB. Data appearing in this chapter derives from a draft version of this Plan shared by CHwB.

fostering economic development through tourism.

Historic Center of Gjilan

Definition of Zone Boundaries: City of Gjilan currently has no city historic area³⁷. Gjilan RCCH and local authorities are yet to undertake any steps in this direction. CHwB is expected to provide important input in this direction, since they are finalizing a study with purposes of establishing the boundaries of the city historic area in addition to recording protective zones for natural and cultural resources in Gjilan Municipality in general³⁸.

The development of Gjilan Urban Center started in the 18th century and at the time it was known as a trade fair center. City history is connected to the settlement of the Gjinolli Family, hence the city name derivative. In 1900, the city had 2 mosques, 2 markets, a military base, one church, a hospital and a big number of shops. Bezistan Building, or the covered bazaar with small craft and coffee shops, inns and several fountains identified the City center. In the vicinity were Shehzade Mosque and the Kajmakam's Building (today the Building of Mayor's Office) constructed in parallel to Bezistan in the early 19th century. According to DRP, Zone 1 of city center³⁹ covers most of the Old Town. Today, the new Craft Center stands where Bezistan stood once.

Although according to the Gjilan UDP approved in 2008⁴⁰ one of the key proposed projects was the revitalization of the "Old City

³⁷ Conversation with Mr. Artan Hoxha, Director, Gjilan RCCH

³⁸ Gjilan MDP approved by MA in 2008

³⁹ PRRU Qendra, Zona 1, KK Gjilan, 2010 [http://kk.rks-gov.net/gjilan/getattachment/47a2e582-52eb-4a37-9f72-73c7021d9e52/PRRU-Qendra-\(pjesa-tekstuale\).aspx](http://kk.rks-gov.net/gjilan/getattachment/47a2e582-52eb-4a37-9f72-73c7021d9e52/PRRU-Qendra-(pjesa-tekstuale).aspx)

⁴⁰ Extracted from URP Center, Zone 1, MA Gjilan, [http://kk.rks-gov.net/gjilan/getattachment/47a2e582-52eb-4a37-9f72-73c7021d9e52/PRRU-Qendra-\(pjesa-tekstuale\).aspx](http://kk.rks-gov.net/gjilan/getattachment/47a2e582-52eb-4a37-9f72-73c7021d9e52/PRRU-Qendra-(pjesa-tekstuale).aspx)

Center”⁴¹, currently in the city of Gjilan, the determination of historic core boundaries appears to be no easy feat, since many of the cultural heritage buildings in the old part of town are no longer in existence. According to the CHwB study, buildings identified as having cultural heritage values are the following:

Buildings of cultural heritage value included on the LCHTP 2014:

1. Atik Mosque;
2. Music School Building (formerly Mustafa Pasha’s Palace [Sarayi]);
3. Zekirja Abdullahu’s House;
4. Teknika Popullore Building;
5. Kajmakam’s Building;
6. Farush Okllapi’s House

Buildings deemed valuable by Gjilan citizens, however not declared under temporary protection according to LCHTP 2014⁴²:

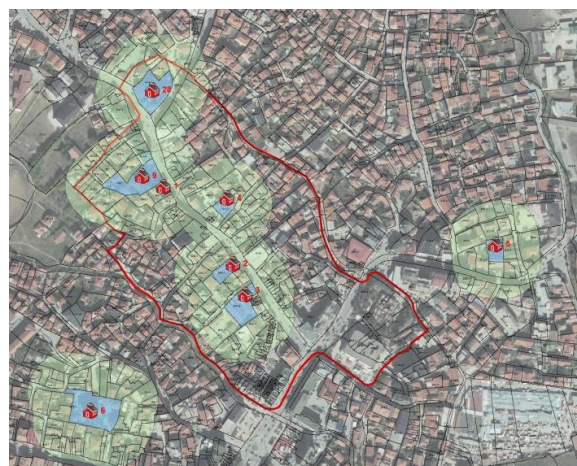
7. Jusuf Rexhepi’s House;
8. Watermill;
9. Maksut Maloku’s House;
10. PDK HQ;
11. Grand Mosque;
12. Old Watchtower;
13. Gjinolli Family Inn.

Considering the protective perimeter of 50-100m around buildings, established in the Law on Cultural Heritage, according to the CHwB led study, the area proposed to be determined as the Gjilan historic core may cover on area of approximately 11ha and is centrally located in the city⁴³.

⁴¹ Detailed Urban Plan “Old Part of Town” developed in the 80s of last century – URP Center, Qendra, Zone 1, MA Gjilan, 2010 [http://kk.rks.gov.net/gjilan/getattachment/47a2e582-52eb-4a37-9f72-73c7021d9e52/PRRU-Qendra-\(pjesa-tekstuale\).aspx](http://kk.rks.gov.net/gjilan/getattachment/47a2e582-52eb-4a37-9f72-73c7021d9e52/PRRU-Qendra-(pjesa-tekstuale).aspx)

⁴² Data provided by Mr. Dukagjin Bakija, Project Manager, Kosovo Office, CHwB

⁴³ <http://chwb.org/kosovo/news/municipality-of-gjilan-defines-heritage-protective-zones/>



Pic. 6 Protected Areas of Cultural Heritage Monuments in the City of Gjilan⁴⁴

Zone Protection Status: A detailed urban plan titled “Old Part of Town” was developed in the 80s of last century, and UDP of 2008 proposes the review of this plan. Nevertheless, state protection status was never granted for this area as a historic Gjilan city core. Upon definition of protected area boundaries, as a result of currently ongoing work by CHwB, the local government, supported by MCYS, is expected to undertake subsequent steps in granting protected area status, and engage in studies for conservation and development of a detailed regulatory plan, which would define protection and development measures for the area, for purposes of halting the further degradation of cultural heritage in the city.

Historic Center of Peja

Definition of protected zone boundaries: In addition to the extraordinary landscape, many archeological sites as well as a large number of cultural heritage buildings and ensembles distinguish the City of Peja and its surroundings. Some of these buildings and sites have enjoyed state protection since the 50s of the 20th century onward, and continue to appear on MCYS’s list of cultural heritage

⁴⁴ <http://chwb.org/kosovo/news/municipality-of-gjilan-defines-heritage-protective-zones/>

for temporary protection. Patriarchate of Peja/Pec, a UNESCO⁴⁵ World Heritage Site, also declared a Special Protected Area⁴⁶ is located in Peja. In spite of this multitude of buildings and ensembles under state protection, the city of Peja does not have a historic core with defined boundaries, with granted legal protection status⁴⁷.

Peja Municipal UDP of 2006, the definition of a historic core encompassing heritage buildings and under state protection, is not noted as a clear strategic objective for urban development. Although, this document does make note that one of the challenges identified (...) *is sustainable heritage and development, according to which: Municipal natural and cultural heritage faces imminent destruction and there is a need for sustainable development by using and protecting our values for the future of our children*⁴⁸.

Given that the issue of cultural heritage is a composite part of the Vision Statement for the UDP and MDP, turns out that cultural heritage represents one of the most important issues for Peja Municipality.⁴⁹ Regulatory plans deriving from the urban development plan do not provide a more comprehensive elaboration on the area encompassing the Long Bazaar, assumed to represent the core for a broader historic center for the city, thus indicating willingness for the definition of a state protected city historic center. Furthermore, city zoning

⁴⁵ Patriarchate of Peja is under UNESCO protection since 2006. This property can be found by ID 724-002bis, in the group of Medieval Monuments in Kosovo, sponsored by Serbia, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/724>

⁴⁶ According to laws pursuant to Ahtisaari Package (Article 7.1/ b, Law on Special Protective Zones, No. 03/L-039)

⁴⁷ Data from Peja RCHC, prepared by Shpresa Gjonbalaj, Director.

⁴⁸ Study: Përfshirja e trashëgimisë në planifikim hapësinor, Spatial Planning Institute with CHwB, February 2011

⁴⁹ Peja UDP, approved in 2007, (extracted from *Konservimi i Integruar*, Report Series, 24/ 2011, CHwB)

according to UDP is such that the majority of monuments already under protection are scattered through various city zones.



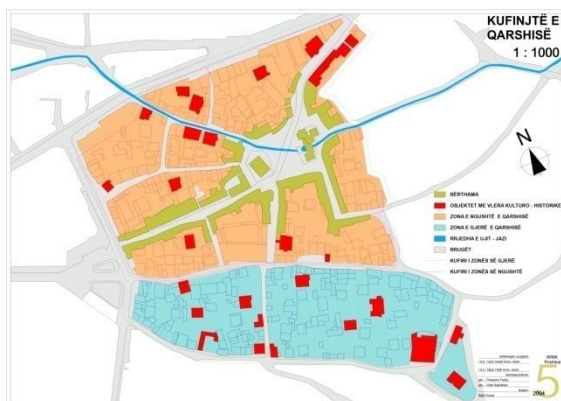
Pic. 7 Map of the Peja Cultural Trail, which includes the majority of heritage monuments⁵⁰

When speaking of Peja historic center, one must note Peja Bazaar, once consisting of two organically connected clusters, Upper Bazaar and Long Bazaar⁵¹. Upper Bazaar was destroyed immediately after World War II, same as Prishtina Bazaar and Mitrovica Bazaar, to make way for new urban developments. What remained was the Long Bazaar, though with many interventions, and it endured until it was burned during the last war in Kosovo. After the war, the owners reconstructed their shops by self-initiative, in accordance with the project for the Bazaar's revival and revitalization drafted 10 years earlier by KIPM⁵².

⁵⁰ Map developed by Economic Development Department/Tourism Division in cooperation with Peja IPM

⁵¹ Drancolli, F., Study: Trashëgimia ndërtimore në Pejë – Çarshia e vjetër në Pejë, KIPM, Prishtina, 2004

⁵² Gashi, G., Projekti për revitalizimin dhe regjenerimin e çarshisë së Pejës, KIPM 2004/5



Pic. 8 Peja Bazaar Boundaries, Bazaar Renewal and Revitalization Plan, developed by KIPM Prishtina, 2004/5

Zone Protection Status: According to Peja RCCH officers, the majority of cultural heritage buildings (save for the Long Bazaar) in this city stand separately and not as architectural building ensembles (complexes)⁵³. Peja encompasses the urban ensemble of Long Bazaar, in addition to surrounding buildings with capital historic and economic value and of course have the status of monuments under temporary protection on MCYS's list of temporary protection. According to Ms. Gjonbalaj, Director, this area can be identified as Peja Historic Center. The following complexes are located in the vicinity of the Bazaar: Peja Old Bazaar, Haxhi Zeka's Mill Complex, Jashar Pasha's Family Inn Complex, Haxhi-Beg's Hammam Complex, Kullas' Complex, as well as buildings, Tahir-Beg's Family Inn, Kulla of Jashar Pasha, Fountain at Shatërvani Square, First Albanian School Building, etc. Additionally, there are over 55 monuments and ensembles in Peja that are part of the list of heritage under temporary state protection, according to the latest update⁵⁴. In spite of this multitude of buildings and ensembles under state protection, the city of Peja does not have a

historic core with defined boundaries, with granted legal protection status⁵⁵.

Historic Center of Vushtrri

Definition of Zone Boundaries: Vushtrri, one of the oldest cities in Kosovo, distinguished by considerable socio-economic development in past centuries, today has very few preserved buildings and ensembles proving this illustrious past. Many parts of the city have been destroyed and degraded following World War II, during the modern city development period; however the greatest destruction this city suffered was during the last war in Kosovo. Degradation continued after the war owing to the negligence of local and central institutions in allowing, inter alia, interventions on heritage properties in violation of international norms and conservation principles for a heritage monument, etc.

Urban Development Plan of 2009⁵⁶, in the description part of the designation of spaces in the city of Vushtrri, makes note of cultural and religious buildings and their inclusion in particular spaces in the city in general terms. Designation of spaces is provided schematically, in the city's spatial development model, and this scheme among other things depicts cultural and historic buildings⁵⁷.

Recently, the development of a plan for the conservation of Vushtrri Historic Center was initiated, as one of the priorities emerging from the Local Heritage Plans, directed by CHWB and cofounded by the Government of

⁵³ Data from Peja RCHC, prepared by Shpresa Gjonbalaj, Director.

⁵⁴ http://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/LISTA_E_TRASHEGIMISE_KULTURORE_PER_MBROJTJE_TE_PERKOHSHME_2014.pdf

⁵⁵ Data from Peja RCHC, prepared by Shpresa Gjonbalaj, Director.

⁵⁶ Konservimi i integruar, sfidat dhe përvojat e integritit të trashëgimisë kulturore dhe natyrore në planifikim hapësinor dhe urban në Kosovë, CHWB Kosovo Office, Report Series No. 24/2011 http://chwb.org/kosovo/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/09/Publication_2011_13.pdf, accessed on July 21, 2015

⁵⁷ Ibidem

Sweden and Vushtrri Municipality. This Historic Center is defined as encompassing the triangle between Old Stone Bridge, Hammam and Castle. This area is defined as such in the Vushtrri Municipal Development Plan⁵⁸. This conservation plan shall reflect provisions on cultural heritage protection and development guidelines, due for completion in the first one half of 2016⁵⁹.



Pic. 9 Vushtrri Historic Center Projection placed in the triangle between Old Stone Bridge, Hammam and Castle⁶⁰

Zone Protection Status: Currently, with the city of Vushtrri, there are cultural heritage monuments and ensembles recorded on MCYS's list for temporary protection. Some are under protection for 50–60 years, and others under proposed status according to the list.

1. Old Stone Bridge, Medieval, Decision no.: 859/49 (pursuant to Ahtisaari Package, this bridge named Medieval Vojinovic's Bridge was declared a Special Protected Area (Article 7.3/d, Law on Special Protective Zones – No.03/L-039)

⁵⁸ MDP and UDP approved in 2009 are currently ongoing a review process. During the summer months, public hearings are organized to discuss city development scenarios, <https://kk.rks-gov.net/vushtrri/News/Debate-publik-per-Planin-Zhvillimor-dhe-Urbanistik.aspx>

⁵⁹ <http://chwb.org/kosovo/news/the-conservation-plan-of-vushtrri-starts-to-be-drafted-2/?lang=sq>

⁶⁰ <http://chwb.org/kosovo/news/the-conservation-plan-of-vushtrri-starts-to-be-drafted/>

2. Castle "Kalaja", Old Tower, Medieval, Decision No.: 858/ 49
3. Mustafa-Beg's Tombstone (Nishan) in the Gazi Ali-Beg's Mosque, 1538, Decision No.: 02 -957/66
4. Gazi Ali-Beg's Mosque, 1444, Decision No.: 02 -985/66
5. Old Hammam, 16th century, Decision No.: 02 -628/68
6. House – Shaban Aga, 19th century
7. House – Mahmut Pasha Gjinolli, 20th century

Pursuant to the Law on Spatial Planning (Article 18/2, Law No. 04/L-174), these monuments/ensembles should be within a protective zone with a radius of 50–100m, as determined by relevant institutions. In the Municipal Development Plan, the area identified as Vushtrri Historic City is the very triangle between the Hammam, Old Stone Bridge and Castle, and abovementioned monuments are within or in the vicinity of this area.

V. Recommendations

Definition of Historic Core Boundaries and Designation of Protection Status: Pursuant to Law on Spatial Planning (Law No. 04/L-174), each municipality must develop a Municipal Zoning Map, which details space type, designation, planned use and relevant measures⁶¹. According to Article 16, paragraph 2.8 of the Law, the Municipal Zoning Map determines areas and measures for tourism development and protection of heritage. In a number of municipalities in Kosovo this map development process is ongoing, and upon approval at the relevant Municipal Assembly this process should be followed up with the development of detailed regulatory plans on areas identified in the

⁶¹ Article 16/1, Law No. 04/L-174

map and pursuant to the relevant Municipal Development Plan⁶².

During the development of Municipal Development Plans and Municipal Zoning Maps, the Municipality in coordination with MCYS, RCCH, and including civil society professionals, shall prepare a study on the relevant city historic core. In addition to buildings and ensembles already included in the national list for temporary protection in the specific area, an inventory of other properties in the city shall be compiled in consultation with the citizens.

Urban Historic Centers represent specifically defined city areas containing a concentrated number of buildings/ensembles of value or values that related in the historic, architectural, archeological or cultural sense. Given that the Law on Cultural Heritage provides that a protective zone of a radius of 50-100m must surround protected heritage property⁶³, historic area boundaries must be determined. Upon assessment and review by responsible MCYS bodies⁶⁴, the area is declared under protection by KKCH, and the historic center is included in the list of state protected cultural heritage. As such, with clear defined borders, the area must be recorded in the Municipal Zoning Map⁶⁵.

The above report finds that several of the cities covered by this report have started the

⁶² Item 1, Article 18, Law No. 04/L-174

⁶³ Article 6.4, respectively 7.16 of Law on Cultural Heritage, No. 02/L-88

⁶⁴ Article 4, Law No. 02/L-88; Cultural heritage assets proposed for protection are assessed by the relevant authority and decision on protection is issued by the Kosovo Council for Cultural Heritage and signed by the Minister (MCYS).

⁶⁵ According to Kosovo Law on Cultural Heritage of 2006, enjoys a different status, that of temporary protection. This status is subject to annual review. Status of temporary protection may be extended according to the review and reassessment procedure annually, and final outcome is List of Cultural Heritage for Temporary Protection.

process of setting boundaries for historic areas/old towns. This report finds that, according to the review of objectives set in the relevant spatial and strategic plans, there are cities (to include some not covered in research) where the definition of a historic center and placing it under state protection is not considered a priority for the overall development of the city.

We stand witness to an increasingly diminished memory of our cities, since even the very few remaining traces of old towns are in miserable condition. And it is the very absence of will by a municipality to put those parts of memory that have prevailed in the city under protection, that represents the most powerful punch to the degradation of architectural heritage, and city development in general.

Development of Conservation Plans:

Development of historic center conservation plans is necessary for determining heritage property protection measures, in addition to establishing rules and providing direction for the further development of that urban area in general. The Conservation Plan is a document explaining why a site is important and how its values should be preserved, independently of adaptive reuse, change, rehabilitation, or management. Conservation plans guide a variety of projects or interventions in historic areas, including: conservation interventions for preservation, adaptive reuse interventions, building rehabilitation, building stabilization, building annexes, urban design, new structures in the historical context, as well as improved accessibility to the area⁶⁶.

Development of Management Plans: Heritage Management Plans aim to ensure the

⁶⁶ Conservation Planning Methodology Developing policies for the Conservation of Historic Places, https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/heritage/external/!publics/web/Conservation_Planning_Methodology.pdf

protection of the variety of a city' heritage for both the present and the future. These plans set the rules for area administration. The purpose of a historic center or ensemble management plan must be: protection of architectural heritage and promote awareness of the wealth of heritage, in order of assuring due care for the heritage, past, present and future, as a focal point for the development of the city⁶⁷.

Notwithstanding a conservation plan that may have been developed for a historic center, without a management plan you cannot stop the degradation of the city and its heritage. To illustrate this point, let's look at the example of the city of Prizren, where in spite of the Historic Center Conservation Plan approved by the MA in 2009, and the applicable legal framework and institutional system, Prizren Historic Center is degraded in continuity⁶⁸.

VI. Conclusions

Today, the notion of urban sustainability and "living cities" is characterized by unique historic heritage. The impact of city growth should not endanger the continuity of collective memory in urban areas; rather the preservation of urban collective memory by way of protecting historic city areas should be an integral part of the contemporary concept for city development.

Conservation is the key term for the protection of historic sites, which can be described as any and all actions or processes aiming to preserve the defining elements for the character of a historic site in order of

maintaining its heritage values and extending its physical lifespan. Such conservation includes the protection, preservation and stabilization of the shape and existing materials, as well as the integrity of the historic site or of a select component, while protecting its heritage value. Conservation may include short and mid-term protection measures for site protection or stabilization, as well as long-term measures to eliminate deterioration or even prevent damage. The latter enables the evasion of long-term damages through routine upkeep and small repairs.

A Historic Center should represent a positive example for an area that has maintained its historic urban structure by responding to the increasingly complex functions of a modern city as time goes by.

Urban Historic Centers in Kosovo serve as examples of degraded areas, where urban historic structure was unable to withstand the demands of the current market, economy, and private interests, etc. Putting these ensembles under protection is one of the emergency actions that our institutions should undertake to protect the collective memory of our cities. By developing documents that regulate and define measures to be introduced for the conservation and management of these areas, with a perspective of sustainable urban development, in general, we hope to ultimately put a stop to the current degradation trends; and heritage, inter alia, shall be able to support the overall cultural, social and economic development of our cities.

⁶⁷ <http://www.lethbridge.ca/Doing-Business/Planning-Development/Historic-Building-Preservation/Documents/Heritage%20Management%20Plan.pdf>

⁶⁸ Ligjet nuk e mbrojnë Qendrën Historike të Prizrenit, EC Ma NDryshe, April 2014, http://online-transparency.org/repository/docs/Ligjet_nuk_po_e_mbrojne_QH.pdf

EC Ma Ndryshe

EC is a community organization, founded in 2006, committed to the advancement of democracy in Kosovo at the local level. The Organization works with a considerable number of community groups, and maintains constant pressure on the local governments for inclusive, transparent and accountable governance. EC engages for civic action for shaping the environment we live in by fostering genuine community organization, democratization of institutions and enrichment of cultural life in the key centers of Kosovo, focusing on Prizren and Prishtina.

Since January 2015, EC operates the following three programs:

- *Inclusive City (Community Mobilization)* – Community Mobilization represents the very essence of the work of EC. The identity of the organization stems from community engagement. Inclusive City will be an important program for the organization and will represent the EC's distinguishing feature in relation to other civil society organizations. Actions that promote civil activism at the level of community groups (mainly urban quarters) will be part of this program.
- *Good Governance (Monitoring and Advocacy)* – To ensure that local government acts in accordance with the demands and interests of community groups as well as keeping the public pressure toward the authorities alive, the Good Governance Program will be structured around transparency monitoring activities and the organization's watchdog role. Monitoring is one of the most prominent features of the work of EC, whereas it is designed in such a manner that it will feed into two other programs of the organization with well-based, quick and credible information.
- *Research (Knowledge Production)* – Knowledge production will be one of the fields of permanent engagement for the organization. By building upon the products of research produced during the recent years, the organization will build a well-structured system of research and production of policy documents. The research program will also further strengthen the organization's production capacity and improve the professional competence in the narrow fields of engagement.

EC's differentiating features are: first, geographic focus, and second, approach to issues of interest. Based in Prizren and Prishtina, the organization uses the anthropological approach to research and policy development. As a result, the organization's research products provide reliable content, since they deal with the essence of the problem rather than the symptoms. Further, EC covers specialty areas such as urban planning, cultural policies, public space management, and alike, which in general remain under-addressed in Kosovo. The organization's research activity and *grassroots* activism are well-combined and interdependent work methods. Through activism, EC is permanently involved in working with community groups to identify their needs, which are the sources feeding its research component. This methodology enables greater influence over the decision-making agenda, as ideas are coming from the bottom, along with creating opportunities for the inclusion of policymakers in a constructive and well-informed debate. By this approach, the organization influences a larger scale public participation and more inclusive processes in public policy development.

The Organization's main projects in the recent years: European School for Urban Planning and Development (2015), EC for Transparent and Inclusive Cities (2015-2016), Municipal Transparency Reform Index (2015-2016), Urbanism Watch – Urbanism of Prizren under Constant Watch (2013 – 2016), Cultural and Urban Activism in Prizren (2014-2015), Inclusive City – Participatory Planning for Sustainable Urban Development in Prizren (2013 – 2015), Linking Communities to Justice Providers (2014-2016), Regional Development through Cultural Tourism (2014-2015), Citizen Participation through Social Media (2013 – 2014), Cultural Heritage, the Central Pillar for Sustainable Local and Regional Development in Prizren (2013 – 2014), Citizen Participation in the Design and Implementation of Cultural Policies in Prizren Municipality (2012 – 2013), Online Transparency of Prizren, Mamusha and Prishtina Municipalities (2012 – 2015), A Balkans Tale (2011-2012), A Balkan Tale (2011-2012), Strengthening Citizens' Action in Promoting and Protecting Cultural Heritage (2009-2010).

The Organization's most recent publications: Erasing the Traces – Historic Centers of Kosovo (2015), Protection and Promotion of Cultural Heritage (Input for the Progress Report) (2015), (in)Justice in Urbanism of Prizren (2015), Community Groups and Urban Planning in Prizren (2015), Prizren Region Catalog (2015), Urban Planning for Citizens (2014), Countdown to Last Days for the Historic Center of Prishtina (2014), Where Is Prizren's Cobblestone? (2014), Public Money as "Dad's Money" (2014), Guide to Municipal Transparency (2014), Historic Center of Prizren, (un)Protected Area (2014), Reading the City through Urbanism (2014).