

Turkish Referendum Part II

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Why in news?

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Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has won a constitutional referendum (got just over 51% votes) that makes him the country's most powerful ruler since the sultans.

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What was decided in the referendum?

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- Right now Turkey's president is a largely ceremonial position but after the changes it will become a vastly powerful position as both the head of the government and head of state.

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- In 2019, should Erdogan win another term in office, he will have powers allowing him to all but ignore parliament, bypass checks on political interference in the appointment of judges, declare a state of emergency, make some laws by decree and wield a vice-like grip over the bureaucracy.

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- Also, Mr Erdogan seems very likely to win a 2019 election, if that happens, in theory, he could stay in office until 2029.

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What will it mean for Turkey?

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- Supporters say it will give strong and stable government and help Turkey face up **against terrorism, chaos** in neighbouring Syria and internal threats.

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- Opponents believe it may be the end of Turkish democracy as there are **insufficient checks on the president's power.**

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- Both sides agree it will shift power away from parliament concentrate it in the hands of the president.

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- **With EU:** Mr Erdogan accused European leaders of behaving like “Nazis” as he tried to galvanise nationalist voters during the campaign.

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- EU leaders **spoke openly of their concerns** about the constitutional changes.

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- But Turkey has made conciliatory noises towards the EU since Sunday's vote and many analysts expect the two sides will try to smooth over their differences now the referendum is over.

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- **With NATO:** The referendum campaign frayed Turkey's ties with Nato allies in Europe but its most important relationship inside Nato is with the US.

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- Donald Trump needs Turkey's cooperation in the fight against Islamic State but is wary of Turkey's hostility to America's Kurdish allies.

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