

Moscow Authorities Adjust Plan for Controversial Vladimir Statue

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The monument, which is already being built, was initiated to commemorate the 1,000th anniversary of Prince Vladimir's death.

City Hall will not erect a giant monument to medieval ruler Prince Vladimir near Moscow State University after a deluge of complaints from the public, RIA Novosti reported Wednesday.

The monument to the ruler who converted Kievan Rus to Christianity in the 10th century was planned to stand atop Vorobyovy Gory (Sparrow Hills), a popular spot with Muscovites that offers an unrivaled view of the capital and is also home to the iconic main building of Moscow State University (MSU).

"We rejected the idea because the well-known image of MSU would change. The monument would dominate the landscape rather than the university," a spokesman for Vladimir Resin, an advisor to Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin, was quoted as saying.

City Hall will now look for alternative locations for the monument.

More than 60,000 people signed a petition against the monument being erected on Vorobyovy Gory. Another 2,000 signatures were collected by students and professors of MSU and submitted to President Vladimir Putin's administration.

Aesthetic reasons aside, activists also said there were geological risks associated with the original hilly location.

The monument, which is already being built, was initiated to commemorate the 1,000th anniversary of Prince Vladimir's death. Some pundits have interpreted the decision as an effort to highlight Russia's roots in Kievan Rus, which was centered in Kiev, the capital of modern-day Ukraine.

Kiev has its own colossal monument to the prince on a hill overlooking the city, though at 24 meters tall, the one planned for Moscow is set to be considerably bigger.

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