



European KO

EUROPAN
KOSOVO
SITE
VISIT
GJAKOVA

11:00
26 April 2015

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Site Visit

Meeting point for the site visit was announced on European website and it was scheduled to start on the 26th of April, at 11:00, in front of Culture Center “Asim Vokshi” in Gjakova. From 11:00 to 11:30 competitors had the time to assemble at the meeting point where a short introduction was given to them as an overview to the competition as well as city's background.

European Kosovo gladly welcomed 16 competitors that arrived from: (7) Albania, (3) France, (2) Italy, (1) Montenegro, (1) Spain, (1) Slovakia and (1) Turkey.



(Photo 01)

European competition was presented by the secretary Rron Tresi as well as Xhelal Hoxha, the director Urbanism from Municipality of Gjakova. The visit started from the border near Hotel Pashtrik, where some general information was given to competitors as an introduction of the location. The starting point presents the border between the old city and the new city and as it is presented, river Krena is dividing the city into two urban areas.



(Photo 02)

From the bridge Mr. Xhelal Hoxha led the group to give them some historical insight of the city of Gjakova as well as its development.

The old city core of Gjakova developed between Krena River in the east and Çabrati hill to the west, where the old Hadum Mahalla neighborhood is set around Hadum Aga Mosque, built in 1592/93.

The construction of different bridges over Krena River in town and over Erenik River, in the verge of the town, has facilitated the journey of trade caravans at the time. Later the city continued to expand and extend to the east. In 1662, when Evliya Celebi, an Ottoman traveler, went through Gjakova, he had recorded 2.000 inhabitants, while in 1838, the city counted more than 20.000 inhabitants.

The central area in the city was the Grand Bazaar (Çarshia e Madhe) - was served for many artisan workshops and commerce basically producing and trading leather, textile and tailoring, agricultural products. Since 1900 the Grand Bazaar had over 1,000 different enterprises.

According to the latest census in Kosovo in 2011, Municipality of Gjakova city population estimates 94,556. In the urban area there 40,827 inhabitants.



(Photo 03)

The site has a central role in the city and is located along the river Krena, passing through the historic part of Gjakova. From north where the city park is located and Hotel Pashtrik as a landmark, the site stretches along the river down to south, crossing near old commercial areas, religious buildings, residential areas and newly developed commercial zones. Beside the river front which is very passive and has no activities, on the north of intervention area there is a big public space close to hotel, music school, museum, commercial and residential area. Four bridges connect both sides of the riverbank only physically because there is a lack of function and activity that will connect this part to the rest of dynamic city center.



(Photo 04)



(Photo 05)

To have an impression of the city's identity, participants were taken to see the old part of Gjakova, to visit “Çarshia e Madhe” where traditionally it was used for commercial reasons. It is low rise neighborhood with wooden structures where people used to produce and to sell goods.

After the war of 1999, this area was totally destroyed but again rebuilt by owners, and nowadays it is used mostly for selling but some owners have changed the typology and turned them into small coffee shops with terraces.

The visit continued to one of the oldest structures of the city, which is Hadum Mosque. The Hadum Mosque in Gjakova, Kosovo was built in the last decade of the 16th century (1594/95) by the architect Mimar Sinan. Its building was financed by Hadum Sylejman Efendia - Hadum Aga, which explains the name of the mosque. The mosque is located in the Old Bazaar (Çarshia e Madhe).



(Photo 06)

After having an overview about old city the visit was carried along the project site where participants took notes and pictures followed by Q&A session. Most of the participants were asking about public and private ownership because next to the riverbank there are existing buildings.

A short description was given about buildings that will be preserved in the project site. Together with participants buildings were marked on their maps.



(Photo 07)

Central commercial zone of Gjakova is along river Krena. As it is described in the design brief, there should be the connection between both sides of the riverbank. Two segments of trade and everyday use are divided. The one on the east is functional but facing the river with its back, and the one on the west that is in very bad condition since it is a ruin. This structure is facing the river but it needs to be treated carefully.



(Photo 08)

Passing along the riverbed participants were more familiarized with the urban pattern of the city, connections from residential areas to the river as well as potentials for intervention. Through discussion some of participants expressed their ideas for identified areas as highly interesting for intervention.

As the visit was approaching the limits of the project site, there was also a discussion on top of one of the oldest bridges of Gjakova, which was part of the famous via Egnatia and it was used for passing of merchants that travelled through the region.



(Photo 09)

FAQ

Q: Is Gjakova pedestrian and bike friendly?

A: Beside car transportation, citizens of Gjakova mostly use bikes. The city is pedestrian friendly since it is centralized. It is important to create the connection between old and new city.

Q: Is there a need for additional public recreational space?

A: All areas next to the river that have high potential for development should be treated as public space and they should be used by everybody.

Q: What is the status of the empty space near Hotel Pashtrik?

A: This space should be treated as public space. The most important issue is that the block of existing buildings should be connected through the public space and serve as an attraction point.

Q: Beside existing bridges, can we propose a new bridge?

A: If there is a point where additional bridge can contribute to the increase of space quality, it can be considered as long as it is proposed in a way to create the missing connection and serve as an added value.

Q: Since the riverbank is wide, and there is a possibility to intervene for walking and cycling paths, can it be treated as well?

A: Possibilities to increase the quality are endless. Even though riverbank walls are high and there are different slopes, there can be a proposal to have better access to this area to have more contact with the water.

The visit ended around 15:00 where European Kosovo and Municipality hosted a joint dinner with participants. Since some of participants arrived later that day, after lunch another site visit was done for the new group and information was given to them as requested.

Gjakova site visit was finished at 18:00.