Simon Harris: Ireland's Youngest Ever Leader [B1]

È un millennial, un TikToker e, da aprile, il più giovane Taoiseach (Primo ministro) della storia irlandese.

In Ireland, the Taoiseach is the head of government, and this year Simon Harris became the youngest ever Taoiseach, at the age of thirty-seven. Active in politics since he was a teenager, he has promised to prioritise rural interests, small businesses and education in his new role.

EARLY YEARS

Born in the coastal town of Greystones in County Wicklow, Harris is the **eldest child** of a taxi driver and a special needs assistant. At fifteen, he was inspired by his autistic brother Adam **to found** an autism support group. He also became a youth member of the liberal-conservative party Fine Gael, meaning 'Family (or 'Tribe') of the Irish'. Fine Gael is now part of a coalition government with two other political parties: the conservative party Fianna Fáil (meaning 'Soldiers of Destiny'), and the Green Party.

A FAST LIFE

After finishing school, Harris began a **degree course** in journalism and French at Dublin Institute of Technology. However, he left the course in his penultimate year to start a career in politics. At twenty-two, he became a **county councillor** for Wicklow, and at twenty-four, he was elected to parliament, becoming the youngest **MP** at the time. Continuing this **trend**, Harris became Ireland's youngest-ever health minister in 2016, and led the country's initial response to the Covid-19 pandemic. He later became the Minister for Justice, and then the Minister for **Further and Higher Education**. "In many ways, my career has been a bit **odd**…," he once told the Irish magazine Hot Press. "Life came at me a lot faster than I expected it to."

THE TIKTOK TAOISEACH

After the former Taoiseach and Fine Gael leader Leo Varadkar resigned in March, Harris immediately became the new leader of the party and, on 9 April, he became the youngest Taoiseach ever. Known as the TikTok Taoiseach, he — like most millennials — is very active on social media. He has over two million likes on TikTok and hundreds of thousands of followers on X and Instagram, and posts almost every day.

Glossary

- **MP** = deputato, parlamentare (Member of Parliament)
- **trend** = tendenza
- **Further and Higher Education** = istruzione complementare e superiore
- **odd** = strana
- **eldest child** = figlio maggiore
- **to found** = fondare
- **degree course** = corso di laurea
- **county councillor** = consigliere