



Non-Governmental Organization Emancipimi Civil Ma
Ndryshe
EC MA NDrySHE

29 December 2014, Prishtina

PRESS RELEASE

**2014 Summary of Urban Planning Monitoring in Prishtina:
A Year of good initiatives in attempt**

In March this year the UK Embassy in Prishtina, Municipality of Prishtina and NGO EC Ma Ndryshe made their cooperation official through the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding, through which, amongst others, they committed themselves to become strategic partners in the implementation of Project “Online Transparency of Prishtina Municipality”, acting in a full transparency and in close mutual cooperation.

The key component of this Project in the Municipality of Prishtina is the monitoring of performance of the Directorate of Urban Planning, Construction and Environmental Protection. This Project aims to increase the local transparency in decision making through the monitoring of municipal executive and reporting on local decision-making practices. The technical assistance in establishing rule and order in the urban planning of Prishtina is also a part of this Project.

Two main monitoring pillars of the Directorate of Urban Planning are issues related to urban planning and cultural heritage protection of Prishtina. The monitoring activities during this year also include the participation in meetings of Municipal Assembly, Directorate of Urban Planning and Prishtina Municipality Board of Directors. These activities also include the participation in public discussions on municipal urban planning issues and research related to urban planning in general and urban planning irregularities, occupations of urban space, legal status of Prishtina Historical Centre and conservation works in some building under protection within this special zone.

Below we will summarize some of the findings from the monitoring of Urban Planning Directorate of Prishtina and provide key recommendations:

1. *In March this year, EC Ma Ndryshe came to conclusion that there is a large number of Prishtina neighborhoods with outdated urban planning papers (8 in total), but there are many other neighborhoods with detailed urban plans dating back in 1970s and 1980s, which have never been revised. One of these neighborhoods is also the Historical Centre of Prishtina, which is suffering from urban degradation for 15 years now.*
- Since the new regulations stemming from the Law On Spatial Planning sponsored by the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning were being drafted, EC Ma Ndryshe, amongst others, recommended the Directorate of Urban Planning that as soon as this process is over, to commence with the review/drafting of new plans for Prishtinë neighborhoods, where the outdated plans of 1970s and 1980s are still applicable.

- From the recent information received by the Directorate of Urban Planning of Prishtina Municipality, it comes out that some developments have occurred when it comes to the review of outdated regulatory plans and drafting of new detailed urban plans. For the time being, 4 Prishtina neighborhoods with outdated plans are being reviewed, and decision was taken to draft new detailed plans for 2 additional neighborhoods.
2. *Public discussions on urban plans held by the Municipality of Prishtina are not inclusive. This was noticed by EC Ma Ndryshe during the participation in monitoring capacity in some of the public discussions related to urban plans. The way how the information was distributed to citizens and non-inclusive targeting of community groups resulted with public discussions with over 90% male participation.*
 - Inclusion of all community groups in urban plan drafting is a key precondition for democratic governance. Therefore, EC Ma Ndryshe recommended the Prishtina Municipality that this process should create space for the community groups deprived of proper public infrastructure and services with the purpose of qualitative increase of citizens participation in urban plan drafting. The Municipality was also recommended to cooperate with civil society organizations in organizing and facilitation of public debates, as well as in improving the way of informing the public about these debates.
 - Public discussions to be held in small groups (15-20 people) within the specified community groups, where the gender component and access for persons with special needs should be considered as priorities.
 3. *Sidewalks in Prishtinë continue to be occupied to a great extent. This fact emerged during a short survey related to daily problems faced by pedestrians of Prishtina, carried out by EC Ma Ndryshe in November this year. Drawing on the survey results during this research, EC Ma Ndryshe worked on maps identifying the obstacles on surveyed streets, and most characteristic ones were presented through images. These maps can be accessed on the following link: <http://ecmandryshe.org/?page=1,17,267>*
 - EC Ma Ndryshe invited the Prishtina Municipality Inspectorate to undertake concrete measures in removing all obstacles and clearing all sidewalks for the citizens.
 4. *EC Ma Ndryshe published the additional proofs of urban chaos in the city of Prishtina by documenting the irregularities in Tophane and Dardania neighborhoods. In pointing out the urban irregularities a mapping methodology scanning the constructions in the field and identifying the violations was used. The map showing the urban chaos in these two neighborhoods can be found in the following link: <http://ecmandryshe.org/?page=1,17,269>.*
 - This map points out to the 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, the Municipality of Prishtina does not have basic information on the construction numbers in the city. As a consequence of poorly systemized urban planning, cadastral and property documentation, the real level of urban degradation is made impossible to be determined. Incapability of determining the real situation of constructions has transformed Prishtina in a fertile land for continuous violations.

5. *In relation to the Law on Legalizing Constructions without Permits, that entered into force since February this year, and with particular concern on addressing constructions without permits in protected areas, EC Ma Ndryshe has drafted a map of protected areas in the Historical Centre of Prishtina, based on the Law on Heritage and the List of Cultural Heritage under Temporary Protection. This map shows all buildings in the city of Prishtina that are enlisted in the List of Cultural Heritage under Temporary Protection, and the fifty-meter perimeter (based on the applicable Law on Cultural Heritage) that includes the protected areas around those buildings.*
 - In drafting documents on constructions that do not have permits, we would recommend all municipalities to work in full coordination with the MESP and the MCYS in order to draft such maps or other similar area maps. The area map for the city of Prishtina drafted by EC Ma Ndryshe can be found at the following link www.online-transparency.org.

6. *'The Historical Centre of Prishtina is Counting its last Days' is a research Report published by EC Ma Ndryshe at the beginning of October this year. This Report pointed out the scale of city's degradation, the harmful activities and raised concerns about its future. The Report enumerates some of the problems that brought the "Historical Centre" of Prishtina in that situation. The Report, amongst other things, emphasizes the problems related to unidentified boundaries of Historical Centre and lack of legal protection. From all the developments, these problems prove to be the most critical ones that leave room for the continuation of its degradation.*
 - EC Ma Ndryshe recommended a temporary hold of all construction activities at the "Historical Centre" of Prishtina; application of punitive measures by responsible authorities against degrading activities; to speed up the determination of Prishtina historical area boundaries through a joint working group, which was already established and functionalized by the MCYS; to include under permanent protection the buildings and compounds from the List of Cultural Heritage under Temporary Protection; to determine the boundaries and to provide a legal status to the protected area of "Historical Centre" of Prishtina, as well as to proceed with the drafting of a conservation plan and, later on, with the management plan for this area.
 - EC Ma Ndryshe is constantly following issues related to the Historical Centre of Prishtina, and most recently, the information coming from the MCYS, showing that some small developments have taken place in this respect. The Working Group established by the MCYS and composed of representatives of MCYS, MESP, Municipality of Prishtina, IPMK, QRKT in Prishtina, CHWB and University of Prishtina (UP) has had several meetings, and the collection and analysis of Historical Centre documentation is ongoing. Even though it is still not known whether this Working Group will have additional members or whether it will act alone or with support of other sub-groups, the key priority will be the determination of boundaries for the Historical Centre of Prishtina.

7. *The restoration of Xhamia e Çarshisë mosque in Prishtina will not be finished this year, and its current state is contributing to its degradation.*
 - Therefore, EC Ma Ndryshe called upon the relevant authorities to react as soon as possible to provide for the required funds for the completion of this Project. Poor institutional coordination and lack of a proper dynamic working plan have resulted with the current bad situation surrounding the Xhamia e Çarshisë mosque, and not only the mosque.

8. *At the end of September this year EC Ma Ndryshe summarized the continuous problems of conservational work at the Big Hamm of Prishtina since the beginning of restoration in 2009 to this date. Three stages of conservation work have seen numerous problems, starting from the irregularities in the implementation of works by the contracted companies, project deviations as a lack of adequate supervision by the IPMK and Municipality, lack of institutional coordination between the MCYS and Municipality of Prishtina as jointly responsible authorities for this Project, works performed in violation of the Law on Cultural Heritage of Kosovo and of the professional restoration norms. This led to numerous interruptions and delays that eventually significantly contributed in further degradation of the Big Hamam facility.*

- Therefore, EC Ma Ndryshe recommended the establishment of an assessment commission as soon as possible by the Directorate of Culture in the Municipality of Prishtina with the purpose of assessing the damage caused by non professional activities at the Hamam facility and of undertaking required measures depending on the assessment results for the works performed until now.

9. During the conservation and restoration works at the cultural heritage sites and facilities in Prishtina, EC Ma Ndryshe investigated the reasons for three-year delay (since September 2011) of the beginning of restoration of Jashar Pasha Mosque in Prishtina. This Project is funded by the Turkish Agency TIKA, which also got the full responsibility to draft, administer and implement the restoration Project. In 2012, the Islamic Community closed the mosque for its believers since it posed danger due to structural problems. TIKA needed three years to begin with restoration works, and in the meantime it did not take precautionary safety measures and there was a danger for the mosque to become pray of damages caused by irresponsible citizens. Such a delay in the beginning of works contributes in the further degradation of Jashar Pasha Mosque.

- Amongst other things, EC Ma Ndryshe recommended the MCYS to pay attention to deadlines for restoration and conservation works in order to avoid such delays whenever the agreements for conservation works at the cultural sites are signed.

Urban planning and cultural heritage are coming back to the attention of the municipal authorities of Prishtina. After long years of negligence as a consequence of problem accumulation, these two fields of public policies have been tackled more seriously in 2014. The Municipality of Prishtina showed interest to cover the municipal territory with urban plans, and to review the old ones. On the other hand, in the line ministries the Municipality is working on two important processes – legalization of illegal constructions and treatment of the Historical Centre of Prishtina. When dealing with public space, municipal authorities have shown decisiveness to act in some instances, and they are developing a general plan for the treatment of all public spaces in the city with special emphasis on sidewalks.

In the fields monitored by EC Ma Ndryshe, Municipality of Prishtina still did not come with final and sustainable solutions. 2014 was a year of declared willingness and good initiatives,

which remained only in the range of attempts, in putting urban order in the municipality. 2015 should be a decisive year for the urban fate of Prishtina, and for decisiveness of municipal authorities to live to their promises for a better city (municipality), as well as for the review and drafting of urban plans, which should bring visible changes in the urban structure of the city. In order to be assured that the Municipality of Prishtina will live up to its promises related to urban planning and cultural heritage, EC Ma Ndryshe will continue its monitoring and reminding activities during 2015.

The EC Ma Ndryshe Project for the transparency monitoring of the Directorate of Urban Planning, Construction and Environmental Protection of Prishtina Municipality will continue to publish the monitoring findings through regular press releases and Project web site, where the findings will be directly posted by the monitors. All findings from the monitoring exercise, including regular press releases and many other information related to local government of Prishtina will be posted at the Project web site, www.online-transparency.org.

Thank you,

ark. Rozafa Basha, Project Coordinator

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*Projekti "Transparenca online e komunave të Prizrenit, Mamushës dhe Prishtinës"
përkrahët financiarisht nga Ambasada e Mbretërisë së Bashkuar në Prishtinë.*