

Bathing water results 2011 – Belgium

1. Reporting and assessment

This report gives a general overview of bathing water quality in Belgium for the 2011 bathing season. The Walloon Region has reported under the Directive 2006/7/EC since 2010 and sent historical data with two parameters of this Directive for the years 2007-2009. The Flemish Region reported under the Directive 2006/7/EC in 2011 and sent historical data with two parameters of this Directive for the years 2008-2010.

When samples of intestinal enterococci and *Escherichia coli* for bathing water are available for three or four consecutive years, the assessment is done according to assessment rules of Directive 2006/7/EC. The frequency of sampling is set out in Annex IV of the Directive. Including a sample to be taken shortly before the start of the bathing season, the minimum number of samples taken per bathing season is four. However, only three samples are sufficient when the bathing season does not exceed eight weeks or the region is subject to special geographical constraints. Sampling dates are to be distributed throughout the bathing season.

Strictly speaking, there should be one pre-season sample and the interval between sampling should not exceed one month. Since a late start of monitoring and/or low frequency do not necessarily indicate unsatisfactory bathing water quality, it has been accepted that the first sample in the 2011 season could be taken shortly after the start of the season (but within 10 days after the start), and the maximum interval between two samples taken into account is 41 days. The number of samples for the period 2008-2011 should be at least 16. These criteria are described as less strict. In the opposite, under the strict rules, pre-season samples should be available in all four years, the interval between sampling in the 2011 season should have not exceeded one month, but 41 days were acceptable for the 2008, 2009 and 2010 seasons. In this report a quality class under the strict rules and less strict criteria are presented.

Bathing waters quality classified according to the Directive 2006/7/EC are 'excellent', 'good', 'sufficient' and 'poor'. Some bathing waters cannot be classified according to their quality but are instead classified as 'closed', 'new' (classification not yet possible), 'insufficiently sampled' or 'changes' (bathing water is not new and classification not yet possible since a set of monitoring data is incomplete).

2. Length of bathing season and number of bathing waters

The bathing season lasted 122 days, from 20 May to 18 September 2011, for coastal bathing waters. Inland bathing waters opened between 1 May and 15 June 2011 and closed on 15 or 18 September 2011.

A total of 121 bathing waters were monitored in Belgium during the 2011 bathing season, of which 42 were coastal bathing waters and 79 were inland bathing waters (18 on rivers; 61 on lakes). No coastal and two inland bathing waters were reported as de-listed (permanently closed) compared to the previous year.

With 121 reported bathing waters Belgium accounts for about 0.6 % of the reported bathing waters of the European Union.

3. Bathing water quality

The results of the bathing water quality in Belgium for the period 1990-2010 as reported in the past reporting years and for the bathing season of 2011 are presented in Figure 1. The previous reports are

available on the European Commission's bathing water quality website (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-bathing/index_en.html; Water/ Bathing Water/ 2005-2011 reports) and the European Environment Agency's bathing water website (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/status-and-monitoring/state-of-bathing-water>; reports for the 2008, 2009 and 2010 bathing seasons).

The graphs show the classification under the Directive 76/160/EEC and during transition period, for coastal and inland bathing waters from 1990 to 2010:

- The percentage of bathing waters that comply with the guide values (class CG, blue line);
- The percentage of bathing waters that comply with the mandatory values (class CI, green line);
- The percentage of bathing waters that do not comply with the mandatory values (class NC, red line);
- The percentage of bathing waters that are banned or closed (class B, grey line).

The same graphs show the classification under the Directive 2006/7/EC, for coastal and inland bathing waters for 2011:

- The percentage of bathing waters that have excellent quality (dark blue bar);
- The percentage of bathing waters that have good quality (light blue bar);
- The percentage of bathing waters that have sufficient quality (green bar);
- The percentage of bathing waters that have poor quality (red bar);
- The percentage of bathing waters that are closed (grey bar);
- The percentage of bathing waters that are insufficiently sampled, new or with changes (orange bar).

Table 1 and Table 2 show results of bathing water quality for coastal, inland and all bathing waters from 2008 on as assessed in the previous annual reports and under the Directive 2006/7/EC for the 2011 season. For the year 2010 results applying the less strict rules are presented if they differ from results applying the strict rules.

A map given in Appendix 1 shows the location and quality of the bathing waters.

Coastal bathing waters

For the purpose of commenting the improvement or deterioration of bathing water quality from 2010, excellent quality is compared with compliance with the guide values; good quality and sufficient quality are compared with compliance with the mandatory values and not the guide values; and poor quality is compared with not compliant with mandatory values.

In Belgium, 40.5 % of the coastal bathing waters were of excellent quality in 2011. This is an increase of 14.3 % compared to the previous year when 26.2 % of the bathing waters met the guide values. A total of 22 bathing waters (52.4 %) were of good quality and three bathing waters (7.1 %) were of sufficient quality compared to 31 bathing waters compliant with the mandatory values and not the guide values (73.8 %) in 2010. No bathing waters (0.0 %) had poor quality, as well as no bathing waters were non-compliant with the mandatory values (0.0 %) in 2010. No bathing waters (0.0 %) had to be closed during the bathing season, the same as in 2010.

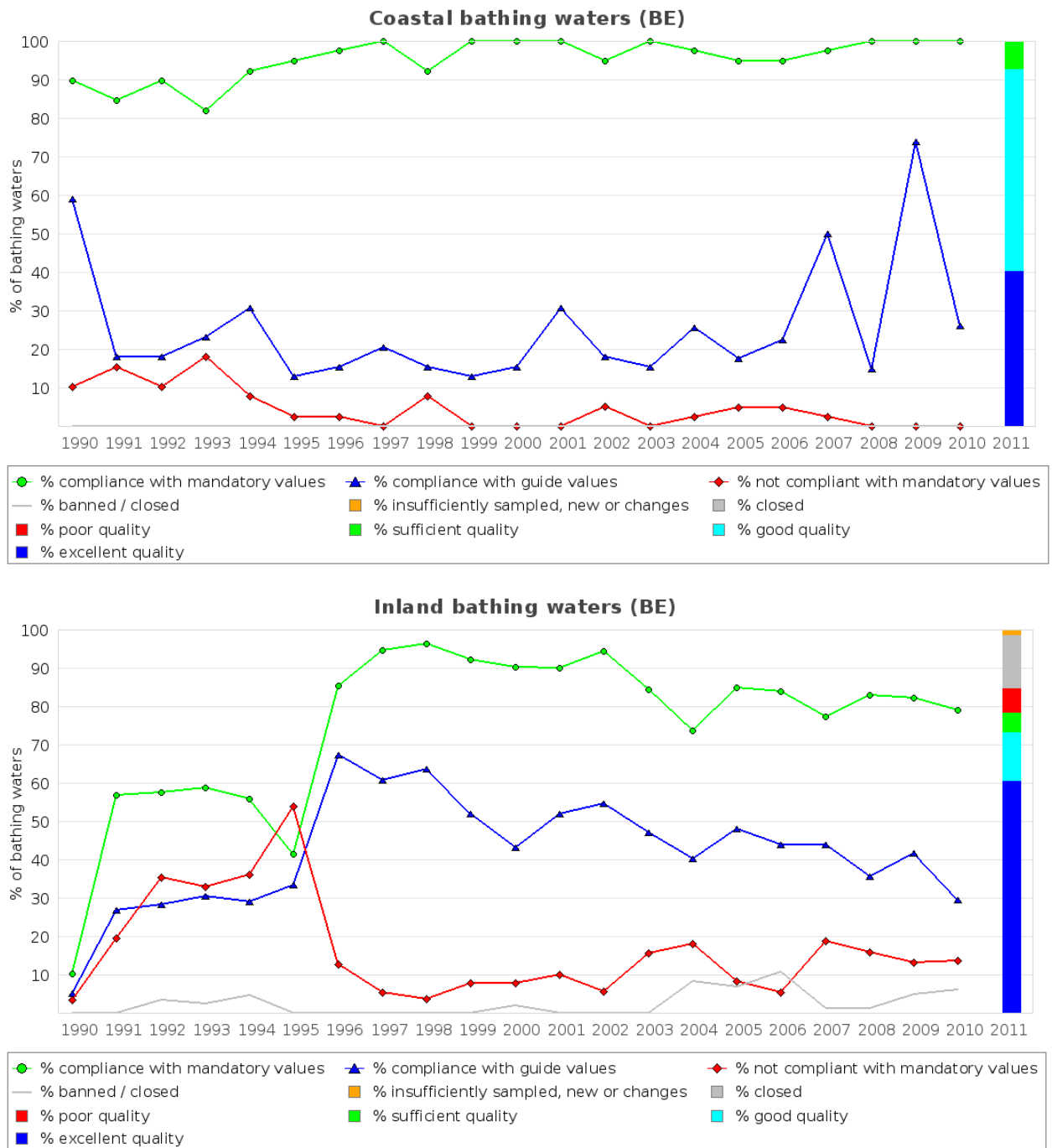
For comparison since the start of the reporting please see Figure 1.

Inland bathing waters

Some 60.8 % of the inland bathing waters were of excellent quality in 2011. This is an increase of 31.2 % compared to the previous year when 29.6 % of the bathing waters met the guide values. A total of 10 bathing waters (12.7 %) were of good quality and four bathing waters (5.1 %) were of sufficient quality compared to 40 bathing waters compliant with the mandatory values and not the guide values (49.4 %) in 2010. Five bathing waters (6.3 %) had poor quality and 11 bathing waters (13.9 %) were classified as closed compared to 11 bathing waters non-compliant with the mandatory values (13.6 %) and five closed bathing waters (6.2 %) in 2010 respectively. One bathing water (1.3 %) was classified as bathing water with changes.

For comparison since the start of the reporting please see Figure 1.

Figure 1: Results of bathing water quality in Belgium from 1990 to 2011



Note: Data until 2008 is available in the previous reports at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-bathing/index_en.html; Water/Bathing Water/ 2005-2011 reports.

Table 1: Results of bathing water quality in Belgium from 2008 to 2010. Assessment under Directive 76/160/EEC and during transition period.

BE												
	Year	Total number of bathing waters	Compliance with guide and mandatory values*		Compliance with mandatory values		Not compliant		Banned/closed		Insufficiently sampled or not sampled	
			number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Coastal bathing waters	2008	40	6	15.0	40	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2009	42	31	73.8	42	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2010	42	11	26.2	42	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2011											
Inland bathing waters	2008	76	27	35.5	63	82.9	12	15.8	1	1.3	0	0.0
	2009	84	35	41.7	69	82.1	11	13.1	4	4.8	0	0.0
	2010	81	24	29.6	64	79.0	11	13.6	5	6.2	1	1.2
	2011											
All bathing waters	2008	116	33	28.4	103	88.8	12	10.3	1	0.9	0	0.0
	2009	126	66	52.4	111	88.1	11	8.7	4	3.2	0	0.0
	2010	123	35	28.5	106	86.2	11	8.9	5	4.1	1	0.8
	2011											

*Bathing waters which were compliant with the guide values were also compliant with the mandatory values for five parameters under the Directive 76/160/EEC or the mandatory value for *Escherichia coli* in the Walloon Region (2010).

Table 2: Results of bathing water quality in Belgium for 2010 and 2011. Assessment under Directive 2006/7/EC.

BE																		
	Year/Total number of bathing waters	Excellent quality		Good quality		Sufficient quality		Poor quality		Closed		Insufficiently sampled		New		Changes		
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Coastal bathing waters	2009																	
	2010																	
	2011	42	17	40.5	22	52.4	3	7.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2011 ^(s)	42	17	40.5	22	52.4	3	7.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Inland bathing waters	2009																	
	2010*	36	9	25.0	8	22.2	0	0.0	10	27.8	5	13.9	4	11.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2011	79	48	60.8	10	12.7	4	5.1	5	6.3	11	13.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.3
	2011 ^(s)	79	48	60.8	10	12.7	4	5.1	5	6.3	11	13.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.3
All bathing waters	2009																	
	2010*	36	9	25.0	8	22.2	0	0.0	10	27.8	5	13.9	4	11.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2011	121	65	53.7	32	26.4	7	5.8	5	4.1	11	9.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.8
	2011 ^(s)	121	65	53.7	32	26.4	7	5.8	5	4.1	11	9.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.8

*For the year 2010 results for the Walloon Region are presented.

The Flemish Region sent short-term pollution events in historical data for 2009 and 2010, while the Walloon Region sent no short-term pollution events in historical data for the years 2007-2009.

^(s)Strict rules applied (see Chapter 1 of this report).

4. Important information as provided by the Belgian authorities

The Belgian authorities have reported significant management measures and reasons for changes (Table 3). In Table 3 short-term pollution and abnormal situation duration is also given. Additional information is provided in separate documents as follows:

Flemish Region

(http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/be/eu/bathing/envtbq1eq/Verklarende_brief_aanduiding_zwemwateren_2011.doc; http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/be/eu/nbwd/envtunntg/Annex_to_ManMeas.doc);

Walloon Region

(http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/be/eu/nbwd/envtddiw/Annex_to_Change.doc;

http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/be/eu/bathing/envtzetyg/Annex_to_ManMeas_corrige.doc (restricted access to public); bathing water profiles: <http://aquabact.environnement.wallonie.be>).

Table 3: Information on management measures and reasons for changes for the 2011 season as reported by the Belgian authorities

Unique Identification Code of Bathing Water	Bathing Water Name	River Basin District Name	Bathing Water Category	Description of Management Measures	Closed*	Classification by National Authorities**	Short term pollution period(s)
BE410480	De Vijvers Prins De Merode - Scherpenheuvel-Zichem	Scheldt	lake	Permanently closed. Het domein is al 2 jaar gesloten waardoor de vergunning voor het uitbaten van een zwemvijver vervallen is. Ook in 2011 zal het domein gesloten blijven.	YP		
BE2400022000000B04	La Plage de Renipont	Scheldt	lake	In a separate document.	N	1	
BE3200001000000E02	Le Lac de Claire Fontaine	Meuse	lake	In a separate document.	YT	3	
BE3200012000000E05	Le Plan d'eau de la Marlette	Scheldt	lake	In a separate document.	N	4	2011-06-21 - 2011-06-28
BE3300007000000E03	Le Grand large à Nimy	Scheldt	lake	In a separate document.	YT	1	
BE3700001000000E04	Le Grand large à Péronnes	Scheldt	lake	In a separate document.	YT	3	2011-07-12 - 2011-07-19, 2011-08-23 - 2011-08-30
BE4300005000000F02	Le Lac de Bütgenbach	Meuse	lake	In a separate document.	N	1	
BE4300009000000F05	La Hoëgne à Royompré	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	YT	4	2011-09-06 - 2011-09-13
BE4300018000000F03	Les Etangs de Recht	Meuse	lake	In a separate document.	N	1	
BE4300024000000F01	Le Lac de Robertville	Meuse	lake	In a separate document.	N	1	Abnormal situation: 2011-06-15 - 2011-09-15
BE6200007000000H06	Le Lac de Chérapont	Meuse	lake	In a separate document.	N	2	
BE6300004000000H23	L'Ourthe à Maboge	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	N	2	
BE6400002000000H19	La Semois à Bouillon (pont de la Poulie)	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	YT	4	
BE6400002000000H34	La Semois à Bouillon (pont de France)	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	N	2	
BE6400004000000H16	La Semois à Herbeumont	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	N	2	2011-06-06 - 2011-06-14, 2011-08-08 - 2011-08-17
BE6400007000000H03	Le Lac de Neufchâteau	Meuse	lake	In a separate document.	YT	4	
BE6400012000000H05	Le Centre Sportif de Libramont	Meuse	lake	In a separate document.	YT	2	2011-06-20 - 2011-06-27
BE6500001000000H07	La Semois à Chiny	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	N	4	2011-07-18 - 2011-07-25, 2011-08-08 - 2011-08-17
BE6500006000000H02	Le Centre Sportif de Saint-Léger	Meuse	lake	In a separate document.	YT	1	2011-06-20 - 2011-06-27, 2011-08-22 - 2011-08-29
BE6500008000000H01	La Vallée du Rabais	Meuse	lake	In a separate document.	YT	1	2011-06-20 -

Unique Identification Code of Bathing Water	Bathing Water Name	River Basin District Name	Bathing Water Category	Description of Management Measures	Closed*	Classification by National Authorities**	Short term pollution period(s)
							2011-06-27
BE710001500000011	La Semois à Alle-sur-Semois	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	N	2	
BE710001500000012	La Semois à Vresse-sur-Semois	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	YT	3	2011-06-27 - 2011-07-04, 2011-08-29 - 2011-09-05
BE720000500000004	Le Lac de Bambois	Meuse	lake	In a separate document.	N	1	
BE730000100000001	Le Lac de Falemprise	Meuse	lake	In a separate document.	YT	2	
BE730000100000002	Le Lac du Ry Jaune	Meuse	lake	In a separate document.	N	1	2011-06-06 - 2011-06-14
BE730000100000003	Le Lac de la Plate Taille	Meuse	lake	In a separate document.	YT	1	2011-08-08 - 2011-08-16
BE4200003000000F10	L'Amblève à Nonceveux	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	YP	4	2011-08-09 - 2011-08-17
BE43000020000000F18	L'Amblève à Coö	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	YP	4	
BE43000027000000F06	L'Our à Ouren	riverhine	river	In a separate document.	YP	4	2011-08-09 - 2011-08-17
BE63000030000000H35	L'Ourthe à Hotton	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	YP	4	
BE65000030000000H10	La Semois à Lacuisine	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	YP	4	
BE7100005000000014	La Lesse à Pont-à-Lesse	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	YP	4	2011-06-06 - 2011-06-14
BE7100009000000015	La Lesse à Hulsonniaux	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	YP	4	2011-08-16 - 2011-08-22
BE7100009000000016	La Lesse à Houyet	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	YP	4	2011-06-14 - 2011-06-20, 2011-07-25 - 2011-08-01
BE71000110000000I20	La Lesse à Belvaux	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	YP	4	2011-08-08 - 2011-08-16
BE71000120000000I13	L'Ourthe à Noiseux	Meuse	river	In a separate document.	YP	4	
BE36000060000000E01	Le Lac de Féronval	Meuse	lake	In a separate document.	YP	2	
BE702905	Robert Orlentvijver (Integravijver) - Nazareth	Scheldt	lake	BE702905: Permanently closed. Uit onderzoek bleek dat er ter plekke een permanent zwemverbod is ingesteld door de uitbater.	YP		
BE633055	Harelbeke - De Gavers	Scheldt	lake			2	2011-06-27 - 2011-06-30
BE871500	Jabbeke - Klein Strand	Scheldt	lake			2	2011-06-27 - 2011-06-30
BE30	Koksijde - St. Idesbald	Scheldt	coastal			1	2011-06-28 - 2011-07-01
BE201010	Sint-Niklaas - De Ster strand	Scheldt	lake			1	2011-07-04 - 2011-07-07
BE10	De Panne - Leopold	Scheldt	coastal			1	2011-07-12 - 2011-07-15
BE377220	Mechelen - De Nekker (grote vijver)	Scheldt	lake			1	2011-07-12 - 2011-07-15
BE240	Bredene - Droge Opgang	Scheldt	coastal			2	2011-07-13 - 2011-07-16
BE250	Bredene - De Duinpan	Scheldt	coastal			2	2011-07-13 - 2011-07-16
BE260	De Haan - Vosseslag	Scheldt	coastal			2	2011-07-13 - 2011-07-16
BE270	De Haan - Centrum	Scheldt	coastal			2	2011-07-13 - 2011-07-16

Unique Identification Code of Bathing Water	Bathing Water Name	River Basin District Name	Bathing Water Category	Description of Management Measures	Closed*	Classification by National Authorities**	Short term pollution period(s)
BE280	De Haan - Wenduine	Scheldt	coastal			2	2011-07-13 - 2011-07-16
BE220	Bredene - Duingat	Scheldt	coastal			2	2011-07-15 - 2011-07-18, 2011-08-26 - 2011-08-29
BE290	De Haan - Harendijke - Wenduine	Scheldt	coastal			3	2011-07-15 - 2011-07-18, 2011-09-05 - 2011-09-08
BE324650	Westerlo - Camping 't Heultje	Scheldt	lake			1	2011-07-18 - 2011-07-21
BE193	Oostende - Noodstrand-Christinastraat	Scheldt	coastal			3	2011-07-18 - 2011-07-21, 2011-08-29 - 2011-09-01
BE107760	Bocholt - Goolderheide	Meuse	lake			3	2011-07-26 - 2011-07-29
BE313600	Mol - Zilverstrand	Scheldt	lake			1	2011-08-09 - 2011-08-12
BE416310	Beringen - Paalse Plas	Scheldt	lake			1	2011-08-23 - 2011-08-26
BE210	Bredene - Turkeyen	Scheldt	coastal			2	2011-08-26 - 2011-08-29
BE190	Oostende - Koninginnelaan	Scheldt	coastal			2	2011-08-29 - 2011-09-01
BE310	Blankenberge - Artanhelling	Scheldt	coastal			2	2011-08-30 - 2011-09-02

*YP: bathing water is closed for the entire season; YT: bathing water is temporarily closed (i.e. a part of the season); N: bathing water is not closed

** 1: excellent quality; 2: good quality; 3: sufficient quality; 4: poor quality

5. More information on bathing water quality in Europe

Of the more than 21 000 bathing areas monitored throughout the European Union in 2011, two thirds were in coastal waters and the rest in rivers and lakes. The largest numbers of coastal bathing waters can be found in Italy, Greece, France and Spain, while Germany and France have the highest numbers of inland bathing waters.

During recent years, including the 2011 bathing season, majority of Member States have adjusted their monitoring programmes to meet the requirements of the new bathing water directive (2006/7/EC). Luxembourg was the first country to report under this Directive in 2007. Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden started to report under the new directive in 2008. Malta and the Netherlands started to report in 2009. Austria, Belgium - Walloon Region, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Slovenia reported under the new directive for the first time in 2010, while Belgium - Flemish Region, Bulgaria, Ireland and Poland reported under this Directive for the first time in 2011. Historical data of two microbiological parameters, *Escherichia coli* and intestinal enterococci were sent by Sweden (2005-2007), Luxembourg (2006), Malta (2006-2008), Belgium - Walloon Region (2007-2009), Belgium - Flemish Region (2008-2010), Greece (2007-2009), Hungary (2007) and Portugal (2007-2009).

Three non-EU countries, Croatia, Montenegro and Switzerland have reported monitoring results under the new directive. Croatia and Switzerland started to report in 2009, while Montenegro reported for the first time in 2010. Switzerland sent data on *Escherichia coli* for all bathing waters but only for some data on intestinal enterococci.

For the 2011 season, bathing water quality has been assessed under the new bathing water directive in 16 European countries. This is 13 more than for 2010 bathing season. Only three countries - the Czech Republic, Romania and the United Kingdom - are still assessed under the old bathing water directive. Eleven countries are assessed under the transition period rules.

Overall in 2011, 92.1 % of bathing waters in the EU met the minimum water quality standards set by the bathing water directives. Bathing water quality increased at 0.6 % of sites in 2011 compared to 2010. The proportion of bathing waters with excellent quality (or complying with the more stringent guide values) increased by 3.5 percentage points compared to 2010, reaching 77.1 %. The share of non-compliant bathing waters was 1.8 %, which was a 0.1 percentage point increase from 2010. In 2011, 207 bathing waters were banned or closed (1 %), which was 57 more than in the 2010 bathing season.

More information on bathing water quality in the European Member States, including the EU summary report, the reports for 27 Member States, Croatia, Montenegro and Switzerland, can be found on the European Commission's bathing water quality website (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-bathing/index_en.html) and the European Environment Agency's bathing water website (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/status-and-monitoring/state-of-bathing-water>). The Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia (IWRIS), a partner in the EEA European Topic Centre on Inland, Coastal and Marine Waters (ETC/ICM) has produced the reports for the bathing seasons from the 2008 bathing season on. Countries have collaborated in the assessment of bathing water quality and supplied additional information when needed.

Interactive information on bathing water quality

The bathing water section of the Water Information System for Europe (WISE), which is accessible at the EEA bathing water website, allows users to view the bathing water quality at more than 22 000 coastal beaches and inland sites across Europe. Users can check bathing water quality on an interactive map or can download data for a selected country or region and make comparisons with previous years.

The WISE map viewer (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/interactive//bathing>) is an online map viewer for visualising European spatial water data. It includes a lot of interactive layers, allowing water themes to be visualised at different scales. Broad resolutions display the aggregated data by Member State. At finer resolutions the locations of monitoring stations are displayed.

The WISE bathing water quality data viewer (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/status-and-monitoring/bathing-water-data-viewer>) combines text and graphical visualisation, providing a quick check on locations and statistics on the quality of coastal and inland bathing waters. It also documents how bathing waters have changed throughout Europe in recent years and provides a full summary of Europe's bathing water quality. Users can search information at three spatial levels - country, region and province - and observe specific bathing water locations on Google Earth, Google maps or Bing maps.

The Eye on Earth - Water Watch application (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/explore-interactive-maps/eye-on-earth>) allows users to zoom in on a section of the coast, riverbank or lake, both in street map or, where available, bird's eye viewing formats. A 'traffic-light' indicator (red, amber, green) of bathing water quality, based on the official bathing water data, is put alongside the ratings of people who have visited the bathing site, including any comments added by users. For historical data Water Watch uses a simplified index of bathing water quality data. The Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland (one municipality), Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia, England and Wales were also sending near real time information on bathing water quality to the Eye on Earth application. The bathing water quality for Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Scotland and Northern Ireland was also presented on the Eye on Earth - Water Watch.

National and local information on bathing water quality

In order to make information to the public more effective, all EU countries have national or local web portals with detailed information for each bathing water. Websites generally include a map search function and public access to the monitoring results both in real time and for previous seasons.

Information on EU bathing water legislation

EU Member States will have to comply with the stricter and more ambitious requirements laid out in Directive 2006/7/EC by 2015 at the latest. The new legislation requires more effective monitoring and management of bathing waters, greater public participation and improved information dissemination. By March 2011 Member States have to have established bathing water profiles. More on the new legislation can be found on the European Commission's websites and on <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:064:0037:0051:EN:PDF>.

Appendix 1

Map 1: Bathing waters reported during the 2011 bathing season in Belgium

