

NAPCP – Public-friendly Consultation Version/Summary

Background

In the past decades, the Netherlands – like all other countries in the EU – has significantly reduced the emissions of air pollutants. An immediate consequence of this is the improvement of air quality and a healthier living environment. However, ambient air must and can be even cleaner which is partly achieved through European policy. A section of this entails the European National Emission Ceilings Directive (NEC Directive). This states by what percentage the annual emissions of 5 air pollutants must be reduced to for each country in the EU. These include, sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), ammonia (NH₃), particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and volatile hydrocarbons (NMVOC). The NEC Directive aims to contribute to European air quality objectives in a cost-effective manner. When determining the reduction commitments per Member States, cost-effectiveness was an important starting point with the obvious technical feasibility and therefore, the obligations differ per country. In compliance with the NEC Directive, there has been a reduction in the negative health impacts of air pollution and premature deaths by almost 50% between now and 2030 [European Commission, 2016]. Compared to 2005, the percentage that must be achieved as a minimum will initially apply for the period 2020-2029 but will be tightened from 2030 onwards.

The NEC Directive determines that each Member State shall draw up a national programme indicating that the obligations of the NEC Directives are currently being met and will continue to do so in the future. The national NEC programme should be updated every four years. On April 1st, 2019, the Netherlands submitted their first national NEC programme. The NEC programme is drawn up according to a mandatory format established by the European Commission.

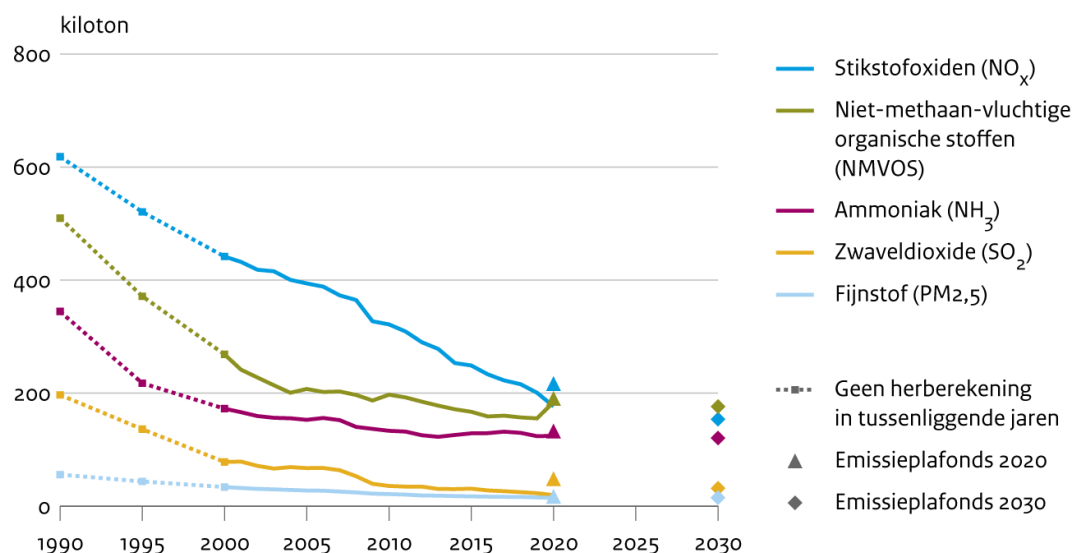
The Netherlands continues to comply with the emission reduction obligations under the NEC Directive

Since the environmental policy was introduced, the Netherlands has been taking measures to limit emissions of air pollutants in various sectors; for example, by imposing emission requirements on industry and agriculture companies. Rules for many other sectors also come from the immediately effective European rules, such as the Euro/EURO standard setting for road traffic or the implementation of European directives in national regulations (such as the NEC Directive). There are also judicial regulations for the emissions of heating installations in homes, greenhouse horticulture and for all types of fuels; a maximum of sulphur content. The air policies and measures in place have contributed to a 60-80% reduction in emissions of the five substances regulated under the NEC Directive since 1990. The figure below illustrates this substantial reduction [Compendium for the Living Environment, 20220].

“Emissions of air pollutants according to the EU NECD”

Emissies van Luchtverontreinigende stoffen volgens de EU NECD

Samenstelling volgens EU-Directive 2016/2284



Bron: Emissieregistratie

RIVM/feb22
www.clo.nl/nl018327

The most recent figures of the Emission Registration (RIVM) show that the Netherlands has achieved the set emission caps of 2020 in 2020 and 2021.

On 28 February 2023, the Dutch Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) issues the report “Estimated developments in national emissions of air pollutants 2023” as a side publication to the Climate and Energy Outlook 2022. This rapport shows that it is more than realistic, that with the established and intended policy, the Netherlands will also comply with the emission reduction connections of 2030. The report describes what the established and intended policy consists of. For each substance, we worked with a range within which the final emission is most likely to decrease. This range outlines the possible deviation from the most likely outcome. The ranges also show that for all 5 air pollutants, with the “established and intended policy”, the emission reduction obligations under the NEC Directive will be almost certainly met.

New developments in air policy

Policies and measures recently put on the agenda but still under discussion, in addition to those already in place or agreed on, have not been considered in the process to project the future emissions. These include measures in agriculture (such as the national termination of certain livestock farms, the reduction of protein content in food for dairy cattle), industry (such as implementing permits at the lowest end of the BREF-range, as much as possible), aviation (electric taxiing), shipping (more power at shore), road transport (Euro 7/VII) and

mobile equipment (cleaner and emission-free construction). Moreover, the government announced in the letter of 25 November 2022, that, in the context of the nitrogen policy, it is necessary that – in addition to the approach for agricultural companies – the so-called “top high-emitters” accelerate their transition to a sustainable business operation. This is expected to imply 50-60 companies, mostly from the basic industry, the energy industry, and the waste processing sector. And especially due to the increasing cost of energy, it is not unlikely that several energy-intensive companies will eventually terminate their activities in the Netherlands, for instance in the fertilizer and aluminium production sector and in greenhouse horticulture. If the policies and measures that are now on the agenda for political discussion and decision making will become effective and the developments mentioned above continue, there will be a considerable chance that the final emissions in 2025 and 2030 will be even lower than the projections based on established and proposed policy now indicate.

Climate

Climate policy and air policy have various possibilities of reinforcing each other. Energy savings and sustainable energy options such as solar and wind energy, lead to lower emissions of both greenhouse gases and air pollutants. The government has come up with a proposal for an initial amendment to the Climate Act, whereby the target of reducing emission with 95% in 2050 will become stricter and be set as an obligation for the Netherlands to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2050 in accordance with the European Climate Act. The target of a 49% reduction rate in 2030 will be replaced by a target of at least 55%. Substantial investments are required to achieve the climate goals from the Coalition Agreement and the transition towards climate neutrality by 2050. The climate and transition fund of 35 billion euros up to and including 2030 meets the needed investment. These resources are additional to already existing arrangements, such as the SDE++, and is meant for CO₂ gas free power stations, the construction of nuclear power stations, stimulating (hybrid) heat pumps, the National Insulation Programme, making social housing more sustainable, early upscaling phases of innovative initiatives, sustainable energy infrastructure and tailor made sustainable transition agreements between the competent authorities and certain industrial companies.

Consultation of stakeholders and public

During its preparation, the NEC program was discussed with all relevant ministries, the environmental services, and representatives of the industry. It has also been discussed with partners from within the Benelux. Furthermore, in accordance with Article 6, paragraph 5 of the NEC guideline, this program is open to the public for commentary, with use of Section 3.4 of the General Administrative Law Act. The NEC program was then submitted to the House of Representatives. The final version of the NEC program will be published on the website www.platformparticipatie.nl and www.rijksoverheid.nl, pursuant to Article 12 paragraph 1 of the NEC guideline.