

## ITALY

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Italy is experiencing a major change in the administration procedure concerning the extractive industry. Most of the functions which were held by central government are being passed on to the regional governments. Statistics, therefore, are hampered by these new developments but through the efforts of the Mining Association more data is likely to be available next year. Among the 20 regional governments of the country some are more advanced with statistical set up than others and it will take sometime before they are all comparable.

Production of industrial minerals, however, did not change significantly from the previous year and a fluctuation of some 5%, up or down, could be considered reasonable. As far as oil and gas are concerned, the authorisation of permits is still in the hands of the central government and the relative data are as follows:

Some 16.8 billion m<sup>3</sup> of gas were produced in 2000 (17.6 billion m<sup>3</sup> in 1999), equivalent to 24% of actual consumption. Available resources are 292 billion m<sup>3</sup>.

Oil production amounted to 4.6 Mt in 2000 (5.0 Mt in 1999) equivalent to 5% of consumption. Available reserves are 200 Mt.

This information was obtained during the general assembly of the Italian Mining Association (May 30, 2001) in Rome.

Metal mining in Italy is currently confined to activities in Sardinia where Perth-based Gold Mines of Sardinia Ltd (GMS), began mining gold at Furtei in 1997. In the following year it produced around 35,000 oz. Output dipped below 20,000 oz in 1999 but exceeded 14,300 oz in the first half of 2000. Oxide resource is limited but a significant sulphide

resource exists and is estimated at 6.2 Mt at 1.52 g/t Au, representing in excess of 300,000 oz of gold. A sulphide circuit was being constructed.

The company is planning a second mining operation at Osilo in the north of Sardinia where a resource of some 1.66 Mt at 7 g/t Au has been outlined.

GMS has reported high-grade gold and copper drill intersections at its Su Coru prospect, a new epithermal gold discovery at Siliqua and encouraging exploration results at Scano Monti Ferru.

Apart from the gold-mining operations at Furtei, metal mining is now practically non-existent in Italy. However, the country is still a significant producer of metals in terms of smelting and refining imported ores.

In September last year, the 100,000 t/y capacity Crotona smelter in the south of the country was sold by Enirisorse to Zincocalabro SpA. The new owner plans to develop an operation producing some 180,000 t/y of electrolytic zinc.

The Porto Vesme complex has an annual capacity to produce 180,000 t of zinc and 135,000 t of lead. In 1999 it produced 173,000 t and 120,000 t respectively. Last year, it lost about 5,000–6,000 t of lead production because of a problem at its Kivcet-type lead smelter which affected output for a two-week period.

Alcoa Inc. of the US operates two aluminium smelters in Italy, one at Porto Vesme and the other at Fusina in northeast Italy. Their combined output amounts to some 187,000 t/y of primary aluminium.