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PRESS RELEASE

To Review the Legislation on Municipal Officials Having Problems with the Law

At the round table “Good Governance and Officials Having Problems with the Law”, held today in Prizren, it was pointed out that officials having problems with the law, namely with justice authorities, cannot offer good governance. Initiation of investigations, charges and judicial proceedings against them shake the public trust, which in turn brings further degradation of accountability and responsibility principles towards the citizens.

The panelists on today’s round table of the Transparency Forum were Fisnik Korenica from the Group for Political and Legal Studies, and Valbona Musliu, journalist and member of Transparency Forum. The round table was moderated by Kreshnik Basha. The discussion was focused on the practices employed so far throughout Kosovo municipalities showing that elected public officials as a consequence of grounded suspicion for the abuse of authority initially had to be faced with investigations, and later on with trials, but almost none of them left the public position, even in cases when guilty decisions were issued against these officials.

Alongside the lack of public ethics, the evident lack of party discipline could also be noticed, since the political entities instead of distancing themselves from these officials, they did the opposite by protecting them, thus jeopardizing the efforts to build a society based on genuine democratic values. Local government officials, opposition party representatives, civil society activists and Prizren journalist participated in these discussions. Possibilities for law amendments were also tackled, with the aim of narrowing the opportunities for authority abuse due to the lack of developed standards of public ethics.

One of the round table conclusions was the need for current legislation review so that the best legal model could be found as a response towards the lack of public ethics by senior municipal officials. The principle of the presumption of guilt was abused to a dangerous extent, enabling the sentenced officials to hold public positions. This is the reason why the round table participants shared the opinion that the discussion on law amendments should begin as soon as possible, with special focus on the Law on Local Self-Government and Law on Local Elections.

Transparency Forum was established in March 2014, as a coordinated effort of civil society actors and media in Prizren that aim to improve the level of transparency and accountability of local government in Prizren. This informal body is composed of civil society activists and journalists from Prizren, who are actively involved in the field of democratic governance.

Thank you

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