

Bathing water results 2012 – Finland

1. Reporting and assessment

In 2012 the Finnish authorities reported under Directive 2006/7/EC provisions a list of their bathing waters, start and end of bathing season for each bathing water, short term pollution events, events impacting bathing water quality and measured values of concentrations of two microbiological parameters — intestinal enterococci and *Escherichia coli* (also known as *E. coli*). This report gives a general overview of bathing water quality in Finland for the 2012 bathing season. Finland has reported under the Directive 2006/7/EC since 2008.

When four consecutive years of samples of intestinal enterococci and *Escherichia coli* for bathing water are available, the assessment is done according to assessment rules of the new bathing water Directive 2006/7/EC. The Annex IV of the directive requires a sample to be taken shortly before the start of the bathing season. Sampling dates are to be distributed throughout the bathing season, with the interval between sampling dates never exceeding one month. Taking into account one pre-season sample, no fewer than four samples are to be taken and analysed per bathing season. Three samples need to be taken and analysed per bathing season in the case of bathing water with either bathing season not exceeding eight weeks or being situated in a region subject to special geographical constraints. The result of such monitoring is used to build up the sets of bathing water quality data. The number of samples for the assessment period should thus be at least 16 or 12 if season duration is less than eight weeks or the region is subject to special geographical constraints.

Bathing water quality in 2012 season in Finland is assessed under the rules of the new bathing water Directive 2006/7/EC. The new Directive assessment provisions are transformed into the following technical rules: a) one pre-season sample should be available, b) the interval between sampling dates in 2012 should never exceed 35 days, provided that the next sampling is done according to the monitoring calendar; c) the yearly number of samples in the previous years should be four or three if bathing season does not exceed eight weeks.

Bathing waters quality classes according to the Directive 2006/7/EC are 'excellent', 'good', 'sufficient' and 'poor'. Bathing waters are classified on the basis of the percentile values for microbiological enumerations falling in the certain class given in Annex I of the Directive. Some bathing waters cannot be classified according to their quality but are instead classified as 'insufficiently sampled', 'new', 'changes' and 'closed'.

The bathing water is classified as 'insufficiently sampled' in 2012 if pre-season sample is missing, sampling frequency is not satisfied or the set of data is not complete. If the bathing water is newly identified and the data set is not complete yet, it is classified as 'new'. If changes occur that affect quality and the data set is not complete yet, it is classified as 'changes'. Temporarily closed bathing waters or closed bathing waters throughout 2012 season are classified if there is a complete set of data available. Otherwise, they are classified as 'closed'.

2. Length of bathing season and number of bathing waters

The bathing season started on 15 or 25 June 2012 and ended on 15 or 31 August 2012 for coastal bathing waters. Inland bathing waters opened on 15 or 25 June 2012 and closed on 15 or 31 August 2012.

A total of 320 bathing waters were reported in Finland during the 2012 bathing season, of which 83 were coastal bathing waters and 237 were inland bathing waters (14 on rivers; 223 on lakes). No

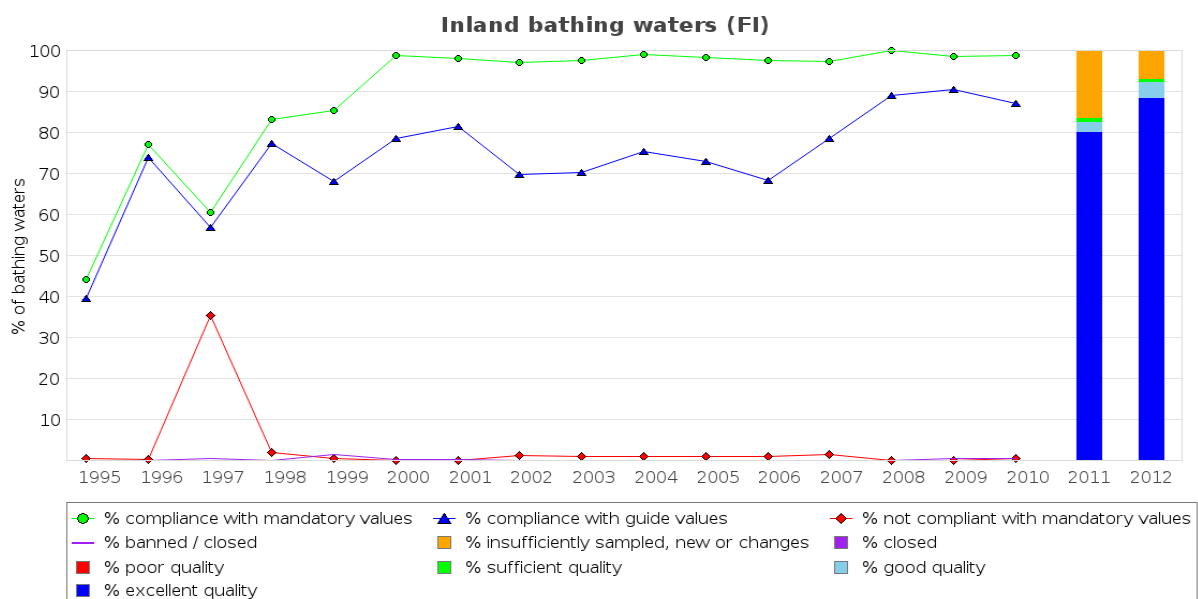
coastal and five inland bathing waters were reported as de-listed (permanently closed) compared to the previous year. No coastal and no inland bathing waters were added to the list.

With 320 reported bathing waters Finland accounts for about 1.5 % of the reported bathing waters of the European Union.

3. Bathing water quality

The results of the bathing water quality in Finland for the period 1995-2012 are presented in Figure 1¹. 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) and the European Environment Agency's bathing water website (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/status-and-monitoring/state-of-bathing-water>).

Figure 1: Results of bathing water quality in Finland from 1995 to 2012.

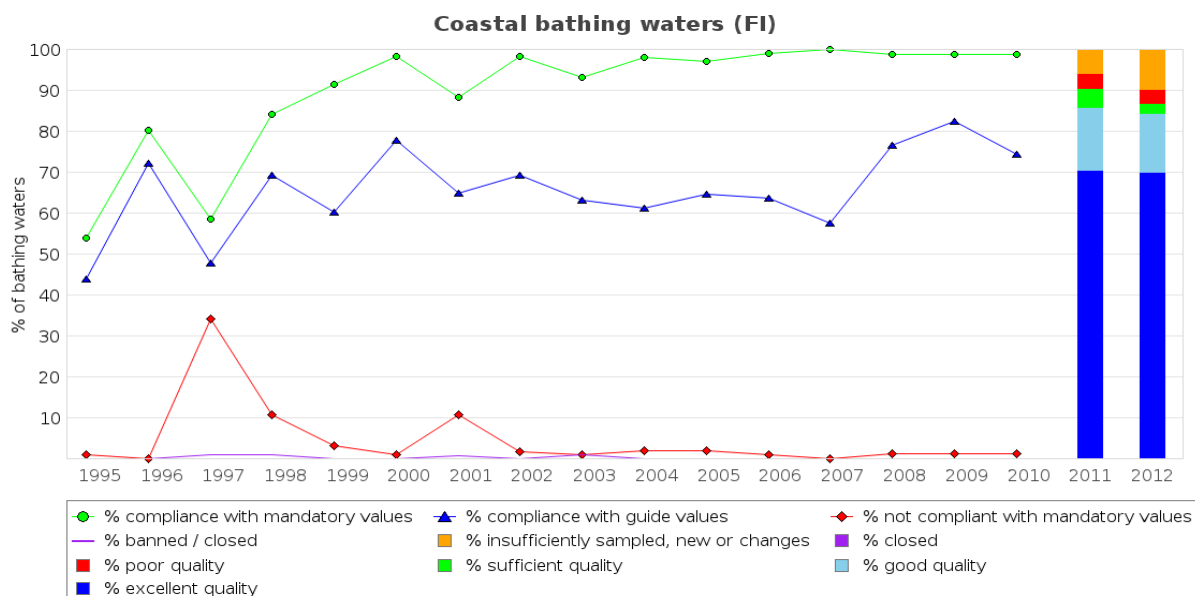


¹ The graphs show the classification under the Directive 76/160/EEC and during transition period, for coastal and inland bathing waters from 1995 to 2010:

- 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, violet line).

The same graphs show the classification under the Directive 2006/7/EC, for coastal and inland bathing waters for 2011 and 2012:

- 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 (violet bar);
- The percentage of bathing waters that are insufficiently sampled, new or with changes (orange bar).



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

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 2012 season. A map given in Appendix 1 shows the location and quality of the bathing waters.

Coastal bathing waters

In Finland, 69.9 % of the coastal bathing waters were of excellent quality in 2012. This is a decrease of 0.7 % compared to the previous year. A total of 12 bathing waters (14.5 %) had good quality and two bathing waters (2.4 %) had sufficient quality compared to 13 (15.3 %) and four (4.7 %) in 2011 respectively. Three bathing waters (3.6 %) had poor quality in 2012 as in 2011. No bathing water was categorized as closed in 2011 and 2012.

Inland bathing waters

Some 88.2 % of the inland bathing waters had excellent quality in 2012. This is an increase of 7.9 % compared to the previous year. Nine bathing waters (3.8 %) had good quality and two bathing waters (0.8 %) had sufficient quality compared to six (2.5 %) and two (0.8 %) in 2011 respectively. No bathing waters had poor quality and no bathing waters were closed during the season as in 2011.

Table 1: Results of bathing water quality in Finland. Assessment during transition period.

FI												
		Total number of bathing waters	Compliance with guide and mandatory values*		Compliance with mandatory value		Not compliant		Banned/closed		Insufficiently sampled or not sampled	
			number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Coastal bathing waters	2008	85	65	76.5	84	98.8	1	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2009	85	70	82.4	84	98.8	1	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2010	86	64	74.4	85	98.8	1	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2011											
	2012											
Inland bathing waters	2008	262	233	88.9	262	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2009	254	230	90.6	250	98.4	0	0.0	1	0.4	3	1.2
	2010	242	211	87.2	239	98.8	1	0.4	1	0.4	1	0.4
	2011											
	2012											
All bathing waters	2008	347	298	85.9	346	99.7	1	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2009	339	300	88.5	334	98.5	1	0.3	1	0.3	3	0.9
	2010	328	275	83.8	324	98.8	2	0.6	1	0.3	1	0.3
	2011											
	2012											

*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*.

Table 2: Results of bathing water quality in Finland for 2011 and 2012. Assessment under Directive 2006/7/EC.

		Total number of bathing waters	Excellent quality		Good quality		Sufficient quality		Poor quality		Closed		Insufficiently sampled		New		Changes	
			number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Coastal bathing waters	2009																	
	2010																	
	2011	85	60	70.6	13	15.3	4	4.7	3	3.5	0	0.0	2	2.4	3	3.5	0	0.0
	2012	83	58	69.9	12	14.5	2	2.4	3	3.6	0	0.0	5	6.0	2	2.4	1	1.2
Inland bathing waters	2009																	
	2010																	
	2011	238	191	80.3	6	2.5	2	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	27	11.3	10	4.2	2	0.8
	2012	237	209	88.2	9	3.8	2	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	3.4	6	2.5	3	1.3
All bathing waters	2009																	
	2010																	
	2011	323	251	77.7	19	5.9	6	1.9	3	0.9	0	0.0	29	9.0	13	4.0	2	0.6
	2012	320	267	83.4	21	6.6	4	1.3	3	0.9	0	0.0	13	4.1	8	2.5	4	1.3

4. Important information as provided by the Finnish authorities

Municipal health protection authorities establish a list of locally identified public bathing waters before the start of a bathing season. Municipal authorities arrange opportunities for public to get information on the implementation of the bathing water legislation and on the list of public bathing waters. The list can e.g. be displayed at the official notice board or published using appropriate media such as Internet and local newspapers. Public has then opportunity to formulate proposals and comments on the list. The final list of public bathing areas having large number of bathers is reported to the European Commission before the start of each bathing season. The final list of public bathing areas with large number of bathers will be also available online (http://www.valvira.fi/ohjtaus_ja_valvonta/terveydensuojelu/uimavesi).

In Finland, large number of bathers is considered to be more than 100 bathers in a day. In 2012, some bathing areas with low number of bathers (below 100 bathers in a day) or private bathing areas have been delisted. In Finland, high amount of private summer cottages near lakes, rivers and sea reduce the use of public bathing areas. According to the recent statistics in 2011, there are around 493 000 summer cottages in Finland, which is 4 000 cottages more than in 2010. In addition, the traditional Finnish legal concept of everyman's right allows free right of access to waterways. Everyman's right means that everyone may swim in inland waters and the sea, i.e. swimming is allowed also in other areas, not only in public bathing areas. A booklet of everyman's rights is available in the Internet, <http://www.ymparisto.fi/download.asp?contentid=25603&lan=fi>.

Three bathing waters were designated as poor quality in 2012:

Unique identification code (BWID)	Name	Type	2012 status
FI151208001	LEIRINTÄALUE	Coastal	poor
FI183853004	SORTTAMÄKI	Coastal	poor
FI195280003	HARRSTRÖM	Coastal	poor

5. General information on bathing water quality in Europe in 2012

Out of more than 22 000 bathing areas monitored throughout Europe in 2012, around two thirds were in coastal waters and the rest were in rivers and lakes. In the 2012 bathing season, the monitoring of bathing sites has been adjusted to the provisions in the EU's new bathing water directive (Directive 2006/7/EC). The sampling of water quality in most of the bathing water sites meets the frequency standards (this involves a pre-season sample of the water quality, followed up by monthly samples thereafter). As regards assessment, the provisions in the new bathing water directive have been applied in 19 European countries (Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden). This involved taking data from four years of monitoring to make the 2012 assessment. For the remaining ten countries, the 2012 assessment has been carried out under a set of transitional rules that do not yet meet all the requirements of the new directive using the results from the 2012 monitoring.

In 2012, the quality of 94 % of all bathing waters met at least the minimum 'mandatory' level (corresponding to a rating of sufficient quality under the new directive). Bathing water quality improved at 1.8 % of sites in 2012 compared with 2011, and at 2.5 % of sites compared with 2010. There has also been a marked decline compared with 2011 in the number of bathing waters that were closed or that prohibited bathing.

In 2012, 95.3 % of coastal bathing waters in the EU-27 achieved the minimum quality standards requested by the EU directives — an increase of 2.0 % compared with 2011. The share of coastal bathing waters with excellent quality (or complying with the guide values) in 2012 reached 81.2 % (an increase of 0.9 % from 2011).

The percentage of inland bathing waters with excellent quality is 72 % in 2012, a 1.6 % increase from 2011. In 2012, 91 % of inland bathing waters in the European Union had good or sufficient quality. This is a 1.0 % point increase from 2011. Only 2.3 % of inland bathing waters in the EU did not satisfy the minimum quality level. This is 0.1 % decrease from the previous year, continuing the slow but steady reduction in the percentage of poor quality bathing waters.

The "European bathing water quality in 2012" report presents the results and trends in bathing water quality in 2012 in Europe (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/status-and-monitoring/state-of-bathing-water>). More information on bathing water quality as prepared for all reporting countries can be found on the European Environment Agency's bathing water website. The reports for the 2012 season have been produced by TC Vode, European Topic Center ICM Waters partner with support of the Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia (IWRS). Countries have collaborated in the assessment of bathing water quality and supplied additional information when needed.

6. Interactive information on bathing water quality in Europe

The bathing water section of the Water Information System for Europe (WISE), which is accessible at the EEA bathing water website (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/status-and-monitoring/state-of-bathing-water>), 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, download data for a selected country or region, and make comparisons with previous years.

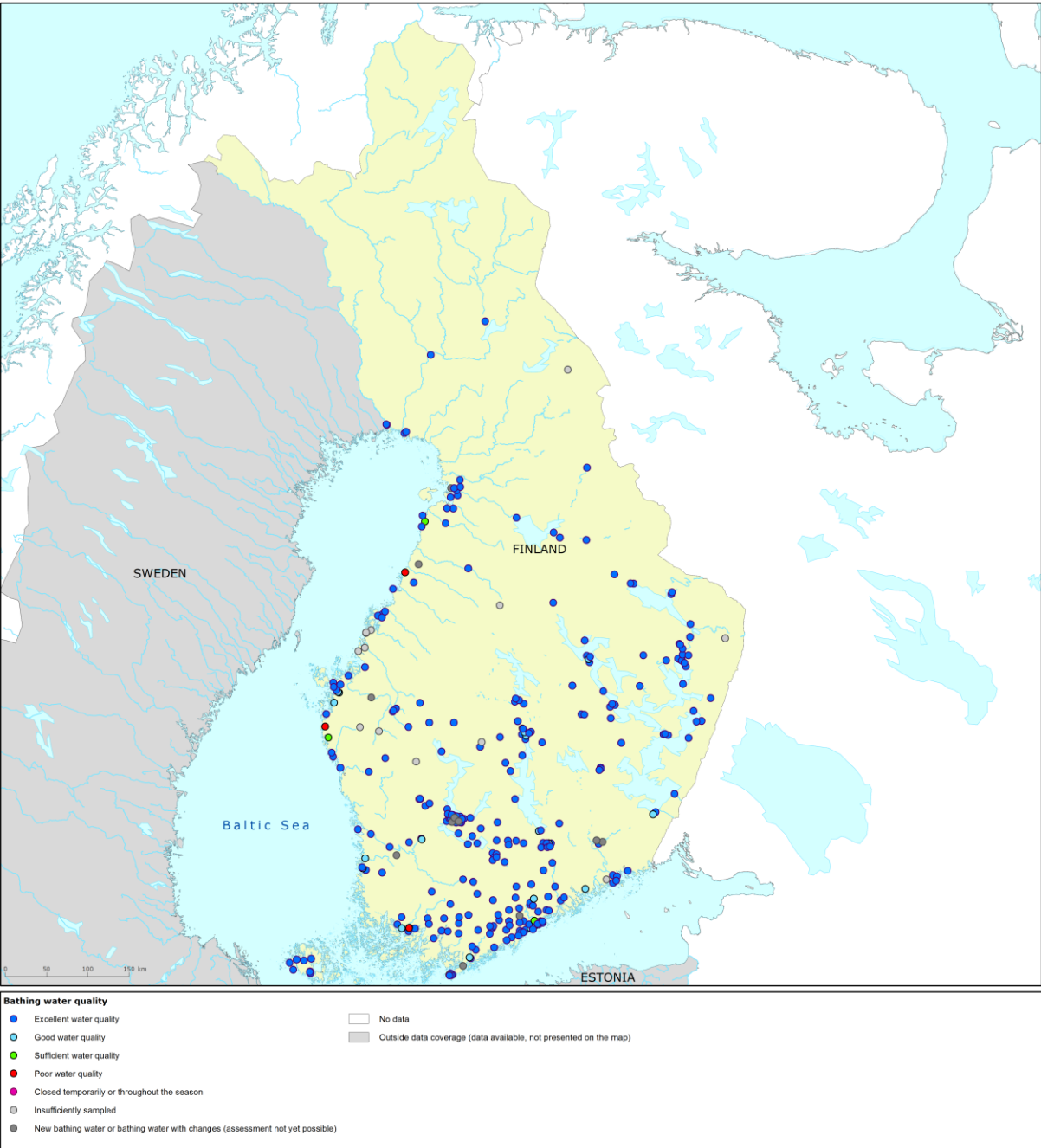
The Eye on Earth — Water Watch application (<http://eyeonearth.org/map/WaterWatch/>) allows users to zoom in on a section of coast, riverbank or lake, both in street map or, where available, bird's eye viewing formats.

The data on bathing water quality in 2012 and previous years can also be viewed in WISE bathing water data viewer, an application prepared by TC Vode (<http://bwd.eea.europa.eu/>).

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 site. Websites generally include a map search function and public access to the monitoring results both in real time and for previous seasons. Citizens now have access to more bathing water information than ever, giving them the tools to become more actively involved in protecting the environment and helping to improve Europe's bathing areas.

Appendix 1

Map 1: Bathing waters reported during the 2012 bathing season in Finland



Source: National boundaries: EEA; Large rivers and lakes: EEA, WFD Article 3; Bathing waters data and coordinates: Finnish authorities