



In today's formal Protocol signing ceremony, the monument to Grand Prince Stefan Nemanja was formally handed over to the Serbian capital city, on which occasion Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikola Selakovic stated that the new memorial complex will be a symbol of continuity, respect and readiness to show appreciation for those who had fought for Serbia.

"Stefan Nemanja is not merely a historic figure, he is above all an idea. An idea saying that if you are united into a whole with a clear goal and a vision, there is nothing you cannot achieve", Minister Selakovic said at the signing ceremony of a Protocol on the handover of the monument to Stefan Nemanja and added that the Serbian state existed long before Stefan Nemanja, but that that we are "counting the time from the period he and his sons lived in".

Minister Selakovic stressed that it is not by chance that one such initiative was "conceived" during the term of Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic.

"It represents a vision, continuity, an idea - for whenever we returned to the idea of Nemanja and Sava, we were certain that we are on the right path", Minister Selakovic said, who is also on the board in charge of erecting the monument to Stefan Nemanja.

The Serbian Foreign Minister finds it hard to fathom that it took centuries for Serbia and its people to erect a monument to Stefan Nemanja, but that this is probably so because this famous ruler himself had built many monuments that remain unsurpassable to this day.

"No-one was able to build a new Studenica Monastery or a new Hilandar Monastery", Selakovic said and continued that, in addition to the Church of Saint Sava that took so long for many factors to align and allow its completion, the idea to build a memorial complex to Grand Prince Stefan Nemanja and its realization is also a landmark event in the cultural history of Belgrade, Serbia and Serbian people in general.

"No-one believed that this will indeed come true, but here we are today having this exceptional and above all original concept for not only a monument, but a memorial complex never seen before in the world, handed over to Belgrade, Serbian state and its people. It is not possible to honour Nemanja with just a monument, because he is so multifaceted as a figure that it calls for a complex", Minister Selakovic shared his belief. According to the Minister, the new complex is supposed to show that Serbs are finally able to demonstrate continuity and that until now and the monument to Stefan Nemanja, there were no monuments honouring any of the Serbian rulers in the city of Belgrade.

The Serbian Foreign Minister thanked all who provided assistance, but also those who criticized the construction of the monument and the monument itself, because, as he underlined, all the

criticism levelled and every attack have only further solidified the idea to bring the task to an end.

"To all citizens of Belgrade, Serbia and all Serbs across the globe, I wish to come to their Serbia and their Belgrade, as soon as this vicious pandemic is over, and stand before the Grand Prince of Serbia in the company of their children and let the memorial complex tell them a story, much like the decasyllabic poetry sung to the accompaniment of gusle was once passed down from generation to generation", Minister Selakovic said.

The Minister added that the monument to Stefan Nemanja is not big enough to show "how small those who were compelled and willing to criticize it are", that his legacy is too vast for one to comprehend, that his mission still continues, and that the monument erected in his honour is also a monument to Serbia and its people.