

Criteria	Natural mineral water	Spring water	Tap water
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Quality and Safety			
<b>Regulatory/ Legal Framework</b>	<p><u>Directive 2009/54/EC</u> applicable to the marketing and exploitation of natural mineral waters and <u>Directive 2003/40/EC</u>.</p> <p>Regulation N° 178/2002 on Food Safety and Regulation N° 852/2004 on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.</p>	<p>Regulated partly by <u>Directive 2009/54/EC</u> applicable to natural mineral waters and partly by Directive 98/83/EC applicable to drinking water (chemical criteria).</p> <p>Commission <u>Directive 2003/40/EC</u> and Regulations 178/2002/EC and 852/2004/EC also applicable.</p>	<p><u>Directive 98/83/EC</u> on the quality of water intended for human consumption.</p>
<b>Origin</b>	Specifically designated groundwater sources only (natural springs, wells or boreholes).		Various sources, from surface water (lakes, rivers, reservoirs), to groundwater (boreholes, galleries) and sometimes seawater (with desalination).
<b>Purity/ Contamination</b>	<p>By law, natural mineral water must be <i>microbiologically wholesome</i>, 'can be clearly distinguished from ordinary drinking water ... by its original purity' and must be protected from all risk of pollution (see Annex I of Directive 2009/54 under 'Definition').</p>	<p>By law, spring water must be safe to drink at source in its natural state (in compliance with Directive 2009/54/EC for microbiological criteria and Directive 98/83/EC for chemical criteria).</p>	<p>The supplier must always deliver safe drinking water.</p> <p>Tap water may contain residues (from treatment chemicals and by-products, trace metals from the distribution system, and trace contaminants such as pesticides).</p> <p>These must always be below drinking water limits, but their presence means the water supply cannot be considered 'naturally pure'.</p>

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<b>Composition</b>	Stable mineral composition is a legal requirement.	Stable mineral composition not a legal requirement. However, as the same source must always be used, fluctuations are usually minor.	No requirement for stable mineral composition. For some supplies, mineral content can change significantly when raw water sources are switched (e.g. from soft surface water to hard groundwater).
<b>Naturalness</b>	Naturalness is the defining characteristic. No disinfection, no chemical treatment allowed. Processing is strictly limited to separation of unstable elements (such as iron) and of some trace elements naturally present. Characteristic constituents, giving the water its natural mineral balance and taste, must not be changed. Quality and safety are maintained by bottling directly into a high quality, sealed package for delivery to final consumer.		Naturalness is not a priority. Consumer safety is ensured by using whatever treatments are necessary. Chemical and microbiological treatments allowed and generally required. Disinfection is applied through addition of chlorine or by other means, with a disinfection residual usually maintained throughout distribution to consumer's tap.
<b>Distribution System</b>	<p>Must be bottled at source, which means the water is filled in a food production environment directly into packages that will be delivered to the final consumer. These are of high quality food grade materials and fitted with a tamper evident seal.</p> <p>Transport in tankers from the source is not allowed.</p> <p>Controlled from source to retailer.</p> <p>Transport to bottling (²) plant via state of the art pipes → no leakage.</p>		<p>Delivered through pipes:</p> <p>→ Quality varies depending on the quality of public and private piping systems. Supplier must deliver drinking quality to each property, but has no control over status of pipes and storage tanks on private property, where risks may exist.</p> <p>→ Significant leakage in some systems which can be many decades old.</p>
<b>Traceability</b>	Traceable per batch code, like other food products. Each bottle traces back to specific quality and safety analyses. This includes water composition, packaging material and in-process conditions.		The supplier must deliver drinking water quality to each property, but does not control quality of delivery system and storage tanks on private property.

<sup>(2)</sup> Except in a small number of cases where tankering was already practised prior to current rules. However, in these cases, quality must still be guaranteed through food grade materials and

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<b>Sustainability/Environment</b>			
<b>Protection of Sources</b>	<p>High level of protection linked to 'original purity' and obligation to be free from all kind of pollution at source. NB: Protected areas may cover up to thousands of hectares.</p> <p>Also, the equipment for exploiting the water must be installed as to avoid any possibility of contamination: spring and outlet must be protected against the risks of pollution.</p>	<p>Equipment for exploiting the water must be installed as to avoid any possibility of contamination: spring and outlet must be protected against the risks of pollution.</p>	<p>Protection of natural water bodies is a requirement of the Water Framework Directive. However, the degree of protection is not typically as high as for NMW and spring water sources as 'original purity' is not a requirement and a broad range of treatments is permitted.</p>
<b>Packaging</b>	<p>All packaging materials used are fully recyclable (glass or PET plastic). NB: The recycling rate for PET is steadily increasing in the EU from 35% in 2005 to 46% in 2008.</p>		<p>No packaging required except for serving by the consumer at point of use.</p>
<b>Health</b>			
<b>Recommended Daily Intake</b>	<p>1.5 -2 L of water per day.</p>		
<b>Hydration Qualities</b>	<p>Each water type is an appropriate and safe source of daily hydration. Scientifically supported.</p>		
<b>Health Benefits</b>	<p>In addition to being a source of natural hydration, other health benefits may be claimed according to composition and other indications based on pharmacological, physiological and clinical examinations (see Directive 2009/54/EC).</p>	<p>A source of natural hydration.</p>	<p>A source of hydration.</p>

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<b>Safety/Hygiene</b>	<p>Very high level of safety and hygiene and high frequency of controls based on HACCP (as required by EU Regulations 178/2002 and 882/2004) and recognised by FVO inspections.</p> <p>Bottled at source and fitted with tamper evident seal.</p>		<p>Tap water must meet strict and safe drinking water requirements at the point of delivery to individual properties. Achieved through monitoring, maintenance and risk management. There may be a risk where pipes and tanks on private property are poorly maintained.</p>
<b>Consumer information and choice</b>			
<b>Labelling</b>	Extensive compulsory information (on origin, mineral composition etc.).	Compulsory information.	Little or no consumer information available at point of consumption, although water quality information should be available publicly and on request.
<b>Choice</b>	Variety of brands, tastes and compositions (mineral content, still or sparkling).		No consumer choice at any given location.
<b>Purpose/ Use of the Product</b>	Food use only (drinking/cooking)		Extremely diverse: primarily non food uses such as cleaning, laundering, dish-washing, sanitary etc.
<b>Convenience</b>	Easily accessible, hygienic and portable. Diversity of formats adapted to suit all consumer needs and enables to stay hydrated throughout the day.		Available exclusively from the tap or from a refillable bottle or via the re-use of empty containers (which offer no guarantee of hygiene).

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<b>Miscellaneous</b>			
<b>Price</b>	Price reflects the investments made in the protection of the resources, the upholding of safety and quality standards until the end consumer and taxes paid to municipalities or states, as well as accise duties. Nearly 100% of supply is used for consumption.		Price reflects the fact that tap water is supplied in bulk (eg.150 to 200 litres/day/person) for many uses of which consumption and food uses represents just 1%. Cost varies from one region to another. NB: substantial investments required in many EU countries to modernise distribution systems (and avoid leakage).
<b>Strategic Resources</b>	Provide vital supply in emergency cases (flooding, severe droughts or following contamination at source or at municipal treatment plants).		Utility companies are required to provide safe drinking water to the public at all times. In the event of supply failure, suppliers have to provide temporary alternatives, such as bottled water or bowsers.