



Non-governmental Organization Emancipimi Civil Ma Ndryshe
EC MA NDRYSHE

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PRESS RELEASE

Municipality of Prizren loses sight of its UNESCO Conference

Within the project of monitoring the transparency of Prizren's municipal executive, EC Ma Ndryshe, over the last months, has looked at the issue of implementation of recommendations from the two-day conference "Prizren and UNESCO – Inclusion Alternatives", organized by the Municipality of Prizren on 16 and 17 May 2013 in Prizren.

Based on the information gathered by the monitors from municipal responsible officials, turns out that the municipal government of Prizren has not taken steps for implementation of any of the recommendations of this Conference, for arrangement of which were spent over EUR 4.500 from the municipal budget.

The Report on the conference developments, except the summary section, has also the chapter on conclusions and recommendations containing 13 items, in which are foreseen various actions that Prizren Municipality should undertake in cooperation with other state and regional institutions to gradually prepare for the application process at the UNESCO.

However, responses received from municipal officials confirm that the local executive of Prizren has not implemented any of those recommendations thus has any blueprint in this respect.

Officials responsible from the Directorate of Culture, Youth and Sports replied that this directorate, "so far has received any notice on further steps that might have been made after the Conference held for the possibility of enlisting the city of Prizren to UNESCO's World Heritage List". DCYS informed that the conference was organized by the office of the former deputy mayor of Prizren Municipality, Ruzhdi Rexha.

Former deputy mayor Rexha acknowledged that the recommendations were presented to the Mayor at a meeting of the board of directors, with the remark that those should be implemented and that no step has been undertaken despite the assurances of their implementation.

Current deputy mayor of Prizren Municipality, Lulzim Kabashi, acknowledged that, "he hasn't received any information from any director nor from another body of Prizren Assembly, who might have undertaken anything about the conference's recommendations."

Based on these findings and several months' observations of the monitors, EC Ma Ndryshe concludes that since June 2013, as well as prior to this date, Prizren Municipality has not shown even the slightest willingness to take any concrete step in initiating process of inclusion of Prizren in the World Heritage List. Although the organization of this conference could serve as a momentum for Prizren to start with its "homework" on this striving goal, it has yet proven "weak student" who does not care a straw about this process.

Despite the fact that a recommendation emerged from the conference in question was to examine documentation of the 70s, when for the first time authorities of former Yugoslavia had initiated application procedure for the town of Prizren at UNESCO, as well as to complete documentation and communications made between Kosovo institutions and UNESCO since 2000 and onwards, the municipality continued to being inert.

This case shows once more that for Prizren Municipality cultural heritage and its conservation is not in a list of priorities thus being one of the 'contributors' on the degradation of the cultural heritage, mainly due to its extreme inactivity and inertness.

Given these findings, EC Ma Ndryshe recommends Prizren Municipality the following:

- To bring into attention of its public policies the brief report on the developments of the conference "Prizren and UNESCO..." and to immediately begin with the implementation of recommendations produced in this report, such as beginning the process of preparing the Application File for UNESCO, research of the documentation from the 70s and communication records from the year 2000 and onwards with UNESCO, launching the inventory process of cultural assets of Prizren, restriction of new constructions until drafting of conservation plans, cooperation with the cities of the region that are on the UNESCO's World Heritage List (besides Berat and Gjirokastra), etc.
- To not spend municipal budget funds in arrangements and events, results of which then fails to address or implement.

EC Ma Ndryshe's project for the transparency oversight of the executive branch will continue on publicizing monitoring findings through regular press releases and the project's website, where the findings will be posted directly by the monitors. To date, all monitoring findings, including regular press releases and other information relative to local governments of Prizren, Mamuşa/Mamushë and Prishtina are being regularly published on the project's website: www.online-transparency.org.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Elmedina Baxhaku, Monitoring Staff
NGO EC Ma Ndryshe
Saraçët Street 5, Prizren
Perandori Dioklician Street 14, (5th floor), Prishtina
www.ecmandryshe.org & info@ecmandryshe.org
+381 38 224 967 & +381 29 222 771



British Embassy
Prishtina

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