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PRESS RELEASE

Evidences of urban degradation in Prizren

EC Ma Ndryshe has continued to oversee the work of municipal executive during the month of July. In this period, the focus of oversight has been set on the sector of urban planning and the constructions within the Historic Centre of Prizren. Just in the first six months of 2012, the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Prizren had issued 62 consents for constructions or interventions within the Historic Centre of Prizren. It is disturbing that a considerable number of constructions do not follow the original project designs and the construction permits issued by the municipal authorities. Although do not retain any obligation whatsoever for proceeding requests to the Directorate of Inspection, this Institute, in the past three years, has sent over 25 requests for ceasing the construction works or for demolition of those constructions for non-adherence to the project in line with the consent issued by the Institute and in accordance with the principles envisaged for cultural heritage in the Historic Centre of Prizren.

To date were identified several works being executed contrary to the construction and intervention requirements set for the Historic Centre of Prizren; inconsistent with a construction permission issued by the municipal authorities as well. Specifically, the monitors of EC Ma Ndryshe have found that the most blatant violations in this zone are the construction works in: Hotel Theranda, café “Hollywood”, former



“Shtëpia e Mallërave” (Shopping Centre) in Shatërvan, cobblestones paved by the Directorate of Public Services in Shatërvan Square (carried out without the consent of the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Prizren), rough frame building near the house of Shuaip Spahia, rough framing construction near the building of IPCM, construction of several hotels, and so on. Infringements of the requirements, construction and intervention permissions in most cases are related with the exceeding of the building line and the level

(storey-height) of the construction. All the aforesaid documented cases are associated with pictures taken, which are enclosed to this communiqué. The monitoring findings and field surveys undertaken by the monitors and activists of EC Ma Ndryshe clearly show that, the allegations made by municipal officials for no having any case of overbuilding and non-adherence to the permits and construction requirements in the Historic Centre of Prizren, do not stand. Furthermore, in the document of the Directorate of Urban Planning

no. 04-353, dated 4 March 2012, addressed to the Directorate of Inspections states, “[...recent constructions which are taking place within the conservation zone are in violation of construction permit.]” This official note is attached to this press release.

By this, EC Ma Ndryshe requests from local government of Prizren to take, without delay, necessary actions towards the regulation of situation in the Historic Centre of Prizren. If otherwise, local government shall turn the Historic Centre of Prizren into the concrete ruins and with “modern”-type constructions, which doesn’t correspond even closely to the Conservation and Development Plan for the Historic Zone of Prizren, approved by the Municipal Assembly of Prizren in 2008. In the first instance, we require from Municipal Directorate of Urban and Spatial Planning to act fully in compliance with the opinion issued by the Institute of Monuments, whereas the Directorate of Inspections is required to strictly oversee the adherence to the requirements foreseen in the construction permits. In case the violations during the execution of works are recorded, the municipal executive (with special emphasis the Mayor) should take specific preventive actions, whereas in case of continuation of works, to take punitive actions against individuals who do not abide to construction requirements. In addition, we appeal to the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Prizren in becoming stricter when providing consents for construction works in the Historic Centre of Prizren and for being more vigorous in the oversight of the execution of works in this Centre. This institute should employ central authority, respectively the Ministry of Culture (part of which it is) and the government of Kosovo for preventive and punitive actions towards the municipality and other transgressors of the requirements, construction permits and cultural heritage patterns in Prizren.

The EC Ma Ndryshe project for transparency monitoring of the executive branch shall keep on publicizing the monitoring findings through regular press releases and, starting from July, through project’s website, in which the findings shall be posted directly by the monitors. By now, all the findings from the monitoring, including regular press releases and other information relative to local government of Prizren, are published on regular basis on the project’s website: www.online-transparency.org.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Hajrulla Çeku, Executive director
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