

To: Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]
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Subject: Italian minister: G-7 'distant' on climate change

By Sara Stefanini

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BOLOGNA, Italy — G-7 ministers are in "complete agreement" on all the environmental issues they're discussing today and Monday — except for climate change, Italian Environment Minister Gian Luca Galletti told reporters today.

The two-day G-7 environment ministers gathering comes 10 days after President Donald Trump confirmed that he would withdraw the U.S. from the Paris climate agreement.

But even before his announcement, American resistance to tackling climate change emerged as a sticking point at the G-7 leaders' summit last month and the G-7 energy meeting in April, where the ministers failed to agree on a communiqué.

"The positions, especially on Paris, are distant positions," said Galletti, host of the environment meeting.

"Here in Bologna we're doing very important work, we're mending. We'll only know at the end what result it will have, but we have already obtained a result because we continue to talk, to identify solutions and common objectives," he added. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt is in Bologna representing the U.S. but is leaving this afternoon.

Galletti said his early departure was always planned because of a meeting with Trump.

"The administrator has had bilateral meetings with a number of our G-7 partners discussing the importance of engagement and environmental issues including conservation, food waste, climate, marine litter and resource efficiency," Lincoln Ferguson, Pruitt's spokesman, told POLITICO by email.

Patricia Espinosa, head of the United Nations' climate change secretariat, told reporters that Pruitt said the U.S. wants to continue to make efforts to combat climate change and engage with the secretariat.

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