

Regulative Plans of Prishtina

### UTOPIA OR REALITY?

*The director of Iniciativa Kosovare per Stabilitet (IKS), Besa Shahini, says that a good plan should address the current problems of the current citizens and not those of an imaginative, utopian city of a distant future. Whereas the director of planning in the Municipality of Prishtina, Lulzim Nixha, claims that Prishtina's regulative plans can not be assessed by "non-professionals"*

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'Utopian Visions' is the first assessment of the regulative plans of the municipality of Prishtina by the Iniciativa Kosovare per Stabilitet. Municipal officials deny. They say that their plans are realistic. 'LAJM' confronted the municipal Director of Planning, Lulzim Nixha, with the Director of the institute 'IKS', Besa Shahini.

According to Shahini, IKS has studied all the plans, which she got from director Nixha. 'Studying them we have realised that these are utopian plans.' Shahini takes the example of 'Kalabria' neighbourhood. According to the municipal plan, she says, many houses in this neighbourhood are planned to be destroyed for it to become a green area, a new neighbourhood.

**'Many high buildings are planned to be constructed, but citizens were not asked if they want to live there.'** She says that none of the urban plans could be done without citizens' approval. However, Nixha claims that all plans were discussed with the citizens. He does not agree at all that the plans are utopian. 'Was it utopian to say that human beings could go to the moon? These plans are planned for 15 years.'

Based on a two year research of the Municipality of Prishtina, Shahini insists that Prishtina does not have more than 220 thousand inhabitants. 'Whereas Prishtina has made plans for 600 thousand inhabitants. By 2020 Prishtina cannot increase its population number by 100 percent.' For Nixha IKS's research is very strange. 'Where do these data come from? Which **demographer** has them? I do not believe that Prishtina has 220 thousand inhabitants. The data are incorrect.'

Nixha does not agree with IKS's conclusion that 12.000 cars enter Prishtina on an average day. '80.000 cars enter Prishtina every day.'

Shahini says that the new plans did not manage to protect cultural heritage. **'In fact, neglect and destruction have continued. If we look at the list of 21 protected monuments more closely, an even darker picture emerges. A listed building was destroyed to make way for a new building of the PTK (UCK St., No.66).'**' IKS researchers have seen that out of 76 monuments, 19 went missing since 2001.

Shahini said that she had debates with municipal officials throughout their research. 'We had all our debates in the municipality, but they never agreed with our comments.' But, Nixha says that he did not accept IKS representatives for debate. He

said IKS leaders are not professionals to evaluate the plans. ‘None of them is an architect, at the very least’. Whereas Director Shahini says that they met policymakers, businessmen, students and municipal officials in order to discover development trends and to understand a host of issues from cultural heritage to economic development and urban planning in Prishtina. She says that Prishtina ought to have projects ready for when the status of Kosova is resolved. ‘The main aim is to reach a consensus for a better governance of the city.’ Whereas Director Nixha says that once the status is resolved, the implementation of projects in Prishtina will begin.

**Lulezim Nixha: After the plans we will speak about façades**

The head-architect of Prishtina, Lulezim Nixha, says that Prishtina will be build very quickly if the municipality takes out loans. ‘We have created new neighbourhoods with these plans, Kalabria, Arberia, and there are a lot of requests for new constructions. But, we must take out long-term affordable loans.’ According to him planning is a duty which can be achieved. ‘If you have made a model, you will fulfil your project.’ He said that, after the Strategic Development Plan and the regulative plans, detailed urban plans will be drafted. ‘Then we can speak of façades and colours.’

**Besa Shahini: The municipality should cooperate with itself**

The Executive Director of IKS, Besa Shahini, says that it is crucial that a good plan can also be implemented. ‘This involves a close cooperation among the different municipal departments, the municipal and central institutions, and the organizations still dependent on the KTA (such as public enterprises).’ She claims that cooperation has been lacking to date.

*Emphases in the original. Translation by IKS team.*