

Bathing water results 2008 – France

1. Introduction

This report gives a general overview of bathing water quality in France during the 2008 bathing season.

France reported 6 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 5 parameters (class CI)
- Compliant with mandatory and more stringent guide values of the Directive for the 5 parameters (class CG)
- Not compliant with mandatory values of the Directive for the 5 parameters (class NC)
- Banned (temporarily closed) or closed 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. In most coastal areas the bathing season opened in May or June 2008 and it closed between late August and the beginning of October 2008 for all of them. In freshwater areas the bathing season opened between May and July 2008 and closed between August and September 2008 for most bathing areas. In the Corsica, it opened in June and closed in mid September 2008 for coastal bathing waters. It lasted from 1 July to 31 August 2008 for freshwater bathing waters.

A total of 3,312 bathing waters were monitored in France during the 2008 bathing season, of which 1,968 were coastal bathing waters (1,962) or in estuaries (6) and 1,344 freshwater bathing waters (431 on rivers; 913 on lakes). The frequency of sampling was reduced by a factor of two for bathing waters that were compliant with at least the mandatory values for the two previous years. Only three bathing waters (two coastal and one freshwater) were insufficiently sampled.

With 3,312 bathing waters France accounts for about 15.4% 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 76/170/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 1,344 in 2008. There were five more freshwater bathing waters in 2008 than in the previous year: 88 new bathing waters were added to the list and 83 were de-listed. The number of coastal bathing waters remained approximately at the same level from 1993 till 2007. There were 71 more coastal bathing waters in 2008 than in the previous year: 82 new bathing waters were added to the list and 11 were de-listed.

3. Results of bathing water quality

The results of the bathing water quality in France for the period 1991-2007 as reported in 2008 report and for the bathing season of 2008 are presented in Figure 1.

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 (temporarily closed) or closed throughout the season (class B, grey line)

Table 1 and Table 2 show the same information in absolute numbers and in percentages separately for coastal and freshwater bathing waters. Table 3 shows the bathing water quality results for 2008 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 2008

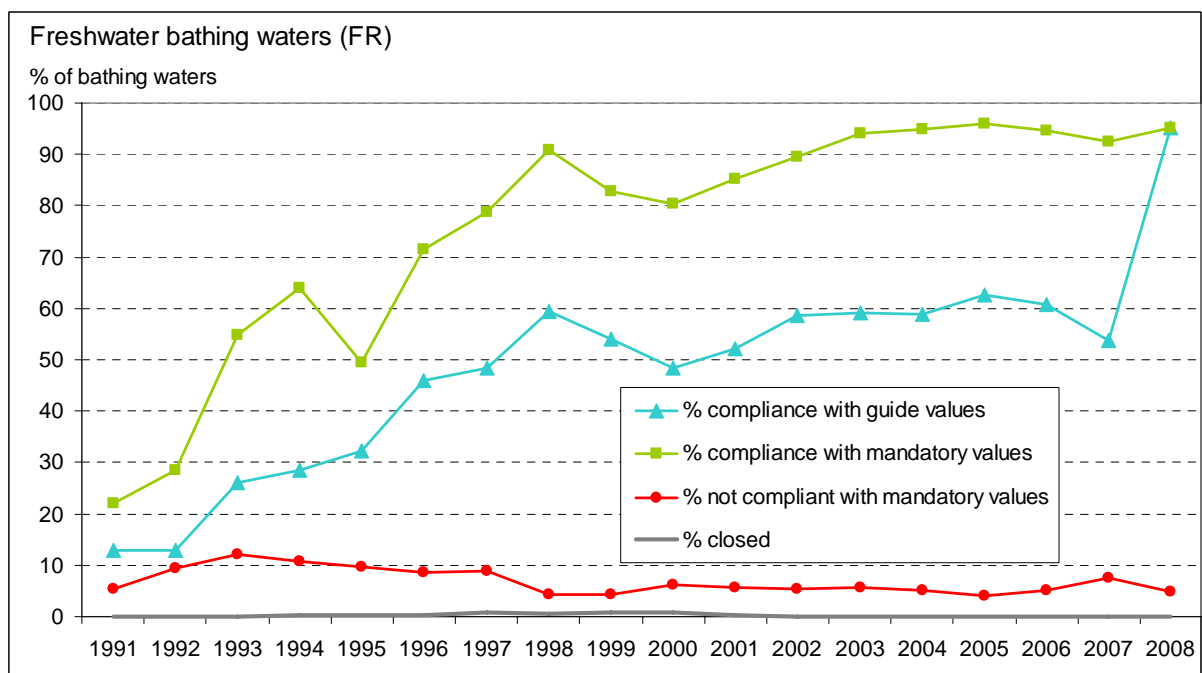
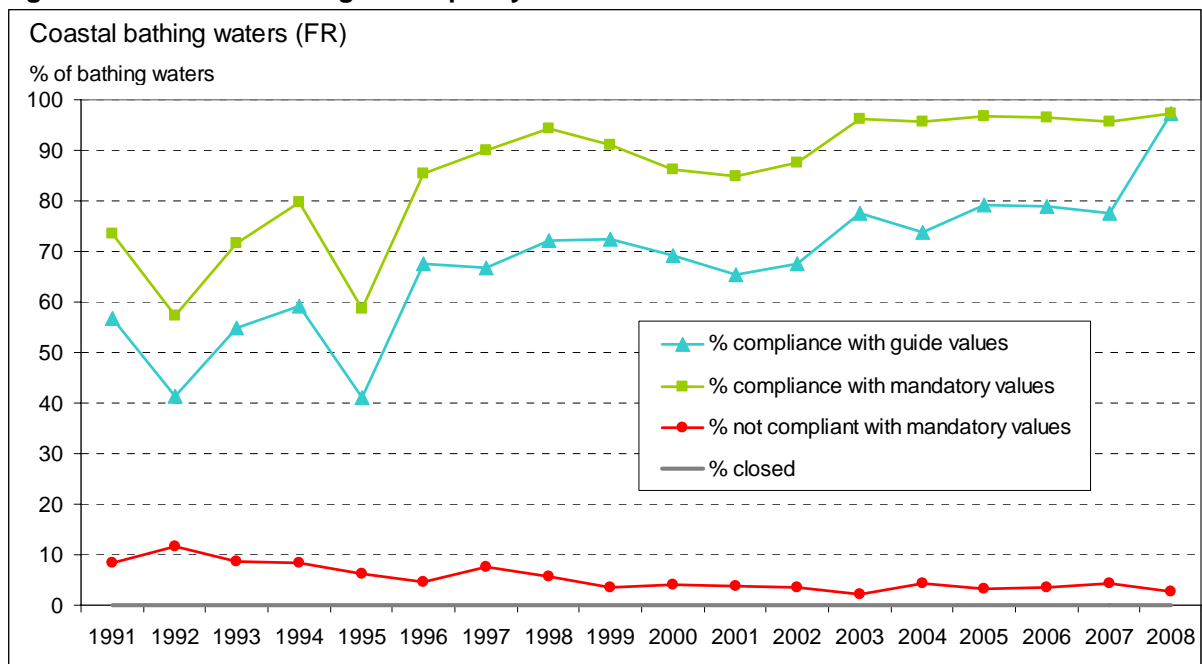


Table 1: Results of bathing water quality in France from 1991 to 2008 as absolute numbers

| | Year | Total number of bathing waters | Compliance with guide values | Compliance with mandatory values | Not compliant | Banned/closed throughout the season |
|----------------------------|------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | FR | | | | |
| Coastal bathing waters | 1991 | 1527 | 866 | 1121 | 129 | 0 |
| | 1992 | 1932 | 798 | 1106 | 226 | 0 |
| | 1993 | 1856 | 1016 | 1328 | 161 | 0 |
| | 1994 | 1870 | 1109 | 1492 | 158 | 0 |
| | 1995 | 1874 | 768 | 1098 | 114 | 0 |
| | 1996 | 1846 | 1249 | 1576 | 85 | 0 |
| | 1997 | 1829 | 1220 | 1646 | 137 | 1 |
| | 1998 | 1856 | 1340 | 1753 | 103 | 0 |
| | 1999 | 1829 | 1326 | 1666 | 64 | 2 |
| | 2000 | 1846 | 1279 | 1593 | 76 | 2 |
| | 2001 | 1859 | 1217 | 1579 | 68 | 0 |
| | 2002 | 1869 | 1265 | 1635 | 66 | 0 |
| | 2003 | 1873 | 1453 | 1801 | 38 | 0 |
| | 2004 | 1872 | 1383 | 1791 | 81 | 0 |
| | 2005 | 1894 | 1500 | 1835 | 59 | 0 |
| | 2006 | 1893 | 1495 | 1825 | 67 | 0 |
| 2007 | 1897 | 1474 | 1815 | 81 | 0 | |
| 2008 | 1968 | 1913 | 1913 | 53 | 0 | |
| Fresh water bathing waters | 1991 | 1743 | 224 | 382 | 93 | 0 |
| | 1992 | 1754 | 227 | 500 | 166 | 0 |
| | 1993 | 1660 | 432 | 911 | 200 | 0 |
| | 1994 | 1663 | 473 | 1065 | 178 | 4 |
| | 1995 | 1640 | 527 | 810 | 159 | 4 |
| | 1996 | 1648 | 756 | 1180 | 142 | 5 |
| | 1997 | 1587 | 770 | 1250 | 139 | 14 |
| | 1998 | 1553 | 921 | 1413 | 65 | 7 |
| | 1999 | 1455 | 785 | 1204 | 64 | 12 |
| | 2000 | 1493 | 721 | 1201 | 91 | 11 |
| | 2001 | 1492 | 777 | 1272 | 83 | 4 |
| | 2002 | 1457 | 854 | 1305 | 77 | 0 |
| | 2003 | 1405 | 831 | 1323 | 80 | 0 |
| | 2004 | 1406 | 826 | 1334 | 72 | 0 |
| | 2005 | 1328 | 832 | 1274 | 54 | 0 |
| | 2006 | 1319 | 803 | 1249 | 69 | 0 |
| 2007 | 1339 | 719 | 1237 | 100 | 0 | |
| 2008 | 1344 | 1278 | 1278 | 65 | 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.

Table 2: Results of bathing water quality in Denmark from 1991 to 2008 as percentages

| | Year | % total number of bathing waters | % compliance with guide values | % compliance with mandatory values | % not compliant | % banned/closed throughout the season |
|----------------------------|------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | FR | | | | |
| Coastal bathing waters | 1991 | 1527 | 56.7 | 73.4 | 8.4 | 0.0 |
| | 1992 | 1932 | 41.3 | 57.2 | 11.7 | 0.0 |
| | 1993 | 1856 | 54.7 | 71.6 | 8.7 | 0.0 |
| | 1994 | 1870 | 59.3 | 79.8 | 8.4 | 0.0 |
| | 1995 | 1874 | 41.0 | 58.6 | 6.1 | 0.0 |
| | 1996 | 1846 | 67.7 | 85.4 | 4.6 | 0.0 |
| | 1997 | 1829 | 66.7 | 90.0 | 7.5 | 0.1 |
| | 1998 | 1856 | 72.2 | 94.5 | 5.5 | 0.0 |
| | 1999 | 1829 | 72.5 | 91.1 | 3.5 | 0.1 |
| | 2000 | 1846 | 69.3 | 86.3 | 4.1 | 0.1 |
| | 2001 | 1859 | 65.5 | 84.9 | 3.7 | 0.0 |
| | 2002 | 1869 | 67.7 | 87.5 | 3.5 | 0.0 |
| | 2003 | 1873 | 77.6 | 96.2 | 2.0 | 0.0 |
| | 2004 | 1872 | 73.9 | 95.7 | 4.3 | 0.0 |
| | 2005 | 1894 | 79.2 | 96.9 | 3.1 | 0.0 |
| | 2006 | 1893 | 79.0 | 96.4 | 3.5 | 0.0 |
| 2007 | 1897 | 77.7 | 95.7 | 4.3 | 0.0 | |
| 2008 | 1968 | 97.2 | 97.2 | 2.7 | 0.0 | |
| Fresh water bathing waters | 1991 | 1743 | 12.9 | 21.9 | 5.3 | 0.0 |
| | 1992 | 1754 | 12.9 | 28.5 | 9.5 | 0.0 |
| | 1993 | 1660 | 26.0 | 54.9 | 12.0 | 0.0 |
| | 1994 | 1663 | 28.4 | 64.0 | 10.7 | 0.2 |
| | 1995 | 1640 | 32.1 | 49.4 | 9.7 | 0.2 |
| | 1996 | 1648 | 45.9 | 71.6 | 8.6 | 0.3 |
| | 1997 | 1587 | 48.5 | 78.8 | 8.8 | 0.9 |
| | 1998 | 1553 | 59.3 | 91.0 | 4.2 | 0.5 |
| | 1999 | 1455 | 54.0 | 82.7 | 4.4 | 0.8 |
| | 2000 | 1493 | 48.3 | 80.4 | 6.1 | 0.7 |
| | 2001 | 1492 | 52.1 | 85.3 | 5.6 | 0.3 |
| | 2002 | 1457 | 58.6 | 89.6 | 5.3 | 0.0 |
| | 2003 | 1405 | 59.1 | 94.2 | 5.7 | 0.0 |
| | 2004 | 1406 | 58.7 | 94.9 | 5.1 | 0.0 |
| | 2005 | 1328 | 62.7 | 95.9 | 4.1 | 0.0 |
| | 2006 | 1319 | 60.9 | 94.7 | 5.2 | 0.0 |
| 2007 | 1339 | 53.7 | 92.4 | 7.5 | 0.0 | |
| 2008 | 1344 | 95.1 | 95.1 | 4.8 | 0.0 | |

Note: Bathing waters which were insufficiently sampled or not sampled according to the Bathing Water Directive are not included in this table. Therefore, in some cases, the sum of the percentages is not equal to 100%.

Table 3: Results of bathing water quality for all bathing waters in France in 2008

| | | FR | | | | |
|---------|------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | Total number of bathing waters | Compliance with guide values | Compliance with mandatory values | Not compliant | Banned/closed throughout the season |
| Bathing | 2008 | 3312 | 3191 | 3191 | 118 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|--------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Waters | | | | | |
|--------|--|--|--|--|--|

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.

4. Development of bathing water quality

Coastal bathing waters

In France, 97.2% of the coastal bathing waters (1,913) met both the mandatory and more stringent guide values in 2008. In terms of mandatory values, this is a slight increase compared to the previous year (+1.5%). In terms of guide values, the increase was higher (19.5%). 2.7 % of the coastal bathing waters (53) did not comply with the mandatory values, which is a decrease by 1.6%. 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. During the last six years the percentage of bathing waters that met the mandatory water quality remained stable around 96%. In that period, the rate of compliance with the guide values was up to 73%. Since the start of reporting in 1991, one to two bathing waters were closed for three years only.

Freshwater bathing waters

95.1% of the freshwater bathing waters (1,278) met both the mandatory and more stringent guide values in 2008. In terms of mandatory values, this is a slight increase compared to the previous year (+ 2.7%). In terms of guide values, the increase was very significant (41.4%). The percentage of non-compliant bathing waters was 4.8% (65 bathing waters) after a decreased by 2.6%. 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. As of 2002 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. In 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.

During the 2008 bathing season, 3 312 bathing areas (1344 freshwater and 1968 coastal water) were checked in accordance with the provisions of the Directive 76/160/EEC, which represents a key control, ensuring the best possible health protection for the many bathers.

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 reports for 27 Member States and the EU summary report, can be found on the bathing water quality website (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-bathing/index_en.html).

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, while Luxembourg already started 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 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 2008 bathing season in France

