



*18 March 2014, Pristina*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Cooperation on Pristina's Urbanism becomes official**

Today, on March 18, 2014, Ian Cliff, the British Ambassador in Pristina, Shpend Ahmeti, the Mayor of Pristina Municipality and Hajrulla Çeku, Executive Director of NGO EC Ma Ndryshe, in a joint press conference formalized cooperation between the aforementioned parties for the "Online Transparency of Prishtina Municipality" project.

The principal component of this project in the municipality of Pristina is to oversee the work of the Directorate of Urbanism, Construction and Environmental Protection. This project aims to elevate the level of transparency in decision making by monitoring the executive branches of municipalities and reporting on local decision-making practices. Part of the project will also be technical assistance for bringing urban order in Pristina.

By this Memorandum of Understanding, the above parties commit themselves to:

- Be strategic partners in project implementation, by acting in full transparency and close cooperation with this monitoring organization.
- Municipality to provide the monitoring staff of the organization an unhindered access to all documents and information requested in accordance with the Law on Access to Public Documents and unhindered access to the premises of the municipal administration and in the open meetings of the municipal bodies.
- The organization's staff will perform high professional and oversight standards; they will ensure a permanent interchange with municipal bodies and officials on all matters monitored prior being published in the media; etc.

In addition to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the above parties, in this conference EC Ma Ndryshe introduced its first product in relation to the Directorate of Urbanism of Pristina Municipality, and which are the findings from the research conducted on the regulatory and development plans of the Municipality of Pristina and a preliminary report on the state of the historic centre of Pristina.

The ambassador Cliff articulated that, "Illegal constructions pose a criminal act; they jeopardize the environment and public safety. For municipal budgets, dealing with the consequences of illegal constructions, presents a great burden of costs as well. I call upon all the citizens to be actively engaged in the reporting of illegal constructions in their municipality; to central and local governments in enforcing the laws and to civil society in being active overseers and to ensure that municipal and central government are adhering to the laws."

The mayor of the municipality Shpend Ahmeti emphasized that, "transparency is the basis of good governance. Well-informed citizens over important issues become active in decision-making – and when citizens become participants it is then when democracy works."



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We deem the cooperation with civil society in monitoring as something innate and healthy for any governance. Such collaborations with tangible outcomes will increase citizens' trust in institutions."

EC Ma Ndryshe's project for the transparency oversight of the Directorate of Urbanism, Construction and Environmental Protection of the Municipality of Pristina will continue in publicizing monitoring findings through regular press releases and the project's website: [www.online-transparency.org](http://www.online-transparency.org).



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*The "Online Transparency of Prizren, Mamusha and Prishtina Municipalities" project is financially supported by the British Embassy in Pristina.*