

URBANISM WATCH

Urbanism of Prizren

Under constant watch

17 November 2015, Prizren

Communication #27

PRESS RELEASE

The situation in the Historic Centre of Prizren is more severe than that concluded in the Progress Report

The situation in the Historic Centre of Prizren has not marked any significant change during this year. Moreover, the developments in this area are even more problematic than the European Commission Report has described it for this year.

The European Commission report concluded that there is a progress in the implementation of law on the Historic Centre of Prizren, justifying it with the fact of equipment and facilities being provided to the Cultural Heritage Council, meanwhile it underlines that equipment for this body have not yet been given.

However, developments on the ground on the Historic Center and Council during this year show a different picture. The progress report does not give accounts of Council's ex-chairman resignation, or his letter which is a firsthand information showing that the concerned law is not being implemented and there are many deficiencies in the Institutional System for the protection of cultural heritage, whereby the culture of impunity is confirmed by the judicial bodies' statistics for the recent years.

In addition to the European officials, the letter of the Council ex-chairman, should have alerted the local institutions. The local institutions, especially the local government of Prizren, instead of reflecting on these developments, they took other degrading steps in relation to the composition of the Council, by electing a person sentenced for election fraud as a member of the Council, even though he was the fourth in the list of evaluated candidates. Besides, they have acted in contradiction to the provisions of the Administrative Instruction for assigning an ad-hoc commission for reviewing and assessing the candidates' applications for the KTK/TAC, by completely excluding the civil society from the process.

However, the EC report puts an emphasis on the need for implementation and enforcement of the legislation to address negative developments in relation to the cultural heritage.

"The cultural heritage demolition incidents have persisted. The established Task Force last year, in charge of dealing with the illegal constructions in Prizren, is operational, yet they have not provided any specific action so far. More efforts are required to investigate violations and to punish perpetrators. Concrete results in combating illegal construction, demolition and harmful developments to demonstrate the Government's commitment to the protection of cultural heritage are needed", it is stated in the Report.

"Ec ma ndryshe" considers that the institutions with legal and constitutional responsibility for protection of cultural heritage should change their current approach and get committed to provide fair defence to

the Centre of Prizren, additionally the aforementioned should be operational for the overall cultural, social and economic development of the city, as well as for the region's municipalities.

Respectively,

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is financially supported by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society

