

Bathing water results 2009 – France

1. Introduction

This report gives a general overview of bathing water quality in France during the 2009 bathing season.

France reported six parameters under the Directive 76/160/EEC (1 Total coliforms, 2 Faecal coliforms, 3 Faecal streptococci, 8 Mineral oils, 9 Surface-active substances reacting with methylene blue, 10 Phenols (phenol indices)).

The parameters to be taken into account for assessment according to the assessment rules of the Directive 76/160/EEC are microbiological (1 Total coliforms, 2 Faecal coliforms) and physico-chemical (8 Mineral oils, 9 Surface-active substances reacting with methylene blue, 10 Phenols (phenol indices)).

The bathing waters are classified in the following categories:

- Compliant with mandatory values of the Directive for the five parameters (class CI);
- Compliant with mandatory and more stringent guide values of the Directive for the five parameters (class CG);
- Not compliant with mandatory values of the Directive for the five parameters (class NC);
- Banned or closed (temporarily or throughout the season) (class B).

2. Length of bathing season and number of bathing waters

In mainland France the length of the bathing season varied widely. The bathing season opened from 15 May to 5 July 2009 and closed from 28 August to 30 September 2009 for coastal bathing waters. In most coastal areas it started in June and ended in September. Freshwater bathing waters opened from 1 May to 17 July 2009, except for one bathing water opened on 25 April and two bathing waters opened on 1 August. These bathing waters closed from 6 August to 30 September 2009, except for two bathing waters closed in October. In most freshwater areas the bathing season closed in August. In the Corsica, the bathing season lasted three months, from 15 June to 15 September 2009, for coastal bathing waters and two months, from 1 July to 30 or 31 August 2009, for freshwater bathing waters.

A total of 3 348 bathing waters were monitored in France during the 2009 bathing season, of which 2 005 were coastal bathing waters (1 999) or in estuaries (six) and 1 343 freshwater bathing waters (435 on rivers; 908 on lakes). 12 coastal bathing waters and four freshwater bathing waters were insufficiently sampled. 407 bathing waters (219 coastal and 188 freshwater) were monitored with reduced frequency according to the Directive 76/160/EEC.

With 3 348 bathing waters France accounts for about 15.6% of the reported bathing waters of the European Union.

The evolution of the reported number of bathing waters since monitoring of the water quality began under the Directive 76/160/EEC is presented in Table 1. The number of freshwater bathing waters decreased significantly since the start of the reporting from 1 743 in 1991 to 1 319 in 2006. However, it increased slightly afterwards to 1 344 in 2008. In 2009, there was one less freshwater bathing water than in the previous year: 34 new bathing waters were added to the list, three were re-opened and 38 were de-listed. The number of coastal bathing waters remained approximately at the same level from 1993 till 2007 and increased afterwards to 2 005 in 2009. There were 37 more coastal bathing waters in 2009 than in the previous year: 37 new bathing waters were added to the list, one was re-opened and one was de-listed.

3. Results of bathing water quality

The results of the bathing water quality in France for the period 1991-2008 as reported in the past reporting years and for the bathing season of 2009 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 and Health/Bathing Water/2005-2009 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 2008 bathing season).

The graphs show, for coastal and freshwater bathing waters separately:

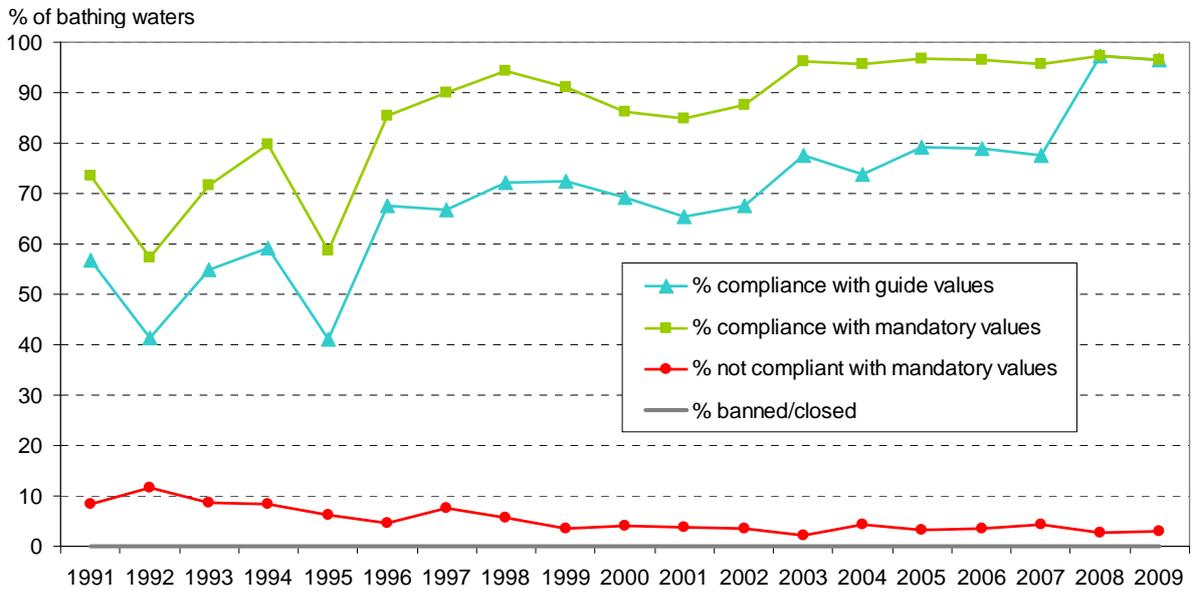
- The percentage of bathing waters that comply with the guide values (class CG, blue line);
- The percentage of bathing waters that comply with the mandatory values (class CI, green line);
- The percentage of bathing waters that do not comply with the mandatory values (class NC, red line);
- The percentage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

Table 1 shows the same information in absolute numbers and in percentages separately for coastal and freshwater bathing waters. Table 2 shows the bathing water quality results for 2009 season in France for all bathing waters.

Map 1 shows the location of the reported bathing waters in France. The location of the bathing waters is based on the geographic coordinates reported by the French authorities.

Figure 1: Results of bathing water quality in France from 1991 to 2009

Coastal bathing waters (FR)



Freshwater bathing waters (FR)

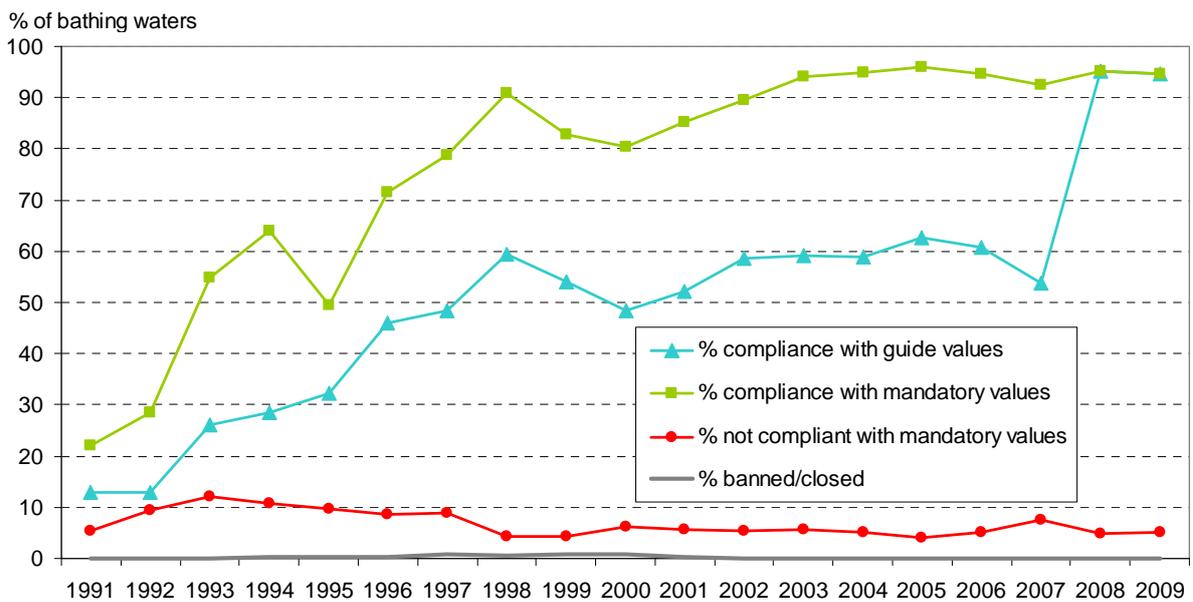


Table 1: Results of bathing water quality in France from 1991 to 2009

FR										
		Total number of bathing waters	Compliance with guide values		Compliance with mandatory values		Not compliant		Banned/closed temporarily or throughout the season	
			Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Coastal bathing waters	1991	1527	866	56.7	1121	73.4	129	8.4	0	0.0
	1992	1932	798	41.3	1106	57.2	226	11.7	0	0.0
	1993	1856	1016	54.7	1328	71.6	161	8.7	0	0.0
	1994	1870	1109	59.3	1492	79.8	158	8.4	0	0.0
	1995	1874	768	41.0	1098	58.6	114	6.1	0	0.0
	1996	1846	1249	67.7	1576	85.4	85	4.6	0	0.0
	1997	1829	1220	66.7	1646	90.0	137	7.5	1	0.1
	1998	1856	1340	72.2	1753	94.5	103	5.5	0	0.0
	1999	1829	1326	72.5	1666	91.1	64	3.5	2	0.1
	2000	1846	1279	69.3	1593	86.3	76	4.1	2	0.1
	2001	1859	1217	65.5	1579	84.9	68	3.7	0	0.0
	2002	1869	1265	67.7	1635	87.5	66	3.5	0	0.0
	2003	1873	1453	77.6	1801	96.2	38	2.0	0	0.0
	2004	1872	1383	73.9	1791	95.7	81	4.3	0	0.0
	2005	1894	1500	79.2	1835	96.9	59	3.1	0	0.0
	2006	1893	1495	79.0	1825	96.4	67	3.5	0	0.0
	2007	1897	1474	77.7	1815	95.7	81	4.3	0	0.0
2008	1968	1913	97.2	1913	97.2	53	2.7	0	0.0	
2009	2005	1932	96.4	1932	96.4	61	3.0	0	0.0	
Freshwater bathing waters	1991	1743	224	12.9	382	21.9	93	5.3	0	0.0
	1992	1754	227	12.9	500	28.5	166	9.5	0	0.0
	1993	1660	432	26.0	911	54.9	200	12.0	0	0.0
	1994	1663	473	28.4	1065	64.0	178	10.7	4	0.2
	1995	1640	527	32.1	810	49.4	159	9.7	4	0.2
	1996	1648	756	45.9	1180	71.6	142	8.6	5	0.3
	1997	1587	770	48.5	1250	78.8	139	8.8	14	0.9
	1998	1553	921	59.3	1413	91.0	65	4.2	7	0.5
	1999	1455	785	54.0	1204	82.7	64	4.4	12	0.8
	2000	1493	721	48.3	1201	80.4	91	6.1	11	0.7
	2001	1492	777	52.1	1272	85.3	83	5.6	4	0.3
	2002	1457	854	58.6	1305	89.6	77	5.3	0	0.0
	2003	1405	831	59.1	1323	94.2	80	5.7	0	0.0
	2004	1406	826	58.7	1334	94.9	72	5.1	0	0.0
	2005	1328	832	62.7	1274	95.9	54	4.1	0	0.0
	2006	1319	803	60.9	1249	94.7	69	5.2	0	0.0
	2007	1339	719	53.7	1237	92.4	100	7.5	0	0.0
2008	1344	1278	95.1	1278	95.1	65	4.8	0	0.0	
2009	1343	1271	94.6	1271	94.6	68	5.1	0	0.0	

Note: Bathing waters which were insufficiently sampled or not sampled according to the Bathing Water Directive were not included in this table. Therefore, in some cases, the sum of the different categories will not be equal to the total number of bathing waters. Bathing waters which were compliant with the guide values were also compliant with the mandatory values.

Table 3: Results of bathing water quality for all bathing waters in France in 2009

FR										
		Total number of bathing waters	Compliance with guide values		Compliance with mandatory values		Not compliant		Banned/closed temporarily or throughout the season	
			Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Bathing waters	2009	3348	3203	95.7	3203	95.7	129	3.9	0	0.0

Note: Bathing waters which were insufficiently sampled according to the Bathing Water Directive were not included in this table. Therefore the sum of the different categories is not equal to the total number of bathing waters. Bathing waters which were compliant with the guide values were also compliant with the mandatory values.

4. Development of bathing water quality

Coastal bathing waters

In France, 96.4% of the coastal bathing waters met both the mandatory and more stringent guide values in 2009. This is a slight decrease compared to the previous year (- 0.8%) in terms of both the mandatory and the guide values. 61 bathing waters (3%) did not comply with the mandatory values compared to 53 (2.7%) in 2008. No coastal bathing water had to be closed during the season.

Since 1991, the compliance rate of coastal bathing waters gradually increased. The dip in 1995 is explained by the large number of insufficiently sampled bathing waters in that year. Since 2003 the percentage of bathing waters that met the mandatory water quality remained stable around 96%. From 2003 to 2007, the rate of compliance with the guide values was up to 77%, except in 2004 (73.9%). Since then, the compliance rate increased above 96% in the last two years. Since the start of reporting in 1991, one to two bathing waters were closed for three years only.

Freshwater bathing waters

94.6% of the freshwater bathing waters met both the mandatory and more stringent guide values in 2009. This is a slight decrease compared to the previous year (- 0.5%) in terms of both the mandatory and the guide values. The number of non-compliant bathing waters with the mandatory values was 68 (5.1%) compared to 65 (4.8%) in 2008. Since 2002, no freshwater bathing water had to be closed during the season.

The compliance rate increased from the early 90's until the early 2000's. Since 2003, both the compliance rate with mandatory values and the compliance rate with guide values remained at approximately the same level. This level is about 95% for the mandatory values and about 60% for the guide values with a drop in 2007. Since 2008, the compliance rate with the guide values reached the level for the mandatory values, as for the coastal bathing waters.

5. General information as provided by the French authorities

Every year the decentralised departments of the Ministry for Health and Solidarity, i.e. the Departmental Directorates for Health and Social Affairs (DDASS), conduct hygiene checks on coastal and freshwater bathing areas frequented by the public. France has been monitoring hygiene in coastal bathing water since 1972 and in freshwater bathing areas since 1979.

De-listing of bathing waters

The French authorities have explained the reasons of de-listing for each bathing water in electronic correspondence with EEA - ETC/W. In 2009, 38 freshwater bathing waters and one coastal bathing water were de-listed due to various reasons:

- prohibition by law for security reasons;
- prohibition by law or by decision of the private operator due to financial or other reasons;
- area is not frequented or attended related to the attractiveness of another site;

- site becomes inaccessible to bathers and/or lack of water;
- area is dedicated to another activity, bathing will be prohibited or not practiced;
- a water treaty which does not correspond to the definition of Directive 2006/7/EC;
- prohibition for health reasons (pH, cyanobacteria ...) with no possible improvement;
- closed site for renovations.

For another freshwater bathing water (Riviere Larose) only the NUTS code (NumInd) has changed.

Information to public

Since July 2008, the Ministry of Health has opened a new version of website on the quality of bathing water. This national website <http://baignades.sante.gouv.fr> includes a map search module and gives the French, English or German public access to the monitoring results not only from previous seasons but also, in real time, from the health inspections being carried out during the current bathing season.

Combating pollution

Like every year, surveys have been carried out by DDASS and managers in order to determine the causes of pollution in bathing areas where the water quality is insufficient. Managers of areas where bathing water was found to be of insufficient quality have been reminded of their duty to identify the causes of pollution and their obligation to take appropriate measures as a result. When the source of pollution has been identified, an action plan has been implemented, which may entail a more or less substantial amount of work. Moreover, for certain bathing areas, work to identify and evaluate the causes of pollution that may affect the quality of bathing water has been carried out rigorously to prepare the bathing water profiles required for the implementation of Directive 2006/7/EC.

The Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment is preparing a generalization of this work of identification and evaluation of the causes of pollution that can affect the quality of bathing waters for all sites that have been identified under the Directive 2006/7/EC, so that each site will have a profile in 2011.

Implementation of Directive 2006/7/EC

The new Directive 2006/7/EC, the details of which will be phased in, has been transposed into French law by Articles L.1332-1 et seq articles D.1332-14 to D.1332-38 of the Public Health Code and two Orders of 22 and 23 September 2008 respectively on the sampling frequency and methods of quality assessment and classification of bathing waters and on rules for the handling of samples and reference methods for water testing in the context of monitoring the quality of bathing water. The first classification of bathing waters of France will follow the provisions of Directive 2006/7/EC at the end of the 2013 season

According to the Directive, the identification of the bathing waters in 2008 bathing season was achieved by informing and involving the public. Records were made available to the public during the previous season by municipalities to collect opinions. This procedure will be achieved under similar conditions each year to establish the list of bathing waters before the start of the season.

6. More information on bathing water quality in the European Union

More information on bathing water quality in the European Member States, including the EU summary report, the reports for 27 Member States, Croatia 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 reports for the bathing seasons of 2008 and 2009 have been produced by the Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia (IWRS), a partner in the EEA European Topic Centre on Water (ETC/W). Countries have collaborated in the assessment of bathing water quality and supplied additional information when needed.

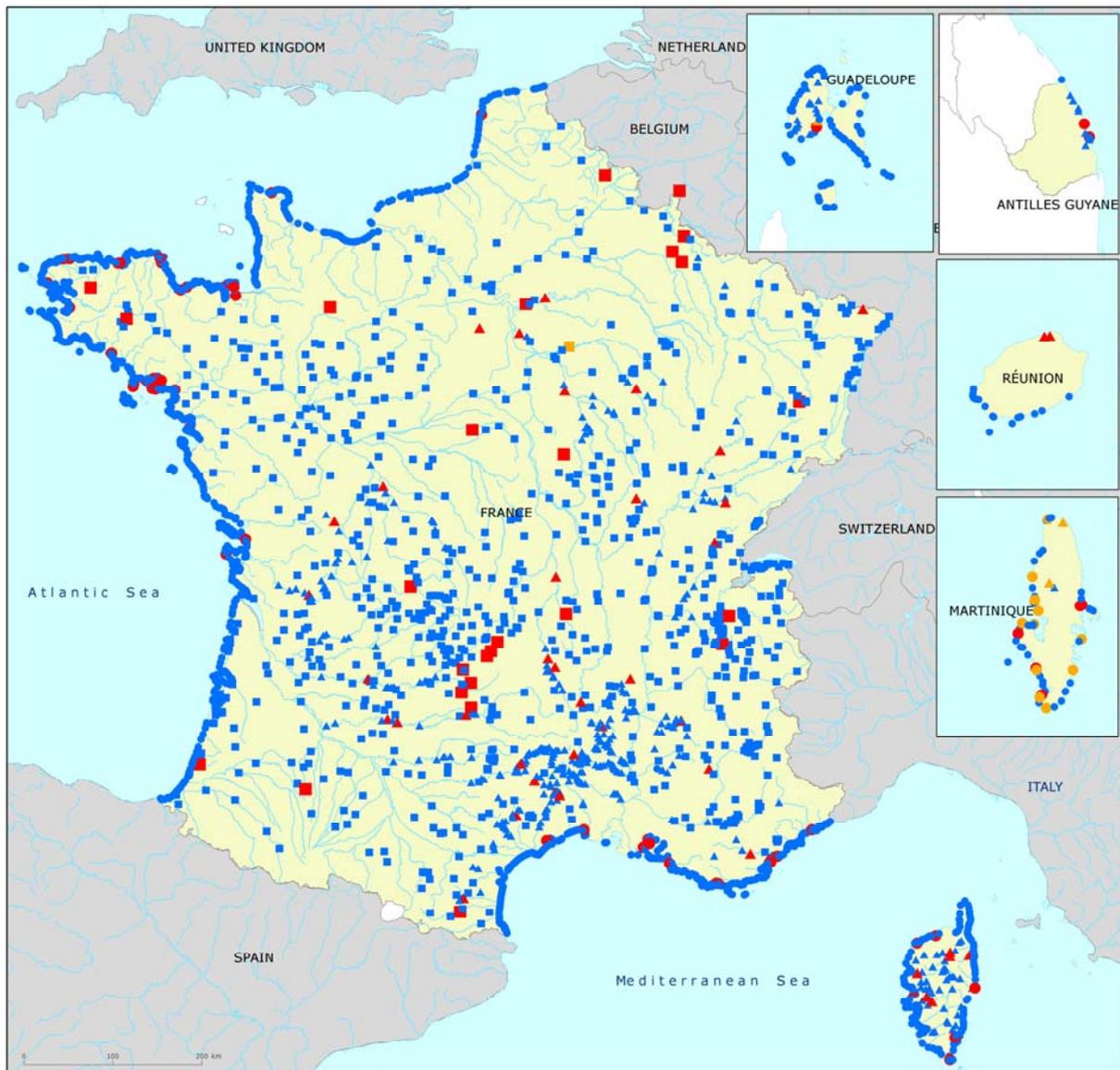
By 2015, Member States will have to comply with the stricter and more ambitious requirements laid out in the New Bathing Water Directive (Directive 2006/7/EC). This Directive requires more effective

monitoring and management of bathing waters, greater public participation and improved information. More information on the new Directive can be found on the bathing water quality website and on <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:064:0037:0051:EN:PDF>.

Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden started to report according to more stringent new requirements in 2008 bathing season. Malta and the Netherlands started to report in 2009 bathing season under the new requirements. Sweden and Malta also sent data for three previous bathing seasons under the new requirements. Luxembourg started to monitor under the new requirements in 2006 bathing season, while reported for the first time in 2007 bathing season.

WISE - Water Information System for Europe (www.water.europa.eu) is a gateway to all water related information. Among other water related data, information on individual bathing water quality can be found in the WISE map viewer and WISE Bathing Water Quality data viewer through interactive maps and graphs (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/status-and-monitoring/state-of-bathing-water>).

Map 1: Bathing waters reported during the 2009 bathing season in France



Bathing water quality			No data
Bathing waters on rivers	Bathing waters on lakes	Coastal/transitional bathing waters	□ No data
▲ Compliant with guide values	■ Compliant with guide values	● Compliant with guide values	■ Outside data coverage (data available, not presented on the map)
▲ Compliant with mandatory values	■ Compliant with mandatory values	● Compliant with mandatory values	
▲ Closed*	■ Closed*	● Closed*	
▲ Insufficiently sampled or not sampled	■ Insufficiently sampled or not sampled	● Insufficiently sampled or not sampled	
▲ Not compliant with mandatory values	■ Not compliant with mandatory values	● Not compliant with mandatory values	

Note: * banned or closed (temporarily or throughout the season)
 More data on bathing water quality on: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/mapviewers/bathing>
Source: National boundaries: GISCU; Large rivers and lakes: EEA, WFD Article 3; Bathing waters data and coordinates: French authorities