

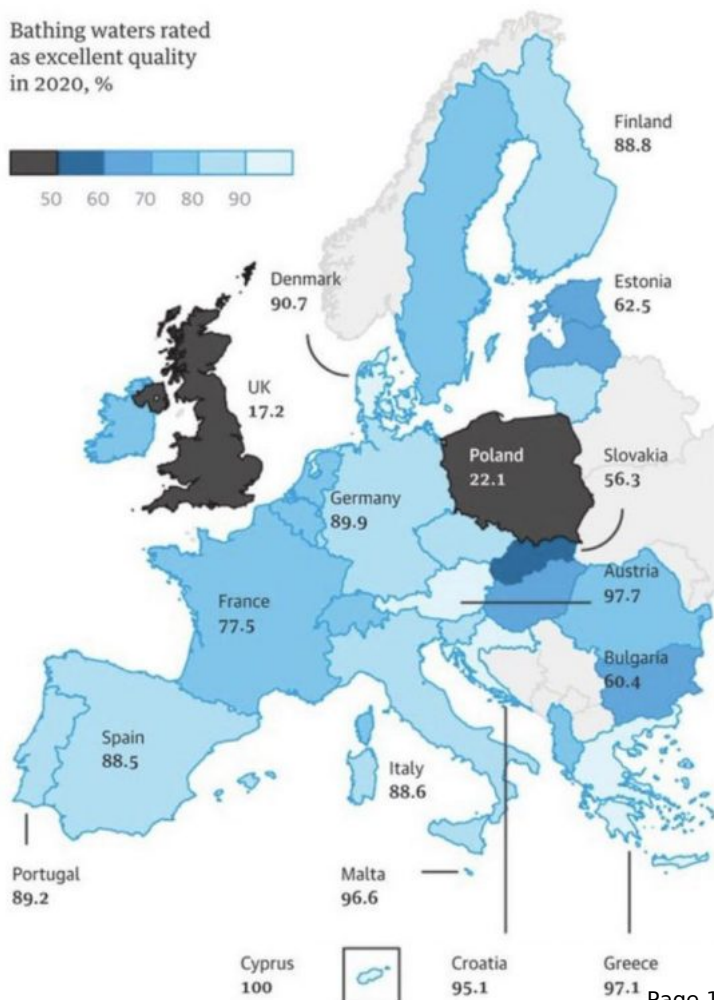
Two stories really stand out in the news this morning.

The first is on sewage. Those on Twitter will have seen many angry tweets over the weekend referring to the Tory MPs who allowed raw sewage to be pumped into rivers and onto beaches. It seems shit really upsets people.

So too does the destruction of our leisure time, when the traditional day by the seaside is dead to people. And there is also the environmental cost. We already had the worst water quality in Europe:

The EU's highest water quality standards were met at 83% of swimming sites monitored in 2020

Bathing waters rated as excellent quality in 2020, %



I suspect we are doing much worse now. The UK's attitude towards deregulation is, to be blunt, destroying us.

The other that stood out was a [Guardian story](#) noting that there might be 165,000 vacancies in care homes. As a result many elderly people are not getting even the most basic care that they need. And this is before energy price rises ensure that these homes cease to be economically viable. This is, of course, a problem almost entirely created by Brexit.

In their different ways, the stories deliver the same message. The belief of some in the UK in our so-called exceptional status, that they thought put us outside the mainstream, is literally doing that. But there is no gain. There is only loss. And it will get worse.

I would like to say I know where this ends, but with Liz Truss due to be prime minister I can offer no hope. She is the ultimate believer in the small state, which is the very last thing this country needs at present. When what is so obviously required is a bigger, more flexible, more open and more inclusive state to address the issues that we face we are going to get nothing of the sort.

I used to think we were in trouble. It is much worse now.