

Turkey ready for EU by 2013

Saturday, 14 February 2009

Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan says his country will be prepared to join the 27-nation European Union by the year 2013.

- Turkey has launched a four-year plan aimed at reforming its economy and other areas required for the country's EU membership, Istanbul daily 'Hurriyet' quotes Babacan as saying.

- Three or four years from now Turkey will be different than it is today, the FM said.

Ankara is aiming to comply with EU accession criteria by 2013. Brussels however has not endorsed Turkey's target date.

Turkey began EU membership talks in October 2005. It

has so far opened discussions on only 10 of the 35 policy areas that candidates must successfully negotiate.

Ankara first began this process in the early 1980s

under President Turgut Ozal and other reforms aside, the biggest sticking point against its membership has been the fact that it is Muslim majority nation and would be the first Muslim country in the ranks of the EU.

- Turkey will continue implementing European Union reforms despite efforts by certain countries to slowdown the membership process, Babacan said. //02.15.09 MiNa