

### Bathing water quality in Europe: good news for the environment and for holiday makers

May 2018 saw publication of the latest report by the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the European Commission on bathing water quality in Europe,

- covering 21.801 bathing water sites monitored last year across Europe (21.509 in the 28 EU Member States, 292 in Albania and Switzerland),
- summarising that 95.9% of these bathing water sites complied with the minimum quality requirements set out in the 2006 Bathing Water Directive .

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Specific results from monitoring showed a small drop in EU sites meeting the highest 'excellent' and the minimum quality requirements set out by the EU's Bathing Water Directive. 'Excellent' quality standards across Europe dropped marginally from 85.5% in 2016 to 85% last year. However, the share of bathing water sites in the EU with excellent water quality has generally increased from 82.6 % in 2013 to 85.0 % in 2017. Similarly, those meeting minimum 'sufficient' standing fell from 96.3% to 96.0%. The reason for the slight drop was due mostly to the effect of summer rain on test results as well as changes in testing methodology in Romania and Sweden. The number of overall 'poor' rated sites remained mostly unchanged from 2016 across the EU, Albania and Switzerland, dropping from 1.5% in 2016 to 1.4% in 2017.

- All reported bathing water sites in Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Slovenia and Switzerland achieved at least sufficient quality in 2017 (according to minimum quality standards set by the Bathing Water Directive).
- "Top Five": In five countries, 95 % or more of bathing waters were assessed as being of excellent quality: Luxembourg (100 %), Malta (98.9 %), Cyprus (97.3%), Greece (95.9 %) and Austria (95.1 %).
- Some way to go still: The three countries with the *highest numbers* of bathing water sites of 'poor' water quality were Italy (79 bathing water sites or 1.4%), France (80 sites or 2.4%) and Spain (38 sites or 1.7%). In the EU Member States, the *highest proportion* of bathing waters classified as 'poor' was recorded in Estonia (four bathing waters or 7.4%), Ireland (seven bathing waters or 4.9%) and the United Kingdom (21 bathing waters or 3.3%)

Europe's bathing water quality has vastly improved over the last 40 years, when the EU's Bathing Water Directive was introduced. Effective monitoring and management

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2006/7/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the management of bathing water quality and repealing Directive 76/160/EEC, Official Journal L 64, 4.3.2006, p. 37.

introduced under the Directive led to a drastic reduction in untreated or partially treated municipal and industrial waste water ending up in water. As a result, more and more bathing water sites are not only meeting the minimum quality standards but have also improved their quality to the highest standards.

For more in-depth reading

- Full report (in French, German and English): <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/europes-seas-and-coasts/assessments/state-of-bathing-water>
- Individual country reports (all EU Member States, plus Albania and Switzerland; in English only): <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/europes-seas-and-coasts/assessments/state-of-bathing-water/country-reports-2017-bathing-season>
- Interactive map <http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/interactive/bathing/state-of-bathing-waters>
- Bathing Water Directive 2006/7/EC (in all EU languages): <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006L0007>

Sources : European Environment Agency, European Commission, May 2018

Bathing Water Report May 2018

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## European Bathing Water Quality in 2017

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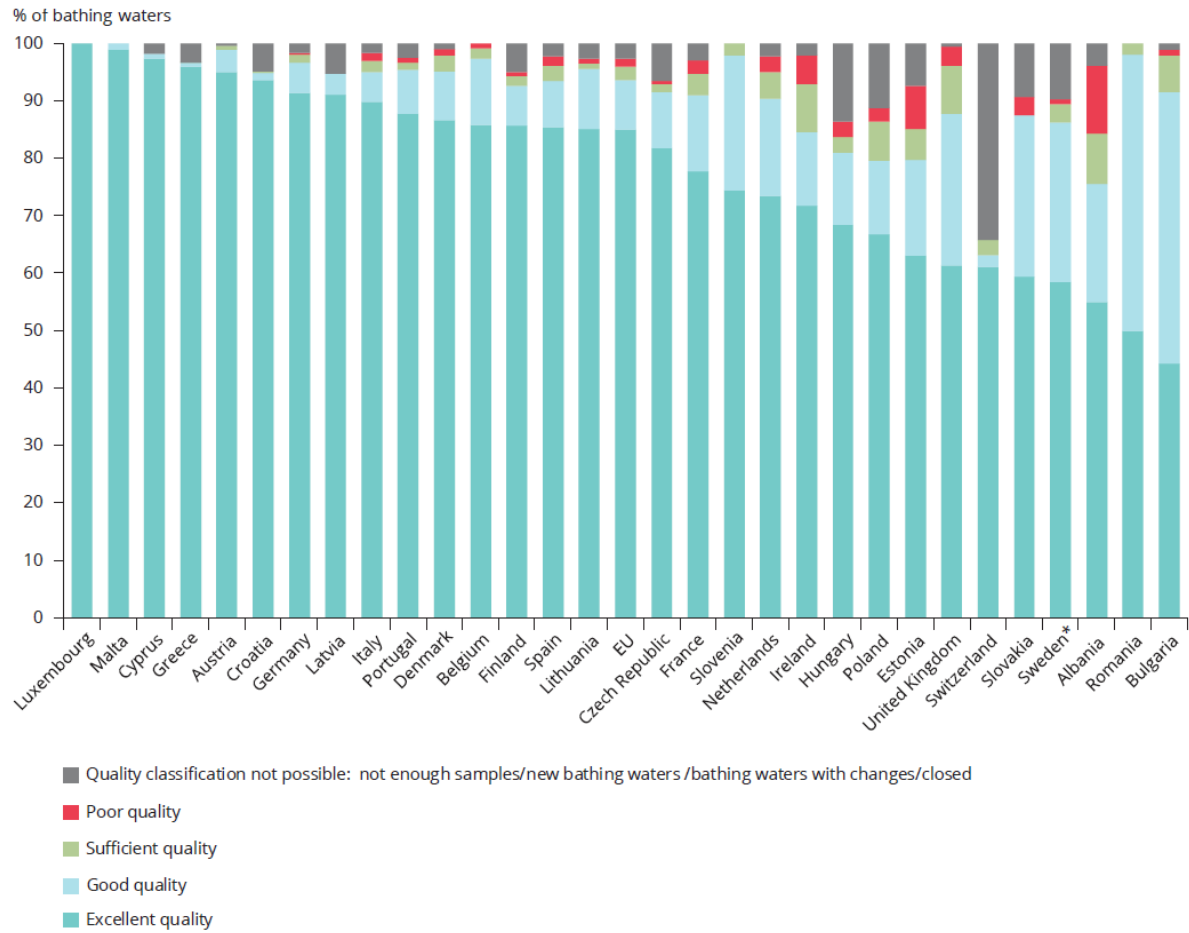


European Environment Agency



Graphics 2:

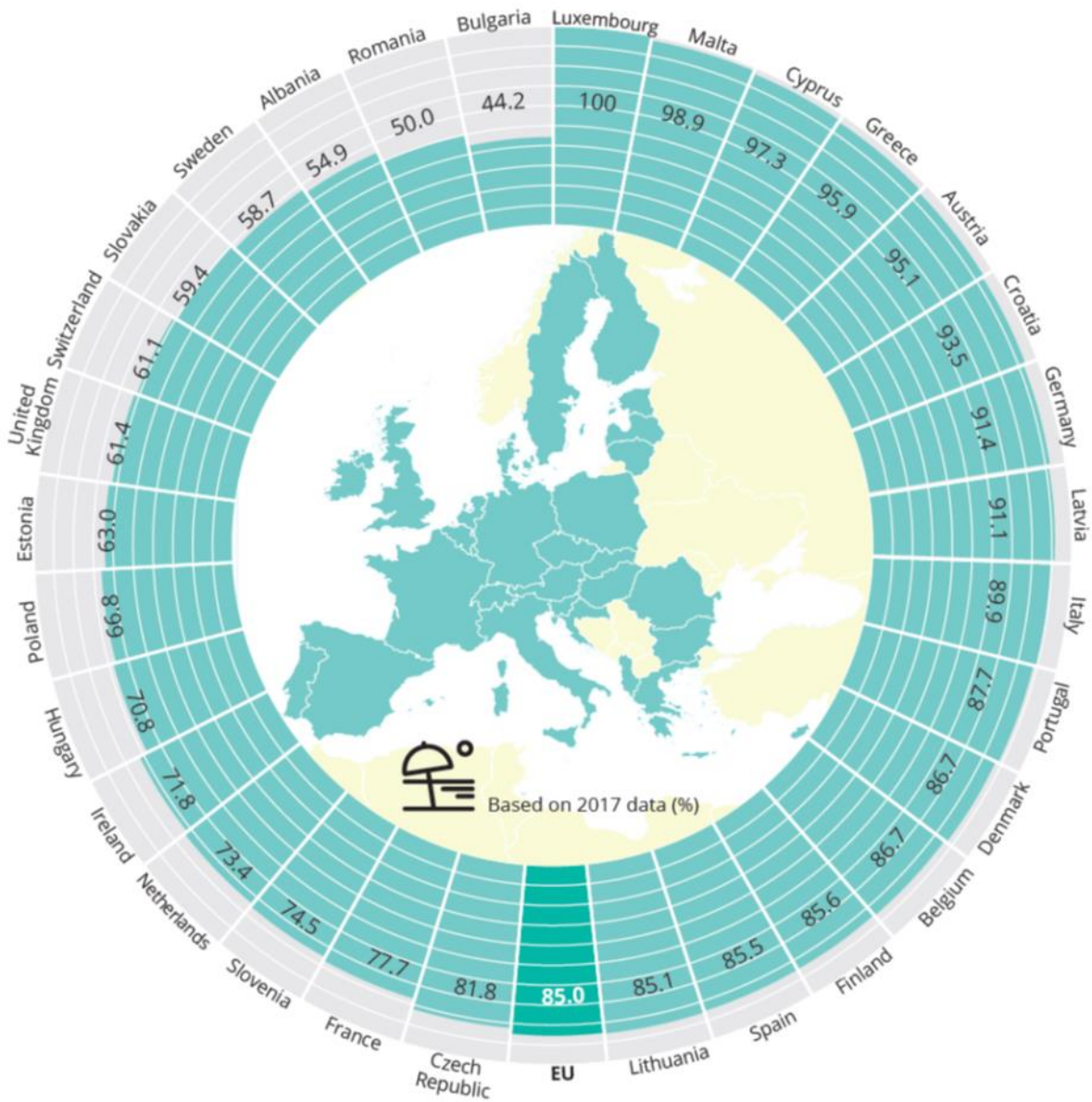
## Bathing water quality in 2017: EU Member States, Albania and Switzerland



**Note:** (\*) Methodology problems by Sweden have affected the results; see also the Swedish country report.



Graphics 3:  
Bathing water sites with excellent water quality in European countries



## Graphics 4: Status of bathing waters assessed as poor

% of poor bathing waters in 2016 and their management in 2017



- Poor in 2016 and excluded from monitoring programme or not assessed (changes, closed or not enough samples) in 2017
- Quality improved from poor in 2016 to at least sufficient in 2017
- Poor quality in 2016 and 2017