

IMPROVED BRITISH BEACHES STILL NOT A PATCH ON GREECE



Recent EU studies devoted to testing the quality of water around Europe's beaches found that British beaches have come on leaps and bounds in terms of cleanliness in recent years. In 2005, 10 of Britain's beaches were deemed unsafe for bathers due to high levels of the bacteria enterococcus and streptococcus in the water increasing the risk of people becoming ill once in contact with such water. The presence of such bacteria in the water is thought to be a general indication of the level of pollution in the area as a whole. It is usually caused by decaying vegetation or animal matter, yet has been known to be caused by the presence of sewage. Last year, only 2 of Britain's 567 beaches failed the EU test with 60% of British beaches being declared excellent.

However, Britain is still unable to compete with some of its Mediterranean and Aegean counterparts. Greece was proven to be virtually unbeatable, with every one of its 2047 beaches passing the test and 96.9% of these beaches being declared as excellent. This leaves almost no margin for improvement. Cyprus could claim the gold medal, with 99% of its beaches also in the 'excellent' bracket.

The worst beaches in Europe for cleanliness were found to be in Poland and Belgium. France was surprisingly behind Britain in the new 'beach league', as surveyors found high levels of pollution around French beaches on the Channel and Northern Atlantic coasts. Global warming has been blamed for disappointing results in northern Europe. However, the same results only strengthen the British claim to glory as the British are, after all, in the same region. Despite the euphoria, the British have a long way to go to meet Greek and Cypriot standards.

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