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EC MA NDARYSHE

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PRESS RELEASE

Urban Chaos Map for Tophane and Dardania Neighborhoods in Prishtina

EC Ma Ndryshe today published additional evidence of the urban chaos in the city of Prishtina indicating irregularities in Tophane and Dardania neighborhoods. In pointing out the urban irregularities the mapping and scanning methodology of the constructions in the field was used, including the identification and registration of construction violations. The purpose of this identification, amongst others, is to make public the construction violations in the city of Prishtina and to increase the level of transparency of the Prishtina Municipality Urban Planning Directorate. The urban chaos map for these two neighborhoods can be found at: <http://ecmandryshe.org/?page=1,17,269>.

The reasons for selection of these two neighborhoods are their clear boundaries, size, their position in reference to the city centre, urban planning structure (Tophane is dominated by individual residence facilities, while Dardania is chiefly composed of collective apartment buildings), and the noticeable physical changes that these two neighborhoods went through over the last 15 years. While the situation in Tophane neighborhood was scanned in all facilities that we were able to access, in Dardania only collective residential apartments were studied, aiming to identify irregular interventions there (constructions on top of them, expansions, adjacent constructions, illegal occupations and other additions).

In Dardania neighborhood we have identified the violations made through interventions in multi store residential apartments (constructions on top of them, expansions, adjacent constructions, etc). From the information obtained in the field, the data stemming from the original layouts of these apartment blocks taken from the Ndërmarrja Publike Banesore (Public Residential Enterprise), as well as from the requests to access the construction permits at the Urban Planning Directorate it comes out that no construction on their rooftops, expansion or other intervention in multi store apartment buildings has permit.

In Tophane neighborhood the chaos can be seen everywhere. From a neighborhood mainly composed of low rise individual houses, it has been transformed into a neighborhood almost completely sealed in concrete, dominated by high rise buildings that do not go in line with basic urban planning structure, the street width, distance between the facilities and parcel size. The chaos is also evident due to the lack of public space, lack of sidewalks, of green areas, from the streets blocked by vehicles, from improper garbage removal, from the non adherence to regulatory line, non adherence to the height of the facilities determined in regulatory urban plans, obstruction of sight and light by one facility to the other, merger of parcels, etc.

Unclassified Urban Planning Documentation

Out of 650 facilities enlisted in Tophane neighborhood, after our persistent requests related to documentation for all types of construction permits in this neighborhood (dating back before the war through to this date), the Directorate of Urban Planning gave us access to only 11 construction permits issued in the last 4-5 years. All these permits involved new high rise facilities build on a number of merged properties, which used to be individual houses.

Even those facilities built with construction permit, if compared with the permit description, most recent regulatory urban plan and decision to supplement it, contain violations mainly related to the number of floors. The Urban Planning Directorate lacks a complete data base of construction permits. Permits issued prior to 2007 and those from before the war, according to this Directorate, are archived in the Municipal Archive, which being extremely poorly systemized is inaccessible even for them. Lack of construction permits issued before the war disables the identification of violations made during that time.

In order to gain access to other documents that would enable us identification of urban planning irregularities in the neighborhood, except for the Directorate of Urban Planning, we have requested the minutes from the Directorate of Inspection for the inspections made in the neighborhood in order to enlist the constructions built without permit. We have requested the same documentation from the Directorate of Cadaster as well. However, we were not able to receive any information from these two Directorates, since the city is not divided in the operational sectors, as it is the case with the Directorate of Urban Planning, and the classification of documents in the Directorate of Inspection was not better than the one in the Directorate of Urban Planning.

Another finding from this study is related to cadastral parcels. From the cadastral plans available at the beginning of this year in many instances cadastral boundaries and numbering does not correspond to the situation in the field. Over the last 15 years, considerable number of property owners has merged their parcels to build a high rise construction, but there are also cases when larger properties were divided into smaller ones. Such confusing situations about the parcel size, the facilities constructed after the war, permits to which we were not able to have access made impossible the determination of construction coefficient and comparison with that provided in urban planning conditions namely in the most recent regulatory plan.

How to Use the Map

The final product of this study is an interactive map, easy to navigate, available online through the following link: <http://ecmandryshe.org/?page=1,17,269> that is populated marks indicating specific facilities. By clicking into the mark a window with identifying information of the construction is opened (photo, address), as well as through the link containing the form with other data for the construction.

The study is composed of the following components:

- Forms containing data for every construction in the neighborhood collected after scanning the factual situation on the field; data from the most recent regulatory plans, cadastral plans, orthophotos, GeoPortal of the Cadastral Agency of Kosovo, documentation of requested permits from the Directorate of Urban Planning, original layouts of high rise residential apartments received from the Public Residential Enterprise of Prishtina, etc.
- Map showing the graphic presentation of these data – connecting the forms with relevant facilities in the map of Prishtina at the relevant neighborhood through the web application Google Map.

Every construction (not cadastral unit), namely every entrance (in Dardania) has corresponding form with a specific reference number that is related with the map database. There are more than 650 constructions enlisted for Tophane neighborhood and 330 for Dardania. Being not able to directly access the properties, for which a special permission is needed and running across difficulties to communicate with the residents, in Tophane neighborhood there is a small number of constructions within house yards, which we were not able to enlist.

Amongst others, the data that can be found in forms are the following: construction photo, address, the layout of construction's position in the area map, 3D graphic presentation of construction – when dealing with high rise buildings, and in case of alleged violations (constructions on top of the buildings, extensions or other additions) of the permit issued by the Directorate of Urban Planning (to those which we had access) or of the most recent regulatory plans or original layout plans of constructions (with high rise buildings in Dardania), they are marked with color and are easy to identify. Other information in the form is related to physical dimensions of the property (size of cadastral unit, number of floors, surface of the base of construction), construction coefficient, description of urban planning conditions as per the last urban regulatory plan, description of the issued permit (where there is one), description of violation, other information and remarks related to infrastructure and services located close to the construction, etc.

As Conclusion

The process of documenting the urban chaos emphasizes key problems related to the lack of institutional coordination that gave space to degrading actions against the urban structure of the city of Prishtina. Even after 15 years, Municipality of Prishtina, does not have basic information on the construction numbers in the city. As a consequence of non systemized documentation related urban planning, cadastre, property and other fields, the realistic picture of urban planning degradation is impossible to be given. The inability to come up with realistic figures of the constructions in the city has transformed Prishtina into fertile land for continuous violations.

EC Ma Ndryshe invites all citizens living in these two neighborhoods that in case they have additional evidence on the constructions shown in the map, to contact our organization so that we could continue with enrichment of forms in the map. This map is editable, and therefore we would like to invite all of you to give your contribution in its updating. Specifically, this map is drawn for the municipality of Prishtina to serve as a model of identifying the real urban planning situation in the field and for the purpose of newly established process of legalizations.

The Project “Transparenca online e komunës së Prishtinës” (*Online Transparency of Prishtina Municipality*) aims to increase the local transparency level in decision making through the monitoring of municipal executive and reporting on the local decision making practices. The key component of this Project in Prishtina is the monitoring of the work of the Directorate of Urban Planning, Construction and Environmental Protection, part of which is the technical assistance in establishing urban planning order in Prishtina.

ark. Rozafa Basha, Project Coordinator

NGO EC Ma Ndryshe

Rr. Perandori Dioklecian, 14 (Floor 5) - Prishtinë

www.ecmandryshe.org & info@ecmandryshe.org

+381 38 224 967 & +381 29 222 771



British Embassy
Pristina

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OJQ EC Ma Ndryshe ~ Saraçët 5, Prizren ~ Perandori Dioklecian, 14 (kati 5), Prishtinë
www.ecmandryshe.org ~ info@ecmandryshe.org ~ 038-224-967 & 029-222-771