

# TURKEY LOOKS TO EU AFTER ELECTIONS

**Ankara ,November 05, 2002**

The Justice and Development Party (AKP), sought to play up its pro-Western, pro-market policies, vowing to send envoys to the European Union and safeguard an economic reform package

The leader of the party that won Turkey's recent national elections said he would travel to different EU countries to lobby for Turkey's bid to join the European Union.

The most important issue on our agenda is the EU," Erdogan said. "We have very limited time" until the December summit.

Erdogan's position is drastically different than that of former Islamic Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, who was forced out of power by the generals in 1997.

"If we can create a constructive, tolerant working environment and if there is respect for the constitution and clear respect for the concept of the secular republic then I think this election will be useful for Turkey," Former Economy Minister Kemal Dervis said.

But the AKP does not have the luxury of time.

Turkey needs to quickly establish market confidence and safeguard the IMF pact. Urgent issues must be tackled in the coming month in pursuit of Turkey's EU membership ambitions.

The EU executive Commission was frugal with praise Monday for the huge election victory of Turkey's Justice and Development Party, saying simply it counted on Ankara to stay the course on EU membership.

The Commission added it "expects Turkey to confirm its commitments" to comply with EU accession criteria and that it "will continue to monitor closely the progress made" in getting Turkey ready for membership talks.