

EUROPE BUSINESS NEWS | March 22, 2013, 12:07 p.m. ET

Enel Looking to Buy Extra Coal from Colombia, North America

By LIAM MOLONEY

ROME--Italy's largest utility by capacity, Enel SpA, is looking to buy several million metric tons of coal from North America and Colombia, a senior executive said Friday.

"As a result of the shale gas in the U.S., coal production from North and South America have freed up," Filippo Mancini, head of Enel's generation and energy management division, told Dow Jones Newswires on the sidelines of a conference organized by Italian coal association Assocarboni in Rome.

"We are looking at buying some extra million tons of coal from Colombia and North America," he said.

Enel's Italian coal-fired plants are basically running at full capacity as the low price of the fossil fuel makes electricity generated from them profitable, Mr. Mancini said.

"We work well with coal, and it is thanks to it that we are seeing lower electricity prices in Italy," he said.

According to Assocarboni, 60% of Italian electricity generation in 2012 came from gas, which is almost all imported, while coal contributed to 12% of Italy's energy mix last year.

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