

URBANISM WATCH

Urbanism of Prizren under
constant watch

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PRESS RELEASE

Prizren MDP to serve as a lead-off for stopping urban degradation in Prizren

The monitors of “EC Ma Ndryshe”, within the project “Urbanism of Prizren under constant watch” project, have closely followed-up the process of adoption of Prizren Municipal Development Plan 2013–2025, which is a statutory document that channels the development of the municipality over the following decade. Prizren MDP is approved by the Municipal Assembly on 17 September 2013.

This document underlines that Prizren Municipality is committed to implement the PMDM in line with the Spatial Plan of Kosovo 2010–2020+ and according to the relevant laws of Kosovo. Development Plan of the Municipality of Prizren (PMDP) is a multi-sectoral blueprint providing a broad framework and presenting instructions for the development of the Municipality of Prizren, given the current and planned growth of population.

However, PMDM confirms that, “today, Prizren is facing many challenges in the management of its resources and territory” with special emphasis on cultural and historical heritage. Prizren MDP emphasizes that a large number of historic monuments turn Prizren into a very attractive location for visitors from Kosovo as well as from abroad.

“However, cultural heritage of Prizren is yet degrading. The lack of conservation efforts, new constructions despite conservation plans and the stock of unused buildings result in great physical problems” it is said in the document, which also clarifies that the Conservation Plan of the Historic Zone of Prizren is a fundamental asset for maintaining the durability of cultural heritage, which has not yet been implemented although several years after its approval. “Developments that contradict the conservation plan can be clearly observed in the Historic Centre of the city, resulting in the degradation of its historic character”, notes PMDP.

Also, in the section on tourism development MDP of Prizren finds that cultural heritage, particularly in Prizren, is being destroyed as a result of the lack of conservation efforts, as well as of new constructions built contrary to conservation plans.

MDP outlines that by the Law on Special Protective Zones (Nr.03/L-039/2008) and by the Law on Historic Centre of Prizren (Nr.04/L-066/2012) Historic Centre of Prizren has been declared as a protected zone. However, this area, according to the monitoring and reports of ‘EC Ma Ndryshe’, is not being protected although there is a Conservation and Development Plan for the Historic Zone of Prizren, which has produced planning propositions in terms of physical matters, land use, transportation and issues dealing with conservation, while there are also several laws in force approved by the Assembly of Kosovo that foresee the safeguards for the old city centre and cultural heritage assets of Prizren.

According to these reports, 'EC Ma Ndryshe' considers that municipal authorities need to display far greater commitment for preservation of the Historic Centre of Prizren and for cultural heritage in general thus to accurately implement the instructions provided under the PMDP.

'EC Ma Ndryshe' reiterates that even the Urban Development Plan of Prizren (2003–2013) had underlined the great importance of cultural and historic heritage of Prizren for tourism development, whereas, in reality, municipal authorities have not taken adequate measures for its preservation; much worse, they have contributed to further degradation through their actions. The same fate has tagged the Conservation Plan, a document adopted by the Municipality in 2008, a document that continues to be regularly violated and ignored.

We call on Prizren Municipality not to repeat the practice witnessed in the UDP of Prizren at the MDP of Prizren, but at last to use this document as a starting point for initiation of concrete steps in stopping urban degradation, which has already escalated in disturbing levels within the city.

'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. This project intends in installing a lasting monitoring system of the activities of the state (both levels of power and the judiciary) in the field of the management and urban development in the city of Prizren, with particular emphasis in its Historic Centre to ensure order in terms of urbanism.

With regards,

Valon Xhabali, Project Coordinator

NGO EC Ma Ndryshe

Saraçët Street, No. 5 – Prizren & Zeki Shulemaja Street, Nr. 2 – Prishtina

www.ecmandryshe.org & info@ecmandryshe.org

+381 38 224 967 & +381 29 222 771

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