

# [***Simon Harris is installed as Ireland's new prime minister. He's the country's youngest leader***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRY-SFP1-JC5B-G00K-00000-00&context=1516831)

The Associated Press

April 9, 2024 Tuesday 7:38 PM GMT

Copyright 2024 Associated Press All Rights Reserved

**Section:** INTERNATIONAL NEWS

**Length:** 406 words

**Byline:** JILL LAWLESS, Associated Press

**Dateline:** LONDON

**Body**

LONDON — Lawmaker [*Simon Harris*](https://apnews.com/article/ireland-premier-simon-harris-leo-varadkar-d63a5d855800dcd2b121ea7b5c1d3f86) was elected Ireland's prime minister by a vote in parliament Tuesday, becoming at 37 the country’s youngest-ever leader.

Harris takes over as head of Ireland’s three-party coalition government from [*Leo Varadkar*](https://apnews.com/article/irish-taoiseach-leo-varadkar-resigns-prime-minister-1af0cbe36559c303e87094e22623a93a), who announced his surprise resignation last month. Harris, who served as higher education minister in Varadkar’s government, was the only candidate to replace him as head of the center-right Fine Gael party.

Lawmakers in the Dáil, the lower house of Ireland’s parliament, confirmed Harris as taoiseach, or prime minister, by a 88-69 vote.

He was formally appointed to the post by President Michael D. Higgins in a ceremony at the president's official residence in Dublin.

Harris was first elected to parliament at 24 and has been nicknamed the “TikTok taoiseach” – pronounced TEA-shock -- because of his fondness for communicating on social media. He faces challenges including a strained health service, soaring housing costs and an exodus of Fine Gael lawmakers, more than 10 of whom have said they will not run for reelection.

“I commit to doing everything that I can to honor the trust that you have placed in me today,” Harris said. “As taoiseach I want to bring new ideas, a new energy and a new empathy to public life.”

Varadkar was the previous youngest-ever premier when first elected at age 38, as well as Ireland’s first openly gay prime minister. Varadkar, whose mother is Irish and father is Indian, was also Ireland’s first biracial taoiseach.

Varadkar, 45, has had two spells as taoiseach — between 2017 and 2020 and [*again since December 2022*](https://apnews.com/article/politics-ireland-e57e4edf251f6ad7b58c91e9347ae081) as part of a job-share with Micheál Martin, the head of Fianna Fáil.

Varadkar officially stepped down on Monday when he handed in his letter of resignation to the president.

Varadkar told the Dáil on Tuesday that his time in ***politics*** had been the “most fulfilling and rewarding time” of his life.

“But today is the beginning of a new era for my party, a new chapter in my life and a new phase for this coalition government,” he said.

Harris has said he plans to keep the Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil and Green Party coalition government going until March 2025, when an election must be held.

Opposition parties argued that the Irish public deserves an early election.

“Another Fine Gael taoiseach is the last thing the people need,” said Mary Lou McDonald, leader of left-wing party Sinn Fein. “We need a change of leadership, we need a change of government.”

**Load-Date:** April 9, 2024

**End of Document**