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# Urban renewal - Retransformation instead of Demolition

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**Abstract.** In an article of the Vienna daily newspaper "Der Standard" in 1997, Prishtina and its urbanization was titled "*Prishtina the rudest city in Europe*". Nearly twenty years later, from the perspective of Western critics there are no improvements seen in the architecture and urbanism of Kosovo's capital, but rather a deviation and degradation of the city, fleeing more and more the shape of a compact city, and called this development phenomenon "*destruction through the construction*." Prishtina grows and swells. But is it necessary to get focused on "urban renewal" for parts of the city within existing urban areas.

**Keywords:** Urban Renewal, Retransformation

Pristina is growing and expanding, but the focus of this study is on "urban renewal" in Prishtina. In this study, I will use the city of Vienna and the Vienna urban renewal projects as my examples. This trend started in the early 70s in Vienna.

It is the first major development of this kind; construction or refurbishments of the post-war (WWII in Vienna). Similar to Prishtina now nearly 20 years after the war.

Vienna was pioneers in this field, first to develop the so-called "*soft urban renewal*" - an extension of urbanism – which does not allow the formation of social ghettos and removing the population from old parts of the city that are torn down.

In 1974 a pilot project became a leading role model and also a kind of propulsion for developing methods to other areas and projects of its kind in Vienna.

This has pushed me to deal with this theme of urban development, namely this urban renewal in Vienna, which is a good example for a lot of countries of Europe. In the 1994 Urban Reconstruction Congress in Vienna, the European Economic Commission of the UNO report took many elements to create a positive model example for other European countries. As an example for a development, which is mainly oriented to the social one, "Scroll of Honor" is the highest prize, which has been awarded to Vienna for its soft politics in urban renewal.

Social criteria plays a primary role and also the involvement of residents in the concepts of renovation of objects and also of the roads and public spaces of the parts of the city.

This is a task for architects to find a balance between the existing and new buildings.

So with this conclusion should remain the thesis that urban regeneration and urban development are not approaches or developments quite opposite, but they should be based on one another. Prishtina can not be developed only in new urban development areas. It is necessary to take the task for urban renewal on existing areas as well towards the goal of creating a compact city.

This does not mean that in central parts of the city the number of inhabitants has to increase, but functions have to get developed which increases the quality of these parts.

We should not escape from this problem in Prishtina. Instead we have to deal with this problematic or thematic issue and take it to the top as a prioritized task.

The growth of the city of Prishtina on the outskirts is in unstoppable demand. In order to have the possibility of renovation and reconstruction of the central parts of the city, this should go in the direction of renovation, to increase the attractiveness of the old parts of the city for living.

To help finance the renewal of private homes was almost impossible, as well, in Vienna in the 70's.

Even then there were calls to the population or speculators to prevent the refurbishment of the dilapidated facilities (almost destroyed), as the current situation is in Kosovar cities at the moment. The call in Vienna was: "Eliminate these old and worthless buildings".

Still there was no law that acted as an instrument for political financing in this field. So it has been gone several years until this has worked, got to practice.

In Pristina there are now many buildings that are or will become substandard. The available or constructed land is very built-up and there are no space for greenery, playgrounds for children and places for recreation.

There is a need for and lack of infrastructure such as in heating, other utilities, roads, etc., but on the other hand almost every family has a car. There are few free spaces; paved areas in the old parts of the cities are been used and for parking.

So because of the poor conditions and mobility opportunities, most have started to leave the old part of the city to move and live in the suburbs where there is more greenery and the possibility of larger flats.

They will be mainly young residents with new families who will leave. Creating vacancies in the old parts of the City, where there is now the possibility of creating slums.

It is at the same time the risk of the loss of substance of the buildings in the central areas can develop dark zones, meaning areas without life and without qualitative life.

There should be a political desire for change, but in a legal form of laws and instruments of legal planning.

Pristina and its economy should increase their self-confidence for future planning. In this regard be made done appeals, because in front of us, there is a task for a proper urban renewal of the old central areas of the city before it gets too late. How are we going to approach the work and the problems to take measures for reconstruction that will affect the future of our city?

We should not let happened to act after the old and valuable buildings are dilapidated. Speculations in construction should be minimized to the final disappearance. The tendency is prevent the buildings from becoming uninhabitable, so that they will not be torn down. The Building police should be formed in order to act in time on this issues.

## **Conclusions**

Create guidelines where Politics, Communications, Environment, Housing, Economy, Social and Education Representatives and Urban renewal makes a base for the development of the city. All of these together, creating a group of experts, to sit down and make a start for planning where they will be assigned:

1. Planning goals and
2. Questions that are still open in this regard

These open questions should be published and open to discussion. The participation has to be meaningful, so the mode of participation needs to be organized in a form in order to involve many layers of population. To be a democratic attempt for the thoughts of different fields and layers of population, this has to get practiced permanently during the developing process.

In order to fulfill the requirements of housing and the residents, it is a task of the future to coordinate urbanism on "Urban extension" but on the other side it necessary to get focused on "Urban renewal" for parts within existing urban areas.

To search the common axes and joints of the city. An important topic is the technical connection of traffic.

In order to achieve these forms of planning, Pristina needs a number of legal instruments in support of planning. By taking into account those that exist, by looking at them, analyzing and adapting to new urban, economic and social conditions.

Another important aspect is definitely the law, and on the other hand it is very important to pay attention to the finance and implementation issues. A system for the methods of possibilities for promoting of the tools here should be developed.

For example, it is very important to inform in time residents and owners of business premises to not come up with incorrect investments. Primarily it is important to prohibit land speculation by law.

The problems that arise if the owner can not rebuild-renovate the object itself. It should be offered a fair price or set a time limit for the sale. An additional problem is that the owners do not want to release their homes. This should be regulated by the law of urban regeneration, which then determines this progress.

In addition to special monuments and historical sites, special attention should be paid to existing parts of the city thus focusing the zoning maps on the existing parts of the city, the old areas of the city and its renewal, as well as the silhouette of city.

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