

Statements from European Health, Water, & Environment Authorities on Water Fluoridation

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Although the U.S. Centers for Disease Control hails water fluoridation as one of the “top ten public health achievements of the twentieth century,” [most of the western world](#), including the vast majority of western Europe, does not fluoridate its water supply.

At present, 97% of the western European population drinks non-fluoridated water. This includes: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, and approximately 90% of both the United Kingdom and Spain. Although some of these countries fluoridate their salt, the majority do not. (The only western European countries that allow salt fluoridation are Austria, France, Germany, Spain, and Switzerland.)

Despite foregoing “one of the top ten public health achievements of the twentieth century,” [tooth decay rates](#) have declined in Europe as precipitously over the past 50 years as they have in the United States. This raises serious questions about the CDC’s assertion that the decline of tooth decay in the United States since the 1950s is largely attributable to the advent of water fluoridation.

STATEMENTS FROM EUROPEAN OFFICIALS:

Austria:

“Toxic fluorides have never been added to the public water supplies in Austria.”

SOURCE: M. Eisenhut, Head of Water Department, Osterreichische Yereinigung fur das Gas-und Wasserfach Schubertring 14, A-1015 Wien, Austria, February 17, 2000.



Belgium:

“This water treatment has never been of use in Belgium and will never be (we hope so) into the future. The main reason for that is the fundamental position of the drinking water sector that it is not its task to deliver medicinal treatment to people. This is the sole responsibility of health services.”

SOURCE: Chr. Legros, Directeur, Belgaqua, Brussels, Belgium, February 28, 2000.



Denmark:

“We are pleased to inform you that according to the Danish Ministry of Environment and Energy, toxic fluorides have never been added to the public water supplies. Consequently, no Danish city has ever been fluoridated.”

SOURCE: Klaus Werner, Royal Danish Embassy, Washington DC, December 22, 1999.

To read the Danish Ministry of the Environment’s reasons for banning fluoridation, [click here](#).



Finland:

“We do not favor or recommend fluoridation of drinking water. There are better ways of providing the fluoride our teeth need.”

SOURCE: Paavo Poteri, Acting Managing Director, Helsinki Water, Finland, February 7, 2000.

“Artificial fluoridation of drinking water supplies has been practiced in Finland only in one town, Kuopio, situated in eastern Finland and with a population of about 80,000 people (1.6% of the Finnish population). Fluoridation started in 1959 and finished in 1992 as a result of the resistance of local population. The most usual grounds for the resistance presented in this context were an individual’s right to drinking water without additional chemicals used for the medication of limited population groups. A concept of “force-feeding” was also mentioned.

Drinking water fluoridation is not prohibited in Finland but no municipalities have turned out to be willing to practice it. Water suppliers, naturally, have always been against dosing of fluoride chemicals into water.”

SOURCE: Leena Hiisvirta, M.Sc., Chief Engineer, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland, January 12, 1996.



France:

“Fluoride chemicals are not included in the list [of ‘chemicals for drinking water treatment’]. This is due to ethical as well as medical considerations.”

SOURCE: Louis Sanchez, Directeur de la Protection de l’Environnement, August 25, 2000.



Germany:

“Generally, in Germany fluoridation of drinking water is forbidden. The relevant German law allows exceptions to the fluoridation ban on application. The argumentation of the Federal Ministry of Health against a general permission of fluoridation of drinking water is the problematic nature of compuls[ory] medication.”

SOURCE: Gerda Hankel-Khan, Embassy of Federal Republic of Germany, September 16, 1999.



Luxembourg:

“Fluoride has never been added to the public water supplies in Luxembourg. In our views, the drinking water isn’t the suitable way for medicinal treatment and that people needing an addition of fluoride can decide by their own to use the most appropriate way, like the intake of fluoride tablets, to cover their [daily] needs.”

SOURCE: Jean-Marie RIES, Head, Water Department, Administration De L’Environment, May 3, 2000.

Netherlands:

“From the end of the 1960s until the beginning of the 1970s drinking water in various places in the Netherlands was fluoridated to prevent caries. However, in its judgement of 22 June 1973 in case No. 10683 (Budding and co. versus the City of Amsterdam) the Supreme Court (Hoge Raad) ruled there was no legal basis for fluoridation. After that judgement, amendment to the Water Supply Act was prepared to provide a legal basis for fluoridation. During the process it became clear that there was not enough support from Parlement [sic] for this amendment and the proposal was withdrawn.”

SOURCE: Wilfred Reinhold, Legal Advisor, Directorate Drinking Water, Netherlands, January 15, 2000.



Northern Ireland:

“The water supply in Northern Ireland has never been artificially fluoridated except in 2 small localities where fluoride was added to the water for about 30 years up to last year. Fluoridation ceased at these locations for operational reasons. At this time, there are no plans to commence fluoridation of water supplies in Northern Ireland.”

SOURCE: C.J. Grimes, Department for Regional Development, Belfast, November 6, 2000.



Norway:

“In Norway we had a rather intense discussion on this subject some 20 years ago, and the conclusion was that drinking water should not be fluoridated.”

SOURCE: Truls Krogh & Toril Hofshagen, Folkehelse Statens institutt for folkeheise (National Institute of Public Health) Oslo, Norway, March 1, 2000.



Sweden:

“Drinking water fluoridation is not allowed in Sweden...New scientific documentation or changes in dental health

situation that could alter the conclusions of the Commission have not been shown.”

SOURCE: Gunnar Guzikowski, Chief Government Inspector, Livsmedels Verket — National Food Administration Drinking Water Division, Sweden, February 28, 2000.

See statement by [Dr. Arvid Carlsson](#), the Nobel Laureate in Medicine, who helped lead the campaign to prevent fluoridation in Sweden in the late 1970s.



Czech Republic:

“Since 1993, drinking water has not been treated with fluoride in public water supplies throughout the Czech Republic. Although fluoridation of drinking water has not actually been proscribed it is not under consideration because this form of supplementation is considered:

- uneconomical (only 0.54% of water suitable for drinking is used as such; the remainder is employed for hygiene etc. Furthermore, an increasing amount of consumers (particularly children) are using bottled water for drinking (underground water usually with fluor)
- unecological (environmental load by a foreign substance)
- unethical (“forced medication”)
- toxicologically and physiologically debateable (fluoridation represents an untargeted form of supplementation which disregards actual individual intake and requirements and may lead to excessive health-threatening intake in certain population groups; [and] complexation of fluor in water into non biological active forms of fluor.”

SOURCE: Dr. B. Havlik, Ministerstvo Zdravotnictvi Ceske Republiky, October 14, 1999.

UPDATES

May 2007: A study of European public opinion on water fluoridation, published in the journal *Community Dentistry & Oral Epidemiology*, reports that the “vast majority of people opposed water fluoridation.” According to the study, Europeans opposed fluoridation for the following reasons:

“Many felt dental health was an issue to be dealt with at the level of the individual, rather than a solution to be imposed en masse. While people accepted that some children were not encouraged to brush their teeth, they proposed other solutions to addressing these needs rather than having a solution of unproved safety imposed on them by public health authorities whom they did not fully trust. They did not see why they should accept potential side effects in order that a minority may benefit. In particular, water was something that should be kept as pure as possible, even though it was recognized that it already contains many additives.” ([See study summary](#))

November 2004: After months of consultation, [Scotland](#) – which is currently unfluoridated – rejected plans to add fluoride to the nation’s water.

April 9, 2003: The City Parliament of [Basel, Switzerland](#) voted 73 to 23 to stop Basel’s 41 year water fluoridation program. Basel was the only city in Switzerland to fluoridate its water, and the only city in continental western Europe, outside of a few areas in Spain.