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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Mayor of Prizren to reopen meetings of the executive body**

The Mayor of Prizren Municipality in his third term of governance as well continues the practice of closed meetings with heads of directorates. Closure of meetings of the executive branch has been one of the most controversial actions, at the same time more detrimental to local democracy undertaken in the second term of the Mayor. Since rendering such a decision, never an articulated and convincing reasoning in justifying such closure has been given.

This practice, which goes against the fundamental principles of transparent governance, is the best evidence that the Municipality of Prizren is failing to promote good governance standards. At meetings of the Mayor with municipal directors, most sensitive decisions are taken on the management of the municipal budget.

Transparency Forum expresses its discontent and dissent about the inability of the media, civil society organizations and citizens to partake in the meetings of the Mayor with municipal directors. This fencing off of municipal decision making poses the direct obstacle to the work of these stakeholders, who intend in enhancing public information.

Therefore, Transparency Forum urges the Mayor of Prizren Municipality to as soon as possible revoke the decision to close the meetings of the executive board and reopening them by enabling participation of reporters, civil society monitors and citizens. Every delay of the mayor in the fulfilment of this demand represents a failure to promote an elementary standard of transparent governance and encroachment of the right of citizens to information.

Transparency Forum is an informal body consisting of civil society activists and journalists of Prizren, active in the field of democratic governance and its mission is synchronizing actions of these stakeholders to raise the level of transparency and accountability of local government in Prizren.

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