



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

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**PRESS RELEASE  
Tourist Information Centres closed for tourists**

In its strategic papers, the Municipality of Prizren has defined tourism as one of the most important economic domain. However, the actions to place tourism into a economic development function, were scarce. Best evidence to this, is the failure to functionalize Tourist Information Centres.

On 14 July 2015, the Mayor of Prizren, proposed by Department of Tourism, made a decision by enabling the announcement of the tender for drafting the project "Design of the Info Centre at the Arasta Bridge." Such Info Centre have yet not been placed in this settlement.

Nevertheless, such Info Centre is placed at Bazhdarhane neighbourhood, where a wooden building placed there has remained closed for months. The public contract signed between the municipality of Prizren and the economic operator for the project design and construction of tourist information centre amounted to 9 thousand 996 Euros.

Whereas, again proposed by Department of Tourism, on 28 July 2015, the Mayor of Prizren has decided to grant permission for use of tourist Info Centre and stands. However, even though six months after this decision, the Municipality of Prizren has not yet give them for use.

Consequently, the Tourist Info Centre at the Farkëtarët street, developed by the NGO EC Ma Ndryshe, under the project implemented by UNDP supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, has also remained closed for more than six months. Furthermore, the promotional materials have also remained closed, a fact which proves the lack of seriousness of local government towards the donor that supported the municipality, to promote and develop tourism.

Hence, the only functional Tourist Info Centre remains the one at the Directorate offices, at the Beledije building, which has very few promotional materials and is closed on weekends.

Regarding the analysis and research for establishing Tourist Info Centre, the Tourism Director stressed, in a previous response, that he inherited this project. At the same time he admitted that the Department is lacking a management plan for these Centres.

EC Ma ndryshe recalls that the Prizren Conservation and Development Plan states that tourist activities have potential for sustainable development, especially in the historical centre of Prizren. More importantly, the Municipal Development Plan 2025 contains four principals, one of them is the "economic vitality" which foresees tourism development as a separate goal.

Therefore, EC Ma Ndryshe considers that the delay in opening tourist Info Centre does not comply with the tourism development goals and increase of tourists' number in Prizren, as one of economic development objectives. Therefore, the Municipality of Prizren, must stop the practice of investment in tourist Info Centre, treating them as construction projects. But it must initially focus on creating content rather than constructing kiosks or stands.

EC Ma Ndryshe recommends to the Municipality of Prizren to enhance its actions towards activation and full functionality of the current Tourist Info Centres as soon as possible. It is also recommended that prior to implementing such projects, to conduct consultations as well as disclose analysis on the feasibility of spending public money for these designations. At the same time, we urge from the local government to comply with the development orientations set out in the strategic papers adopted by the Municipal Assembly.

EC Ma Ndryshe has started implementation of the project "Index of the Reform on Municipal Transparency" since May 2015, thanks to the support of the United Kingdom Embassy in Prishtina, a project that covers bigger municipalities in Kosova such as: Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, Mitrovica, Gjilan, Ferizaj and Gjakova and few smaller ones such as: Suhareka, Rahovec, Malisheva, Dragash, Mamusha and Shterpce. This project aim is to assist municipalities in identification of main deficiencies as far as transparency concern and at the same time provide instructions on how to address and overcome them. The Index of Transparency represents one more structured effort to support the municipalities of Kosova in fulfilling the standards of good governance, set by the local governance reform and European agenda of Kosovo.

Sincerely,  
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