

# Italy becomes first country to make climate change lessons compulsory for all children

Chiara Giordano

[Italy](#) is to become the first country to make [climate change](#) lessons compulsory for schoolchildren.

[Lorenzo Fioramonti](#), the education minister, has announced all state schools will dedicate almost one hour per week to climate change issues from the start of the next academic year.

Traditional subjects, such as geography, mathematics and physics, will also be studied from the perspective of sustainable development, said the former university economics professor.

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The minister said: "The entire ministry is being changed to make sustainability and climate the centre of the education model.

"I want to make the Italian education system the first education system that puts the environment and society at the core of everything we learn in school."

Mr Fioramonti, from the anti-establishment [Five Star Movement](#), was criticised by the opposition in September for encouraging students to skip school and take part in climate protests.

The 42-year-old, who has written several books arguing gross



Peso:12-56%,14-68%,15-74%

domestic product should no longer be used as the main measure of a country's economic success, has been targetted by right-wing opposition ever since he became a minister in the coalition government between Five Star and the centre-left Democratic Party.

His proposals for new taxes on airline tickets, plastic and sugary foods to raise funds for education were strongly attacked by critics who said Italians were already over-taxed.

He then sparked fury from conservatives when he suggested crucifixes should be removed from Italian classrooms to create a more inclusive environment for non-Christians.

But despite the criticism, the government's 2020 budget presented to parliament this week included both the plastic tax and a new tax on sugary drinks.

"I was ridiculed by everyone and treated like a village idiot, and now a few months later the government is using two of those proposals and it seems to me more and more people are convinced it is the way to go," he said.

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Surveys showed 70-80 per cent of Italians backed taxing sugar and flights, he said, adding that coalition lawmakers had told him they would table budget amendments to introduce his proposal to raise air ticket prices before the budget is approved by the end of the year.

Mr Fioramonti said targeted taxes of this kind were a way of discouraging types of consumption which were harmful to the environment or individuals, while generating resources for schools,



welfare or lowering income tax.

He has also suggested other levies on various types of gambling and on profits from oil drilling.

His progressive positions on the economy and the environment are the antithesis of Matteo Salvini's hard-right League, which has overtaken Five Star to become Italy's most popular party, with more than 30 per cent of voter support.

Mr Fioramonti said: "I want to represent the Italy that stands against all the things that Salvini does.

"We have to build a different narrative and not be afraid of saying something Salvini may not like, because that's why we exist."

*Additional reporting by Reuters.*



*Italy's education minister Lorenzo Fioramonti during an interview in Rome on Monday (Reuters)*

