



Reconstruction Implementation Commission
for Orthodox Religious Sites in Kosovo

PRESS RELEASE 9 March 2006

SECOND PHASE OF RECONSTRUCTION OF RELIGIOUS SITES BEGINS

After the winter break, the Reconstruction Implementation Commission (RIC) has begun the second phase in the process of reconstruction of religious sites damaged in March 2004. Whereas the first phase completed in 2005 succeeded in protecting 30 sites and prevented ongoing deterioration, the second phase to be carried out in 2006 and 2007 will consist of extensive reconstruction works to the priority sites.

Political, institutional and financial conditions and strategies have been agreed between the different partners: the Council of Europe (CoE), UNMIK, the European Union (EU), the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC), and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) of the Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PISG). As a result, the revised Terms of Reference are being circulated to all the direct partners for approval.

In the meantime, the RIC has been engaged in the completion of pending issues from the first phase, the amendment of working conditions, planning new interventions and ensuring the availability of funds and support from all the partners. The initiation of interventions in 2006 will begin shortly with the lead roofing of the church of the Holy Virgin Ljeviska in Prizren, as agreed last year. This is of high priority following the theft of the existing two lower roofs which were both stripped of their lead. It is envisaged that the majority of the 2006 reconstruction works will focus on sites in Pristina and Prizren.

The RIC is expected to hold its first meeting in April. 2006 will see more extensive and complex interventions than last year as well as a more comprehensive approach to heritage conservation in Kosovo. Recognising the need to bring the level of expertise in this area into alignment with European and International standards, the RIC is committed to using the opportunity presented by its work in 2006 to build capacity and offer training to local experts, institutions and others involved in the field of cultural heritage conservation. As a further means of long-term protection for the sites, the RIC will also seek to promote public awareness, respect and tolerance with regard to the valuable, cultural and natural heritage in Kosovo.

The RIC was setup in June 2005 as a result of an agreement between the SOC and the PISG to fund the interventions in Orthodox Religious Sites damaged in March 2004. It is chaired by the CoE and includes representatives from the MCYS, the SOC and the Institutions for the Protection of Monuments of Kosovo and Belgrade.



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