Note on quality of Albanian bathing waters

In 2015 bathing season, 78 bathing waters have been reported in Albania. Albania started reporting bathing water monitoring results from the 2012 bathing water season. In the 2012 to 2014 the Albanian bathing waters have been classified based on the individual years. From the 2015 bathing water season there are the required four years of observation to be assessed under the revised bathing water directive[1]. The thresholds in the revised directive are stricter and gives reliable and realistic results on the risk of bathing.

The assessment of bathing water quality in Albania is listed in table 1:

Table 1: Bathing waters in the season 2015 according to quality

		Total number of bathing waters	Excellent quality		At least sufficient quality		Poor quality		Quality classification not possible: not enough samples /new bathing waters/bathing waters subject to changes/closed	
			No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Total	2012	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	2013	73	37	50.7	67	91.8	6	8.2	0	0.0
	2014	73	26	35.6	72	98.6	1	1.4	0	0.0
	2015	**78**	**25**	**32.1**	**39**	**50.0**	**31**	**39.7**	**8**	**10.3**
	2015*	78	58	74.4	20	25.6	0	0.0	0	0.0

Note: the class "At least sufficient" is bathing waters with excellent, good and sufficient quality; and bathing waters which are of excellent quality, the sum of shares is therefore not 100%.
2015* assessed under transition rules, see http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-bathing-water-quality-in-2014

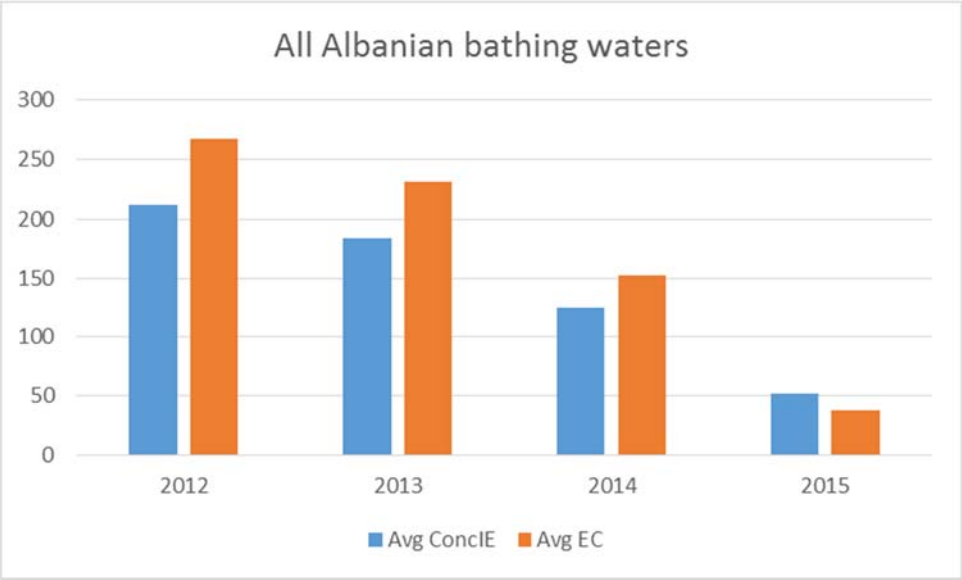
The 2015 bathing water quality results are affected by stricter standards by the revised Bathing water directive, and that data from 2012 to 2015 are used. The use of data from four years gives a more reliable estimate of the risk of bathing. All the 30 reporting countries have their 2015 bathing water quality assessed on the data from the four year period 2012-2015.

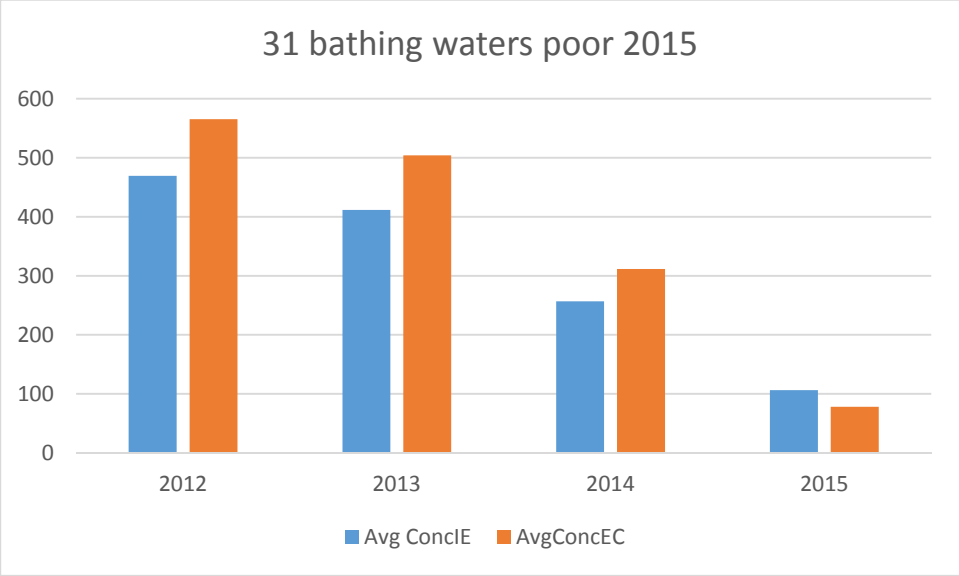
If the Albanian bathing waters had been assessed under the transition rules as done in 2013 and 2014 the results would have been 74.4 % of bathing waters of excellent quality and the rest (25.6 %) of good or sufficient quality (2015* in table 1). It appears that all 31 bathing waters that were assessed as poor according to four-year dataset have been managed so that monitoring results for the 2015 bathing season are substantially better than previous seasons.

[1] The assessment of bathing water quality under the revised Bathing Water Directive makes use of the values of two microbiological parameters obtained in four consecutive years. For example, the quality of bathing waters in 2015 is assessed on the basis of samples taken from 2012 to 2015. The classification of bathing water quality according to the revised Bathing Water Directive is an indicator of risk of bathing in bathing water polluted with faecal bacteria.

Improvements in bathing water quality in 2014 and 2015

The Albanian 2015 bathing water quality results does, however, not reflect the improvement that happened in the Albanian bathing water quality in 2014 and 2015. The two graphs below illustrate the average concentration two microbiological parameters of the two microbiological parameters for all 78 Albanian bathing waters and the 31 bathing waters classified as poor in 2015. The graphs show a clear improving trend and much lover concentration levels in 2015.





As the above results illustrate the Albanian Authorities have taken measures to reduce the pollution levels, and the Authorities may for the individual bathing waters were measure to reduce pollution level have reported this. In this case there is the possibility to have the bathing water quality assessed based on the observation collected after the changes[2].

[2] Article 4 4(b) any changes have occurred that are likely to affect the classification of the bathing water in accordance with Article 5, in which case the assessment shall be carried out on the basis of a set of bathing water quality data consisting solely of the results for samples collected since the changes occurred;