

Bathing water results 2007 – Estonia

1. Introduction

People throughout Europe show a great interest in the water quality of seas, coasts, rivers and lakes. Good bathing water quality may be an important factor in their choice of a holiday or weekend destination. Also for the tourist industry, clean and safe water is an important argument to attract visitors to an area. The Bathing Water Directive sets binding standards for bathing water in the European Union.

This report gives a general overview of the bathing water quality in Estonia during the 2007 bathing season. The parameters to be checked are microbiological (total coliforms and faecal coli forms) and physico-chemical (mineral oils, surface-active substances and phenols). The bathing waters are classified in the following categories:

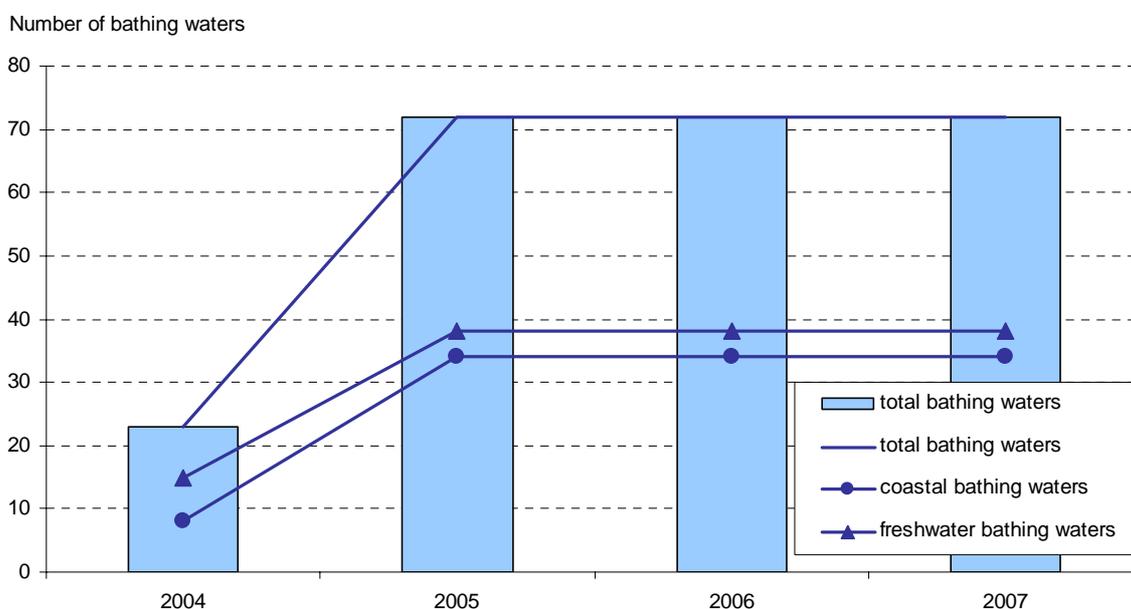
- Compliant with mandatory values of the Directive for the 5 parameters
- Compliant with more stringent guide values of the Directive for the 5 parameters
- Not compliant with mandatory values of the Directive for the 5 parameters
- Prohibited throughout the bathing season

2. Length of bathing season and number of bathing waters

For all bathing waters the bathing season lasted four months, from 15 May to 15 September 2007.

A total of 72 bathing waters were monitored in Estonia during the 2007 bathing season, of which 34 were coastal and 38 freshwater bathing waters. With 72 bathing waters Estonia accounts for about 0,3% of the reported bathing waters of the European Union.

Graph 1: Total number of bathing waters reported by the Estonian authorities since 2004



Graph 1 shows the evolution of the reported number of bathing waters since monitoring of the water quality started according the Directive. Both the number of coastal bathing waters and the number of freshwater bathing waters increased in 2005 and stayed the same afterwards.

3. Results of bathing water quality

The results of the bathing water quality in Estonia during the bathing season of 2007 are presented in graph 2.

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

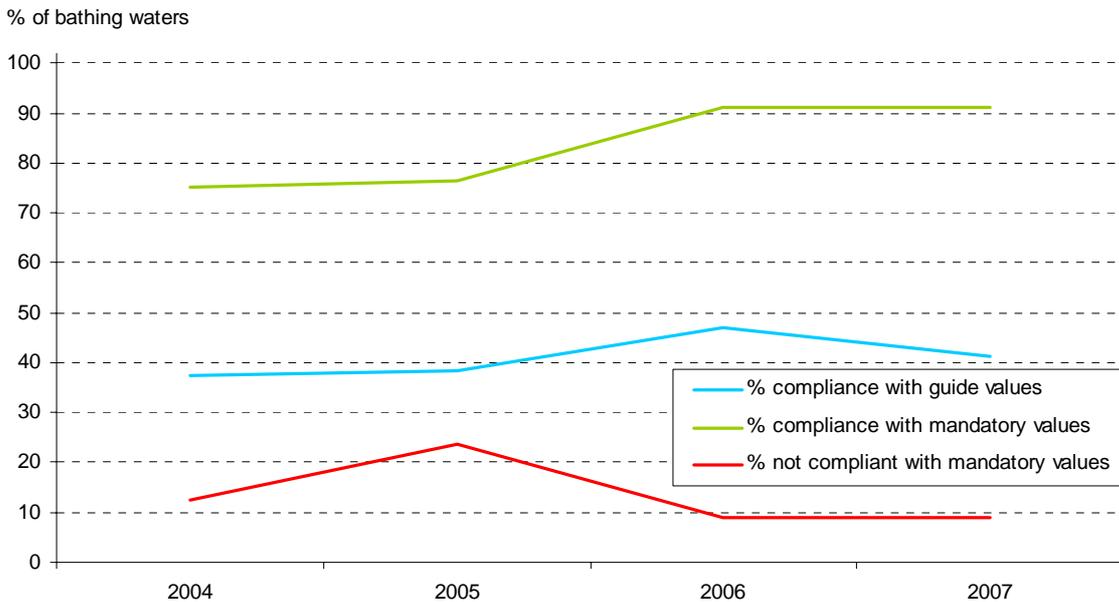
- The percentage of bathing waters that comply with the guide values of the Directive (blue line),
- The percentage of bathing waters that comply with the mandatory values of the Directive (green line)
- The percentage of bathing waters that do not comply with the mandatory values of the Directive (red line)
- The percentage of bathing waters that are prohibited throughout the bathing season (grey line)

The table in Annex 1 shows the same information in absolute numbers and in percentages, again separately for coastal and freshwater bathing waters.

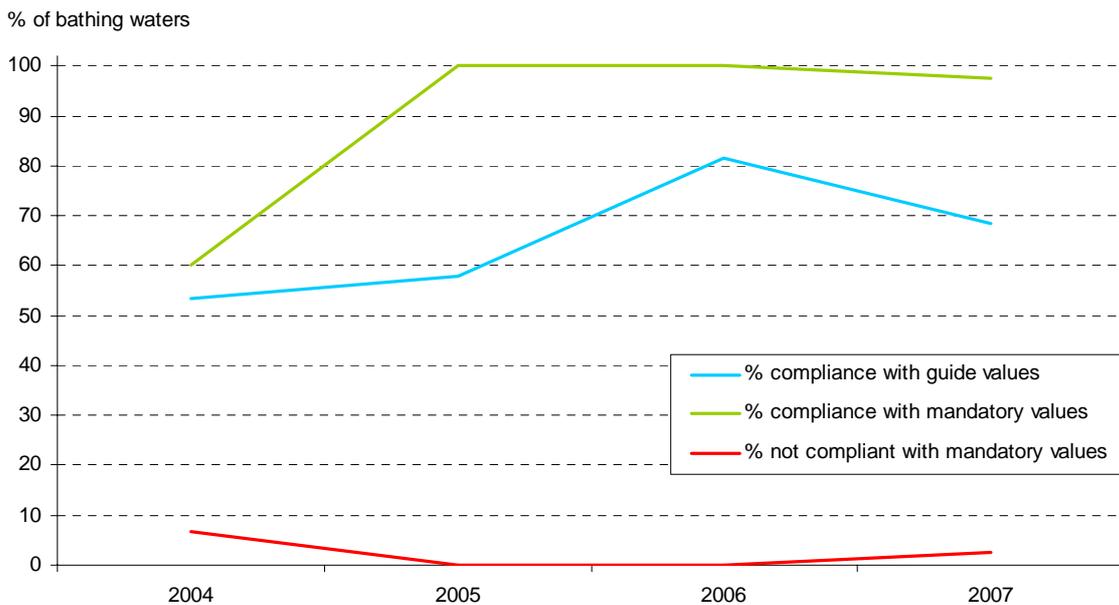
The map shows the location of the reported bathing waters in Estonia. The location of the bathing waters is based on the geographic coordinates reported by the Estonian authorities.

Graph 2: Results of bathing water quality in Estonia from 2004 to 2007

Coastal bathing waters



Freshwater bathing waters



4. Development of bathing water quality

Coastal bathing waters

As in the previous year 91.2% of the coastal bathing waters were in compliance with the mandatory values. 41.2% of the coastal bathing waters met the more stringent guide values. All bathing waters reported in 2006 were also open in 2007. No coastal bathing water had to be closed during the season.

From 2004 on there is an improvement of the percentage of bathing waters that comply with mandatory values. The percentages of bathing waters that complied with the more stringent guide values increased from 2004 to 2006 and decreased again from 2006 to 2007. Since 2006, the

percentage of bathing waters that did not comply with mandatory values, remained at the same level (just below 10%).

Freshwater bathing waters

97.4% of the freshwater bathing waters met the mandatory values in 2007. This is a slight decrease compared to the previous year when all bathing waters complied with the mandatory values. The rate of compliance with the guide values, decreased by 13.2%. The number of non-compliant (2.6%) bathing waters increased compared to 2006. In none of the bathing waters, bathing had to be prohibited.

After 2004 there was an improvement in the quality of the freshwater bathing waters, both in terms of compliance with the mandatory values as with the guide values. In 2007, however, the quality decreased.

5. General information as provided by the Estonian authorities

Information for the public

During bathing season information about quality of bathing water is available at the bigger beaches, on the web site of Health Protection Inspectorate: <http://www.tervisekaitse.ee/> as well as it is posted to counties and central newspapers and occasionally in TV or radio.

Water quality

Bathing water quality is responsibility of two Ministries: the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Social Affairs. Surveillance of quality of bathing water is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and its institution Health Protection Inspectorate.

Quality of bathing water complied with the requirements in most of the places in this bathing season. Non-compliance with the parameters limit values occurred usually once or twice during the bathing season in some bathing places. Mostly faecal streptococci from microbiological parameters didn't comply with the requirements and dissolved oxygen and transparency from chemical and physical parameters exceeded the requirements. The reasons for the non-compliances are different and often closely related with weather conditions – amount of sunrise, rainfall, water temperature etc. Faecal contamination may be a problem for bathing places what situate close to bigger settlements and towns where is insufficient sewerage or lot of private houses with their own gathering sewerage wells.

During the last decade, significant changes have occurred in wastewater treatment. Based on large-volume investments, the level of treatment has increased by today and a significant decrease is observed in the pollution load. Since 1990, lot of new wastewater treatment plants have been built and old ones renovated. But there are still settlements which need new sewerage or wastewater treatment plants. So there are several development and investment plans for water networks and sewerage. More information is available at the web site of Ministry of Environment: <http://www.envir.ee/67388>

6. Infringement procedures

There are currently no infringement procedures against Estonia under this Directive.

7. 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/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 Directive¹. This new Directive requires more effective monitoring and

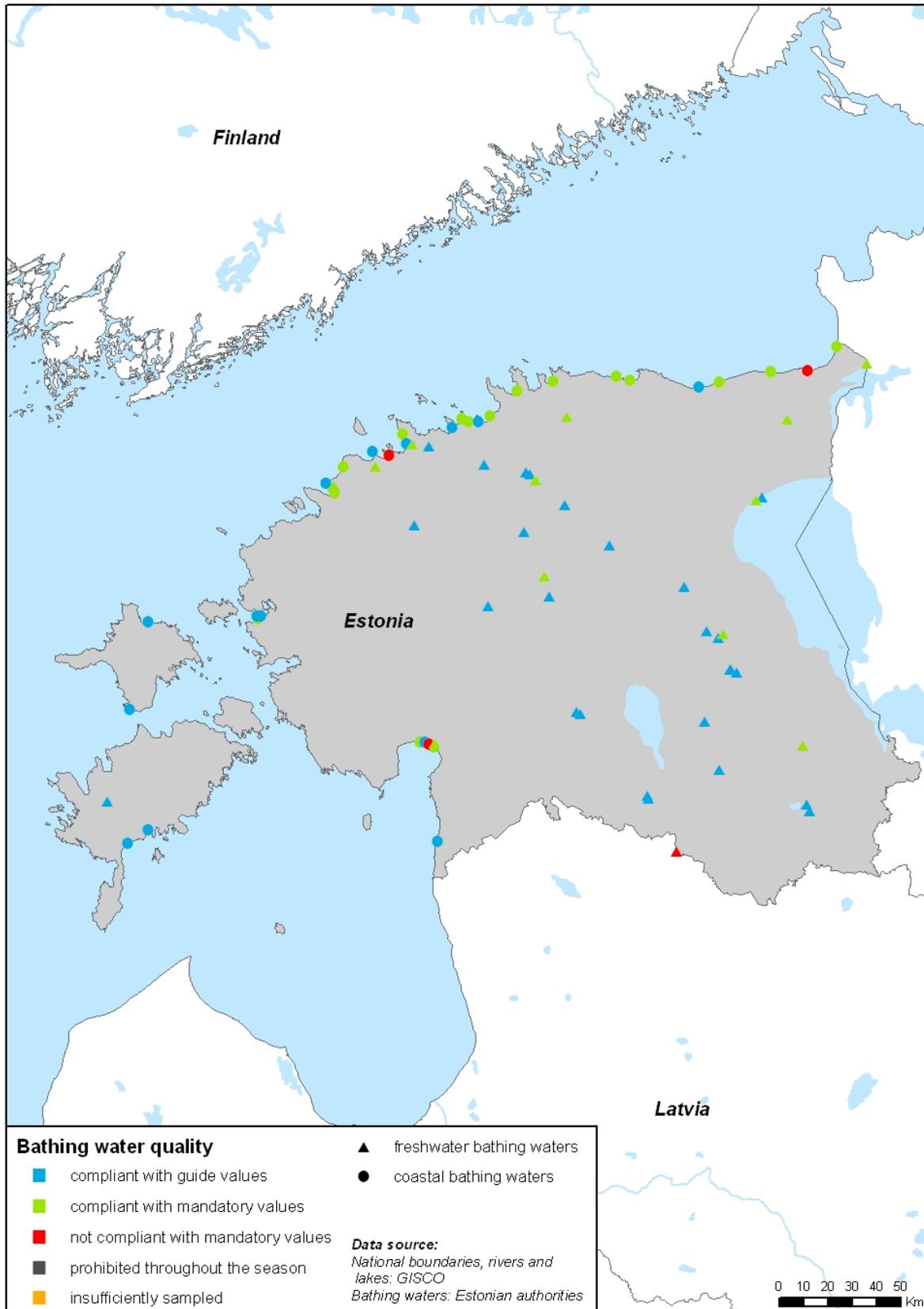
¹ Directive 2006/7/EC

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://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:064:0037:0051:EN:PDF>. Luxembourg already started since 2007 reporting according to these more stringent new requirements.

A newly established 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 viewer (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/wise-viewer>) through interactive maps.

Annex 1

Map 1: Bathing waters reported during the 2007 bathing season in Estonia



Results of bathing water quality in Estonia from 2004 to 2007

	Total number of bathing waters	Compliance with guide values		Compliance with mandatory values		Not compliant		Prohibited throughout the season		
		number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	
Coastal bathing waters	2004	8	3	37.5	6	75.0	1	12.5	0	0.0
	2005	34	13	38.2	26	76.5	8	23.5	0	0.0
	2006	34	16	47.1	31	91.2	3	8.8	0	0.0
	2007	34	14	41.2	31	91.2	3	8.8	0	0.0
Freshwater bathing waters	2004	15	8	53.3	9	60.0	1	6.7	0	0.0
	2005	38	22	57.9	38	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2006	38	31	81.6	38	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2007	38	26	68.4	37	97.4	1	2.6	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.