

6 July 2014, Prizren

DEBATE "Confront"
Transparency of local governance in Prizren

On July 3rd in Prizren, Transparency Forum held the third discussion of the "Confront" series of debates on the topic "Transparency of local government in Prizren", wherein spoke Ymer Berisha, information officer of the Municipality and Kujtim Gashi, Chairman of the Municipal Assembly. The panellists faced with members of the Transparency Forum and representatives of opposition political parties in Prizren, whereas the debate was facilitated by the journalist of Radio Kosova, Valbona Musliu.

The discussion focused on issues of transparency and accountability of Prizren Municipality. In particular were discussed issues in relation to public information, consultations with the public, financial transparency and meetings of the executive branch as well as access to public documents. The opening up of the decision-making of the board of directors to the media and civil society organizations was reconfirmed as one of the fundamental demands of the Transparency Forum. Furthermore, participants of this debate noted a stall in terms of transparency and accountability in relation to updating of the official municipal website, publication of the minutes of the Municipal Assembly, drafting of the reports on the work of the Assembly and inclusion of citizens in decision-making processes.

Municipal officials have insisted that the Municipality of Prizren displays a high level of transparency, while have shown a predisposition to lay out responsibility to individual officials in cases of infringement of transparency. Representatives of opposition political parties were highly critical of the work of municipal bodies, especially on the executive one. They recalled at this debate the Mayor's sentence, alluding to the inability of transparent governance with a convicted Mayor.

Transparency Forum members have made clear that they will not give up from their firmness on the opening up of the decision-making of the executive branch, while have sought a solution to a permanent problem of delays in relation to applications for access to public documents. From the Chairman was requested greater pressure on the executive branch in relation to transparency, whereas members of Transparency Forum and representatives of opposition political parties have agreed in principle to introduce an initiative in the Municipal Assembly, whereby this institution would demand from the Mayor the opening up the decision-making to the media outlets, civil society and other parties.

Transparency Forum will continue in organizing regular panels within the "Confront" series of debates.

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