

Moscow Begins Installation of Prince Vladimir Statue Without UNESCO Approval

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The  **Moscow Times**

Moscow authorities have begun the installation of a controversial statue of Russia's Prince Vladimir despite lacking UNESCO approval, the Kommersant newspaper reported Friday.

Bulldozers are already working on the monument's planned site close to the Kremlin, which has already been fenced off, the newspaper reported. The statue is set to be on Nov. 4, which marks Russian National Unity Day.

The 16-meter statue is due to be mounted on Borovitskaya Ploshchad by the Moscow Kremlin, which is classes as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Any construction in the area requires approval from the organization. Moscow City Hall told Kommersant that UNESCO permission had already been received, but the organization itself did not confirm the claim.

“Further comments on the revised project will be provided to the Russian authorities as soon as an assessment has been completed by the Advisory Bodies,” UNESCO said in a letter to Kommersant.

Russia's Culture Ministry also admitted that plans for the monument had not yet been approved by UNESCO, with the

ministry's press service saying that while amended plans had been re-submitted, no reply from UNESCO had been received so far.

The monument, which will depict Vladimir holding a large cross has been revised several times following outcry from experts and local people. The statue was originally planned to be 25-meter tall and erected at Vorobyovy Gory, or Sparrow Hills, near Moscow State University. The date of the monument's unveiling has also been repeatedly postponed.

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