

BATHING WATER'S QUALITY : AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF THE EUROPEAN'S ANNUAL ASSESSMENT, SURFRIDER DELIVERS ITS MANIFESTO TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION



An annual report that does not reflect the reality of the quality of bathing water

On June 1st, the European Environment Agency published its annual assessment on the quality of bathing water. According to the report, 83% of this water is said as excellent. But these results in no way reflect tangible reality, and for good reason: **many criteria are not monitored**.

First and foremost, **chemical pollution**, which are widely missing in the European Directive on Bathing Waters. This criterion is however taken into account by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Water Framework Directive. The lack of harmonization of these directives - yet constituting a solid legislative framework - is to be deplored.

Algae and marine litter, for their part, are only subject to visual monitoring, while our clean up campaigns - organized as part of our Ocean Initiatives program - attest that plastics are found on all the beaches studied.

In addition, controls are restricted to the summer season when many citizens enjoy European waters all year round. It should also be noted that only the bathing waters are monitored but the other recreational areas where divers, kayakers, boaters and surfers enjoying their leisure activities are excluded from the study perimeter.

A European Directive to be revised for a fairer approach of reality

The European Bathing Water Directive, born in 1976, was revised for the first time in 2006. Its revision is once again on the agenda. For Surfrider Foundation Europe, it's time to strengthen the criteria ; if they are not revised now, how long will we have to wait to improve monitoring while chemical pollution is increasing ?

Surfrider Foundation Europe submits its Manifesto to the European Commission

This is why this Thursday, June 3, during its conference on bathing water, Surfrider Foundation Europe submitted its Manifesto for the quality of bathing and recreational water to the European Commission, through Silvia Bartolini, head of the marine unit responsible for policies related to the protection of the marine environment and water at DG Environment of the European Commission.

[Please find the whole manifesto here](#)

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Cosigned by [55 stakeholders that you can find here](#), the manifesto highlights all the revendications supported by Surfrider Foundation Europe :

EXTEND WATER QUALITY CONTROL TO RECREATIONAL AND WATER SPORTS AREAS

Recreational and aquatic leisure activities are very popular in Europe and go beyond simple swimming. Water sports enthusiasts are more exposed to health risks because they very often practice outside the bathing areas as defined in the regulations and their practice times are longer. Moreover, there is no physical boundary between «bathing water» and «recreational water». Water pollution is diffuse and affects water regardless of the use made of it.

MONITOR WATER QUALITY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Given that water-based recreational activities, including swimming, can be enjoyed all year round, we call for water quality monitoring to be carried out throughout the year in order to protect all those who use the sea

ADD NEW PARAMETERS TO BE MONITORED AND TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION IN THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE SITE

Chemical pollutants, harmful algal blooms and cyanobacteria, as well as waste and plastics. Given the magnitude and variety of pollution sources impacting our water bodies, we cannot reasonably limit the quality control of our waters to the assessment of two bacteriological criteria, a two-month monitoring period and four samples.

IMPOSE OBLIGATIONS TO AUTHORITIES TO PREVENT POLLUTION AT SOURCE

Public authorities should be obliged to put a strict end to pollution, regardless of the classification of water, and without the option of systematically banning access to bathing or recreational areas as this latter option does not provide any incentive to tackle pollution at source.

HARMONISE ALL POLICIES IMPACTING ON WATER AND MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

Whether for domestic, industrial, or recreational use, all sector-specific and non-sector-specific policies as well as texts governing the management of marine or freshwater must be aligned. There needs to be consistency in the monitoring processes, testing methods and monitored parameters. This means the Water Framework Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Wastewater Treatment Directive and other EU policies must be aligned in order to improve the quality of water and protect the marine and freshwater environment as well as human health.

STRENGTHEN AND ENCOURAGE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Member States should step up their communication on public participation and consult citizens as well as the representatives of water sports and the community of bathers and water sports enthusiasts in Europe on a regular basis and through various media. This consultation should cover more areas than the list of sites to be monitored.

ENSURE HARMONISED, MORE ACCESSIBLE AND BETTER RELAYED INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC ON THE QUALITY OF WATER

Public information needs to provide different reading levels with playful and simplified communication for a wide audience and the opportunity to acquire knowledge for a well-informed public. It must be made available both on site and online.

In this period when everyone is getting ready to go on holidays after a tough year, we believe that the media also have an essential role in providing information to users. For that reason, our experts - both on water quality and on the European legislative framework - are at your disposal for any interview in order to ensure a better awareness of what it is really about when we talk about monitoring of bathing water.

Do not hesitate to contact us.



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