

URBANISM WATCH

Urbanism of Prizren under

Constant Watch

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PRESS RELEASE

Prizren Municipality once again breaching the law in the Historic Centre

In the framework of monitoring developments in the field of urban planning of Prizren, EC Ma Ndryshe, over the past week, has looked at the case of interventions in Marin Barleti Street – a street stretching within the boundaries of the Historic Centre of Prizren.

According to the information obtained from the Regional Centre for Cultural Heritage and from Council for Cultural Heritage of the Historic Centre of Prizren, turns out that works in the zone of the Historic Centre are launched by the Directorate of Public Services (DPS) of Prizren without consents obtained beforehand from both these bodies, a procedure foreseen as a necessary legal precondition to being equipped with a construction permit from the Directorate of Urbanism and Spatial Planning (DUSP).

By exercising a legal right of access to public documents, EC Ma Ndryshe has sought from DPS and DUSP additional information regarding this project.

DPS has notified that only the pavement works of the Marin Barleti Street are taking place and that with same concrete cubes it had been paved with before, together with the regulation of access for ten families, in length of 20 meters, according to the request made by the representatives of the neighbourhood. DPS did not provide any reply to the question whether it has been equipped with a construction permit from the DUSP for interventions in the infrastructure of the street.

Neither the DUSP has provided a reply to this question. In the information note addressed to EC Ma Ndryshe, DUSP emphasized that “as for works initiated in ‘Marin Barleti’ Street, a response was provided on 03.10.2014 by the competent body, respectively the Directorate of Public Services.”

EC Ma Ndryshe reminds municipal bodies that Article 8 of the Law on Historic Centre of Prizren that deals with interventions in the infrastructure explicitly defines that, “Every intervention to the infrastructure of the Historic Centre of Prizren, such as: water supply, sewerage, telephone network, power network or other infrastructure networks may take place after the approval on the implementing Project by the Directorate for Urbanism and the consent of the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments of Prizren [now Regional Center for Cultural Heritage]” Article 16 of the same law clearly sets out that, “The Directorate of Urbanism shall submit to the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Prizren and to the Chairperson of the Cultural Heritage Council a copy of all project requests for urban permits to construct, demolish or modify buildings, change their use, conduct temporary activities or any other developments within the Historic Centre of Prizren.”

According to the responses of the officials from RCCH and CCH results that these procedures were not observed in this case. EC Ma Ndryshe has reported even before on cases when the municipality disregarded the laws in projects implemented within the Historic Centre of Prizren, as in the case of Ura e Gurit (Stone

Bridge) and Arasta bridge, initiation of works in Sheshi i Lidhjes (League's Square) without being equipped beforehand with a definite permit by DUSP, and so on.

Relying on these findings, EC Ma Ndryshe reckons that illegal interventions in the Historic Centre of Prizren have become regular occurrences for the Municipality of Prizren, which obviously does not care about the protection of cultural heritage values. Evidences on these issues are provided on the findings of the Progress Reports of the European Commission for the years 2013 and 2014.

We call on the Municipality of Prizren to end once and for all the practices of overlooking of laws in the Historic Centre of Prizren when implementing infrastructural projects thus to engage more firmly in the preservation of cultural heritage in this protected zone.

Herein, we also call upon the Ministry of Culture to be resolute in ensuring lawfulness in the Historic Centre, by taking prohibitive and sanctioning measures against all transgressors, including the Municipality of Prizren.

'EC Ma Ndryshe', in July of 2013, began with the implementation of the "Urbanism of Prizren under Constant Watch" project, financially supported by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS). The need for overseeing developments in the sector of urban planning 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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