

## **URBANISM WATCH**

Urbanism of Prizren under  
Constant Watch

8 November 2013, Prizren

Communiqué #6

### **PRESS RELEASE**

## **ILLEGAL INTERVENTIONS AT URA E GURIT (STONE BRIDGE) AND ARASTA BRIDGE**

‘EC Ma Ndryshe’, within the “Urbanism of Prizren under constant Watch” project, has looked at the issue of recent interventions with decorative lighting at Ura e Gurit (*Stone Bridge*) and on the repair works and placement of the decorative lighting at Arasta Bridge, both within the Historic Centre of Prizren.

According to the information received from the Directorate of Urbanism and Spatial Planning, interventions in both these bridges were undertaken without prior permit from this department.

“In regard to the request submitted by the NGO ‘EC Ma Ndryshe’, the Service of this Department herein informs that no construction permit request was submitted to the DUSP for decorative lighting of both Ura e Gurit (Stone Bridge) and Arasta Bridge. Those undertakings do not possess construction permits”, says in the DUSP’s letter.

At the same time, the Institute for Protection of Monuments in Prizren has confirmed that it did not receive any request for consent for interventions on the mentioned bridges therefore it hasn’t issued any approval.

Our organization’s monitors sought clarification from the Directorate of Public Services, whose representatives stated that on 11 September 2013 the DPS has issued the consent for NSH “Hisar Kosova” for cleaning-up the bed of Lumëbardhi river, regulation of the security walls on the damaged places and placement of decorative lighting at the bridges in the city. “Decorative lighting of bridges was done for a short-term period which will remain until the upcoming holidays with some minor repairs that were undertaken such as the colouring of the guardrail, regulation of pavement on the bridge, which were very damaged and that can last until the construction of a new bridge”, says in the DPS’s response.

According to this information it appears that interventions, respectively placement of decorative lighting at Ura e Gurit (the Stone Bridge) and placement of decorative lighting and repair works on Arasta Bridge, were done without DUSP’s permit and without IPCM’s consent that poses a direct violation of the provisions of the Law on Historic Centre of Prizren.

Article 9 of the Law on Historic Centre of Prizren that defines protection of cultural heritage monuments from damage in paragraph 1 sets out that, “the natural and legal person performing construction, demolition, interventions to the infrastructure or any other activity shall beforehand take all the necessary measures to protect the building of cultural and religious heritage from any possible damage, during the performance of these activities”, whereas paragraph 2 stipulates that, “the measures under paragraph 1 of this Article must be taken in coordination with the Directorate of Urbanism and the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Prizren.”

This law also provides that for each activity in the Historic Centre, the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Prizren and the Council for Cultural Heritage of the Historic Centre must be consulted beforehand and after their consent the Directorate of Urbanism issues a relevant permit or rejects the request according to the Conservation Plan and applicable Laws. These procedures were not met in the case of Ura e Gurit (the Stone Bridge) and Arasta bridge.

According to these findings, 'EC Ma Ndryshe' considers that municipal authorities should be much more engaged in the observance of the Law on Historic Centre of Prizren and when it comes to preservation of values within this protected zone.

'EC Ma Ndryshe' is grateful for donations of friendly countries and encourages the riddance of procedural obstacles for implementation of upright projects, reminding at the same time that, in this particular case, we are dealing with a protected zone where special measures are to be applied for preservation and conservation of cultural heritage buildings.

We call on the municipality of Prizren to increase inspective oversight in this zone for bringing an end to the practices of project implementation without proper permits from responsible institutions, in order to see the rule of law and protection of cultural heritage values in the heart of Prizren.

'EC Ma Ndryshe', in July, began with the implementation of the project "Urbanism of Prizren under Constant Watch", financially supported by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS). The need for overseeing developments in the sector of urbanism has naturally emerged as a result of a numerous adverse developments during the post-war and transition period that were manifested in urban degradation and lopsided spatial planning. The project will continue to monitor and publish findings from the field of urbanism and spatial planning, as well as in addressing institutional responsibility.

With regards,

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