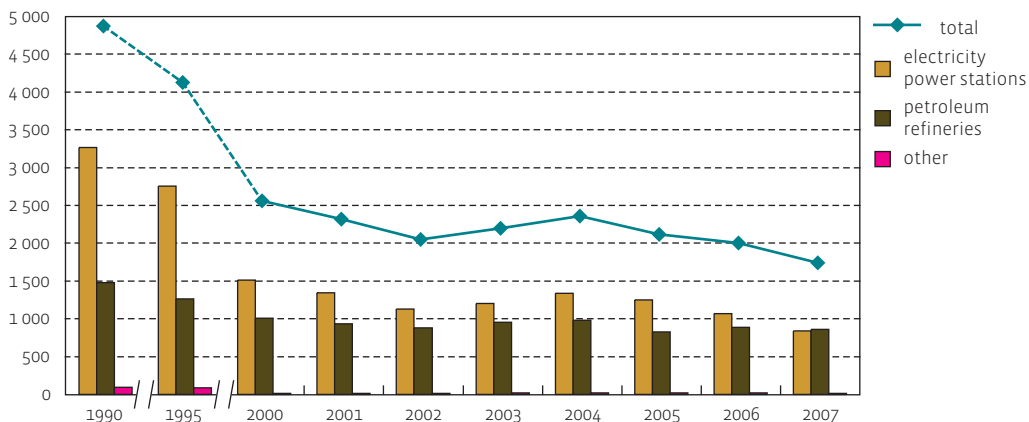


acidifying emissions (million Aeq)



Source: MIRA based on VITO and VMM

Acidifying substances remain under emission ceilings

The total emissions of acidifying substances by the energy sector decreased in 2007 by 65 % compared to 1990, and by 32 % compared to 2000. The share of the power plants in the acidifying emissions of the sector was 49 % in 2007, that of the petroleum refineries 50 %. Acidifying emissions of gas companies represented 0.7 % of the total. The SO₂ share was 70 % in 2007, and that of NO_x 30 %. The NH₃ emissions by the energy sector are negligible. Most of the NO_x emissions of the energy sector come from the power plants (69 %), petroleum refineries have on the other hand the largest share of SO₂ emissions (59 %).

In 2007 the emissions were again lower than the absolute ceilings specified in the environmental policy agreement with the electricity sector for the period 2005-2009. In 2008 these ceilings were lowered from 781 million Aeq for SO₂ to 234 million Aeq and from 543 million Aeq for NO_x to 304 million Aeq. Keeping to these tighter ceilings will require an additional effort, especially for the SO₂ emissions. This also means more than a halving of the SO₂ emissions of 2007. For the petroleum refineries the emission limit values for SO₂ and NO_x were tightened in 2004 in VLAREM II. These values are based on emission ceilings for SO₂ of 312 million Aeq and for NO_x from 141 million Aeq for all petroleum refineries combined by 2010.

The gradual decrease in the emissions is mainly the result of less sulphur-rich coal and fuel oil and the partial switch to sulphur-free natural gas. The increase in the SO₂ emissions between 2003 and 2005 is mostly attributable to the (renewed) increase in the fuel oil consumption and the combustion of coal with a higher sulphur content by the power plants.