



13 December 2012, Prizren

PRESS RELEASE

Adherence to the law in local governance

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE PRESS,

Today, in Prizren, EC Ma Ndryshe organised a panel discussion: **“Adherence to the law in local governance.”** The panellists of this roundtable were Mr. Ian Cliff, the British Ambassador in Prishtina, Mr. Ruzhdi Rexha, Deputy Mayor of Prizren, Mr. Refki Reshitaj, a journalist of *Zëri* daily newspaper and Ms. Elmedina Baxhaku from EC Ma Ndryshe. At the opening of this roundtable EC Ma Ndryshe has introduced its Quarterly Monitoring Report on the Municipality of Prizren, followed then with the deliberations of the panellists and upfront discussions. The roundtable debate evolved on the subject of adherence to the law in local governance of Prizren and on cooperation among relevant municipal stakeholders in achieving the standards of democratic governance.

According to the report, Ms. Baxhaku, a monitoring staff of EC Ma Ndryshe, has introduced the key monitoring findings for the period September–November 2012 indicating the following: non-compliance with building requirements is not penalized by the institutions; occurrence of public investment practices in disputed properties; senior municipal officials working in education as well; Prizren Municipality ignores the MAPL’s legal note regarding the limitations imposed to citizens on motorized vehicle registrations; Prizren municipal government challenges the authority of Constitutional Court; and the Regulation on treatment of structures built without a construction permit presents an illicit copy.

Based on the monitoring findings, EC Ma Ndryshe recommends: Full implementation of Administrative Instruction on Transparency and the legislation in force to increase transparency; More frequent media reporting on the matters associated with the use of municipal budget, economic development, using of municipal property, urban planning, investments and municipal revenues; Organization of periodic press conferences by information officers; Organization of Q&A sessions with the public at large or stakeholders; Update the municipal official website with accurate data and documentation; and, Implementation of previous recommendations of EC Ma Ndryshe in regard the transparency.

Above all, EC Ma Ndryshe recommends that:

- Non-compliance to construction requirements to be penalized by relevant institutions,
- To end the practice of public investments in land areas subject to a property dispute,
- Senior municipal officials, working in education system as well, to refrain from engaging in dual positions

- To revoke the decision for limitation of motorized vehicle registration with the payment of the waste debt
- To strictly enforce the Judgment of Constitutional Court concerning the case of “Dardania” neighbourhood,
- To revoke the Regulation on the treatment structures built without a construction permit because of being an illicit copy

In their presentations, panellists pointed toward the report’s findings by offering their views on the topic of a panel. Deputy Mayor of Prizren, Mr. Ruzhdi Rexha, stressed the importance of cooperation among local government and civil society to raise the standards of good governance and transparency in Prizren Municipality, at the same time providing specific recommendations for monitoring methodology and sought to reflect also on the achievements of local government in Prizren. In his address, the Ambassador of the United Kingdom in Pristina was straightforward in his request for adherence to the rule of law in local government, highlighting in particular the necessity to act fully in compliance with the Constitution of Kosovo. From the media’s perspective, the last speaker of this discussion panel, Mr. Refki Reshitaj from Zëri newspaper, focused on the significance of reporting of monitoring organizations and, at the same time, urged on more frequent communication of local government officials with reporters to increase the level of transparency and accountability in local decision-making.

You will find the comprehensive Quarterly Monitoring Report and the analysis on the adherence to the law in local governance enclosed to this press release.

Transparency monitoring project began its implementation in March 2012 and intends to increase the level of transparency in decision-making through overseeing the municipal executive of Prizren Municipality and reporting on practices of local decision-making. The “Online Transparency of Prizren Municipality”, in the period from March to August 2012 was financially supported by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS) and from September and onwards will continue to be implemented with amplified capacities by the support of the Embassy of the United Kingdom in Pristina.

Thank you for your cooperation,

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The “Online Transparency of Prizren Municipality” project, as from September 2012, is financially supported by the British Embassy in Pristina.



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