

Transatlantic Energy Outlook: Prospects for Cooperation between Italy and the United States

Meeting with Jarrod Agen, Executive Director of the White House National Energy Dominance Council

Rome, Center for American Studies | September 3, 2026

1. Context and objectives of the meeting

On September 3, WEC Italy and the Center for American Studies convened a meeting in Rome with Jarrod Agen, Executive Director of the White House National Energy Dominance Council, to discuss U.S. energy policy priorities and prospects for energy cooperation between Italy and the United States.

The meeting brought together representatives of Italian companies, industry associations, the financial sector and academia, with the participation of representatives of the U.S. Embassy in Rome. Following welcoming remarks by Giusy De Sio, Deputy Director of the Center for American Studies, a video message from WEC Italy Chair Marco Margheri and an introduction by WEC Italy Vice Chair Riccardo Pozzi, the exchange with Jarrod Agen took the form of a conversation moderated by Mario De Pizzo, followed by a discussion with participants.

The meeting formed part of the transatlantic dialogue promoted by WEC Italy and provided an opportunity to maintain direct engagement with the U.S. Administration at a time of profound change in the global energy landscape. Agen's presence in Rome offered an opportunity to discuss U.S. priorities alongside the needs and expertise of the Italian energy sector, identifying several areas for practical follow-up.

The central outcome was the opportunity to strengthen the Italy–U.S. energy partnership through an agenda combining security of supply with industrial cooperation, infrastructure investment and technological innovation.

2. Strengthening the transatlantic energy relationship

The opening remarks highlighted the need to develop a long-term perspective for the transatlantic energy relationship, in light of the growing importance of energy in international affairs.

The contribution of U.S. LNG supplies to European and Italian energy security was highlighted within a broader framework of cooperation: investment, critical minerals, nuclear energy, fusion and geothermal energy all offer opportunities to build on the two countries' complementary strengths.

Equal emphasis was placed on the strategic value of an energy partnership grounded in complementary expertise and the mutual strengthening of industrial and technological capabilities. Cooperation between Italy and the United States extends from security of supply to investment and innovation, offering opportunities for joint development in third-country markets as well.

The relationship between energy, competitiveness and industrial policy was also highlighted, emphasizing that Italy and the United States face common challenges despite differing national approaches. Among these, the growth in electricity demand driven by artificial intelligence, data centers and industrial development makes sustained dialogue between institutions and industry particularly valuable.

In this context, reference was made to the prospect of continuing the discussion in Washington as part of ongoing energy cooperation between Italy and the United States.

3. Energy security, diversification and new infrastructure

The discussion focused on the growing convergence between energy security and national security. Concentrated supplies, vulnerable trade routes and dependence on a limited number of infrastructure assets are risk factors that call for a coordinated response among allied countries.

The exchange on tensions in the Middle East and the Strait of Hormuz highlighted the need to expand alternative routes for transporting energy resources. Particular attention was given to the prospect of developing additional connections between the Gulf countries, the Mediterranean and European markets, through infrastructure capable of reducing exposure to individual transit chokepoints.

This was recognized as requiring action on several fronts: political agreements among the countries concerned, the mobilization of capital and the involvement of companies with the capabilities to deliver and operate complex projects.

The issue is of direct interest to Italy, given both its geographic position and its industrial expertise. The discussion highlighted the contribution Italian engineering can make to the development of international energy infrastructure, drawing on its experience in delivering onshore and offshore projects.

4. LNG and Italy's role in European security of supply

LNG was one of the main themes of the discussion. U.S. priorities for expanding export capacity and accelerating permitting processes were outlined, alongside the need for adequate import infrastructure and interconnections in destination markets.

The discussion highlighted that increased gas availability must be matched by the capacity to transport it to demand centers. In this context, several entry points into the European market and connections to Central and Eastern Europe were discussed, with references to Greece, Croatia, Poland and Lithuania.

Italy was explicitly identified as one of the potential entry points to be further developed, depending on infrastructure availability and the ability to reach the relevant markets. Questions from Italian industry representatives helped clarify the country's role in the European system, including through its transmission, regasification and storage infrastructure.

Another topic was the balance between spot market purchases and long-term contracts. The latter were presented as a useful means of improving supply predictability and supporting investment, while the discussion also reflected European concerns about energy costs and the need to maintain effective supply diversification.

The discussion thus outlined an agenda encompassing resource availability, commercial terms, infrastructure and energy affordability for businesses and consumers.

5. Electricity demand, grids and opportunities for industrial cooperation

Growing energy demand associated with artificial intelligence and data centers was recognized as a shared challenge, with implications for technological competitiveness, generation capacity planning and grid reliability.

The discussion explored the need to accompany new demand with investment capable of preventing congestion and pressure on electricity costs. Models linking data center development to new generation capacity were also discussed, including their potential contribution to power system resilience.

Grid modernization is an area of particular interest for bilateral cooperation. The discussion highlighted opportunities offered by upgrading transmission lines, reconductoring and adopting existing technologies, whose deployment also depends on operators' investment decisions and incentives.

In this context, Italian and European experience and expertise were recognized as examples of excellence in this field. The discussion therefore identified opportunities for cooperation that directly draw on the industrial and technological capabilities of Italian companies.

6. Nuclear energy and other energy generation technologies

The discussion identified nuclear energy as a major area of shared interest, with particular attention to small modular reactors and advanced technologies.

The need to adapt permitting and regulatory frameworks to technological advances was emphasized, moving beyond approaches designed for earlier generations of plants. Greater alignment among partner countries could support the replication of solutions, supply chain development and progressive industrial scale-up.

The discussion distinguished immediate energy supply needs from the longer-term deployment of new technologies: natural gas was seen as an important component in meeting near-term demand, while advanced nuclear energy was placed within a longer-term development horizon.

Alongside nuclear energy and fusion, geothermal and hydropower were highlighted as additional areas for expanding cooperation. Despite differing approaches to individual energy sources, the discussion identified substantial scope for joint work on reliable generation, innovation and the application of industrial expertise.

7. Critical minerals and supply chain security

Critical minerals were addressed as a cross-cutting issue affecting energy, industrial and technological security.

The discussion highlighted vulnerabilities arising from supply chain concentration, particularly in processing and refining. Diversifying extraction alone is insufficient to reduce dependencies if subsequent processing stages remain concentrated in a limited number of countries.

The discussion therefore emphasized the need to combine mining investment with the development of processing capacity and partnerships among allied countries. This approach creates opportunities for cooperation encompassing industrial projects, financial instruments and infrastructure connections.

Participants' questions also linked critical minerals to economic corridors and cooperation with U.S. institutions, highlighting an interest in integrating supply chain security with infrastructure development.

8. Transport, biofuels and diverse technological solutions

Contributions from Italian industry representatives prompted a closer examination of sustainable mobility and the role of different technologies in energy security and decarbonization.

The roles of biofuels, renewable liquid fuels and renewable gases were discussed, together with prospects for integrating different energy carriers. A willingness to continue the exchange on biofuels emerged, including in view of their contribution to diversifying energy sources and increasing overall fuel availability.

The discussion also addressed refining capacity constraints and their implications for prices. This broadened the exchange from oil and gas availability to the ability of industrial supply chains to transform resources into usable products and meet market needs.

9. Engagement focused on projects and tangible results

A defining feature of the meeting was the emphasis on cooperation aimed at delivering projects and agreements.

In closing, the National Energy Dominance Council expressed its willingness to serve as a point of contact for companies and stakeholders interested in putting forward initiatives, facilitating engagement with the relevant U.S. departments and agencies, including the Department of Energy and the Department of State.

This provides an important basis for follow-up: alongside discussions on policy priorities, there is an opportunity to engage on specific projects and issues, assess their feasibility and identify the institutional involvement required.

References to multilateral meetings, starting with the G20 Energy meeting in Houston, were likewise accompanied by an emphasis on advancing concrete partnerships and agreements.