



Prishtina, capital city only by name

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The “Strategy 2020” is a utopian and unclear vision. The plan is based on wild assumptions and unreliable data, said Verena Knaus, analyst of ESI.

The directors of the Kosovar Stability Initiative (IKS) and the European Stability Initiative (ESI), on Thursday evening chose the Kosovo Museum to hold a discussion on governance and planning in the capital. On the panel, Ismet Beqiri, the mayor of Prishtina, and Ardian Gjini, Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning, responded to questions of civil society.

In the study done by these two organisations numerous examples of governance failures in Prishtina were summarised. Verena Knaus, ESI analyst, said that the “Strategy 2020” is a utopian and unclear vision. ‘This plan is based on wild assumptions and unreliable data’. Meanwhile Besa Shahini, Executive Director of IKS, does not agree with the new plans to destroy a large number of already existing buildings. Shahini and Knaus would like to know how long it would take for Prishtina to become like Ljubljana.

Mayor Beqiri, however, did not agree with the conclusions presented by the two organisations. ‘Prishtina could not be like Ljubljana... Prishtina is the capital city only by name, because it is not regulated as such, neither legally nor financially.’ He compared the budget of Prishtina with that of other capital cities in the region: ‘Tirana has a budget of 85 million dollars while Prishtina has only 9 million.’ Astrit Hajrullahu, architect from Prishtina, said that leaders should forget about the expression ‘inherited problems’. ‘This sentence is being used for 8 years’. Beqiri said that we cannot be free from the problems of the past. Citizen Baki Kastrati expressed his disappointment with the leaders of Prishtina: ‘Prishtina looks like a massive cemetery. The law is not

working.’ Leon Malazogu said that it bothers him that Mother Theresa Street is closed for ‘corso’ as this creates traffic on Agim Ramadani St. Beqiri said that once a solution is found, the corso will be closed off all together.

Muhamet Mustafa, director of Riinvest Institute said that every strategy needs to be reviewed. ‘The capital city needs to be filled with culture.’

Gjini: There would be a big loss if Prishtina’s plans were to fail

Ardian Gjini, Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning requested a separation of the unit of long-term planning from that of urban management, so as to enable quick solutions. Gjini said that Prishtina cannot afford that its plans fail. ‘There are no utopian plans. If these plans fail, it will be a big loss not only for Prishtina but also for Kosovo.’

Dardan annoys Beqiri

Dardan Islami, from radio “Urban FM”, was the only one who ‘annoyed’ Beqiri. He told the Mayor that all inspectors are corrupt. ‘How come those who know how to steal, don’t know how to collect taxes from the citizens?’ He criticized Mayor Beqiri for the large number of bodyguards that look after him. He also said that it is very difficult to arrange a meeting with him. In response, Beqiri said that Dardan’s provocative behaviour does not help him obtain a meeting with the mayor.