



Sweden Emilia Romagna Network

**An example of
European
integration from
below**

WHAT IS SERN



SERN is the acronym for Sweden Emilia Romagna Network. It is a non profit organisation founded in January 2005 with the objective of developing in a structural way the relations between the local and regional authorities in Sweden and Italy, in particular in the Emilia-Romagna area.

SERN has three main specificities:

- 1) it is the only bilateral network in the Europe that brings together actors from the Northern and Southern part of the Union.
- 2) It is a multilevel network where different levels of government interact and collaborate
- 3) It is a network open to the civil society and to the private actors

SERN aims at creating long-term dynamics of cooperation among the areas involved by:

- fostering economic links and interdependence
- exchanging best practices in local policy-making
- exchanging information, know-how and people

HOW DO WE WORK

The approach that has been developed in the first years of activity has been centred on the role of local authorities as key nodes of the network both in the transnational work and locally for the involvement of the actors interested in actively engaging themselves in international relations (educational institutions, NGOs/civil society and business actors).

An effective circulation of information and the development of clearly set out processes through which organising the activities, have allowed SERN to expand rapidly (from 28 members in January 2005 to 55 members in January 2009) and to develop a wide range of activities in five priority areas : **education, environment, entrepreneurship, social polices, tourism.**





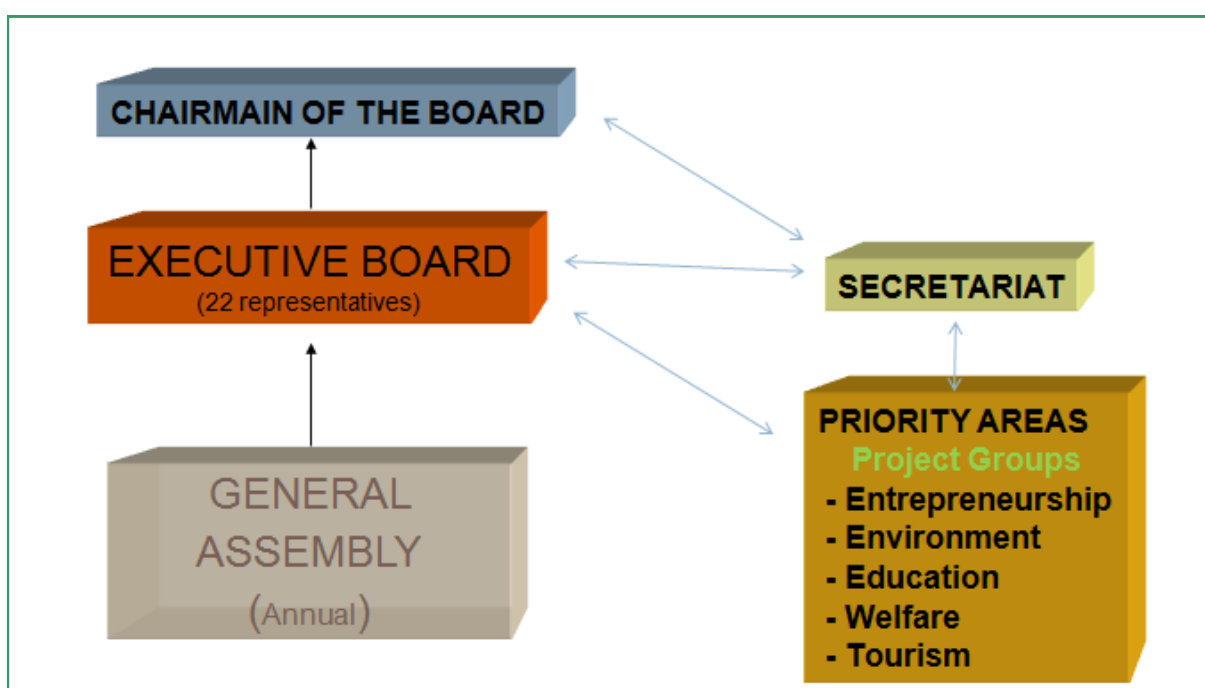
The network has been identified by the European Commission (DG EAC) at European level as one of the organisations to show cases, in the field of thematic networking among twinned cities. In the same way also in the context of the bilateral relations between Italy and Sweden the role is acquiring an important role as recognised by the meeting between the Swedish head of state and the Swedish foreign Minister in the context of the state visit in the spring of 2009.

From an organisational point of view the structure of the Network set out in the statute consists of a General Assembly gathering annually, an Executive Board consisting of 22 political representatives and a Chairmen representing the Network.

From an operational point of view SERN works through two tools:

The Secretariat (currently based in Bologna) having the task to ensure the effectiveness of the work carried out in the priority areas, to foster the development of the network and to assist the members in establishing intra-networks contacts.

The *thematic project groups* created by the members on a specific theme of common concern around which one or more projects are built as a result of a discussion about common objectives, activities and evaluation tools.





OUR ACTIVITIES



As a result of the objectives set out by the SERN Board the activities carried out in the five policy areas have been numerous.

Below you will find **a selection** of projects and activities purely bilateral or with a large majority of SERN member.

EU Projects

Paths of integration in the educational contexts (2005-2006)

A EU project on the identification of good practices in the field of integration in schools (Length: 10 months, 7 municipalities, coordinators Stockholm city and Parma municipality). Follow up: cooperation through EU projects in the field of integration among pre-schools and upper-secondary schools.

Towards a common approach to violence against women (2006)

A EU project on the prevention of violence at local level through pilot actions and benchmarking (Length 1 year, 10 member municipalities coordinators Forlì municipality and Falköping Municipality). Follow up: Seminars in Sweden and Italy and study visits.

Local development strategies and sustainable tourism (2005-2009)

The project, co-funded by the European Union, has focused on the exchange of good practices concerning local development strategies aimed at fostering the development of a “slow” tourism in the areas involved. The project has been characterised by a strong involvement of the entrepreneurs, tour operators and by close interaction between public and private actors (ongoing, 11 municipalities, companies, coordinators Jokkmokk municipality and Traversetolo municipality)

Quality of life of the seniors (2008-2010)

There are an increasing number of 60+ people in good mental and physical health with an active lifestyle. This growing ageing society urgently needs the establishing of a creative research and development setting as well as a new set of local policies

so that seniors better cope with living at home and more in general improve the quality of their everyday life, in order also to prevent ageing pathologies (Length: 3 years, Partners: 7 municipalities, universities, companies, NGOs; Coordinators: Parma Municipality and Skövde Municipality).

Quality cities (2008-2009)

The objective of this project is to create a network of collaboration centred on the comparison of various experiences in the management of quality in public services. In particular the focus has been on quality in the pre-school educational services and services for elderly care offered by the municipalities involved. (Length: 2 years; Partners: 4 municipalities, Coordinators: Scandiano Municipality and Trollhättan City)

Support to parenthood (2008-2009)

The project aims to improve the municipal services in support of families both from a social and an educational perspective. The project includes several types of activities: benchmarking seminars, exchanges of best practices and joint training activities for professionals.

(Length: 2 years; Partners: 4 municipalities, Coordinators: Scandiano Municipality and Trollhättan City)

In 2009 a new project will be developed on the issue of **energy efficiency** focusing on the planning urban and industrial areas, the development of new solutions in housing and the local policies

Other activities/projects

- Pre-school staff exchange programme 2008-2010
- Regional policies in support of disabled citizens
- Partnerships among schools at all levels
- Promotion of business meetings among SMEs in the agri-food sector
- Cross-Promotion of the areas of the network (Swedish days in Emilia Romagna in 2007 and Emilia Romagna Days in Norrköping in 2008)
- Exchange among youth groups (themes: music, fight against racism and culture)



RESULTS

The activities of the network have generated a wide range of results. The complexity of the activities and the wide number of actors involved have contributed to several achievements.

Some examples of the results produced by the projects at local level.



Improvement of local pre-school services

The exchange of personnel among the pre-school services of the 12 municipalities have led to introduction of new methodologies and pedagogical approaches. In Scandiano, Rimini and Meldola, as a result of the job shadowing activities of their teachers with their Swedish colleagues (20 only in 2008), outdoor educational strategies and activities have been introduced in the regular programmes of the services. At the same time the Swedish participants have tested new methodologies and activities related to fostering creativity through the use of materials the teachers have learnt during their stay in Italy.

Improvement of the quality management of the elderly care services



The project on quality services has led to the introduction both in Sweden and Italy in the municipalities involved new tools for quality management in the elderly care sector. As a result of that, the Italian (Unione Terre Verdiane and Scandiano) and Swedish municipalities (Trollhättan and from 2009 Norrköping) have defined jointly common quality indicators and the definition of a common charter of services. Their challenge is now to benchmark not only with the neighbouring municipality but with their partners in Europe.

A common strategy to support parenthood at local level



The municipality of Vänersborg together with Imola and Ravenna have engaged in the definition of common guidelines for the support of parents through community networking and the definition of a common approach to young support families. The process has produced the testing of good practices and new services learnt as a result of the seminars, study visits and training sessions involving the professionals. For example, in Vänersborg a new “youth house” for providing support on the model of those present in Italy will be created and new projects will start locally to foster voluntary work with/for immigrants.

Working together for sustainable tourism at local level



Entrepreneurs from Sweden (Jokkomkk, Stromstad and Tanum) and Italy (Traversetolo, Montecchio, Montechiarugolo, Felino and Canossa) have been collaborating together and new tourist offers/packages targeting the public in the other country. In parallel, the local authorities have identified a common framework for continuing and expanding cooperation on the issue of profiling the participating municipalities as destinations characterised by a sustainable tourism.

SERN IN FIGURES	
Number of members	55 (in Italy 27 - in Sweden 28)
Activities (Projects, study visits, exchanges etc) since 2005	48 (EU Projects, study visits, exchanges etc)
EU funded projects	31- total EU grants obtained 701.430 €



ASS. OF MUNICIPALITIES
“BASSA ROMAGNA”
ASS. OF MUNICIPALITIES
“IL TRICOLORE”
CITY OF MOLNDAL;
CITY OF TROLLHÄTTAN
COMUNITÀ MONTANA VALLI
DEL TARO E DEL CENO;
COUNTY COUNCIL OF NORRBOTTEN;
KOMMUNFORBUNDET NORRBOTTEN ;
MUNICIPALITY OF ALE;
MUNICIPALITY OF ÄLVSBYN;
MUNICIPALITY OF ARJEPLOG;
MUNICIPALITY OF ARVIDSJÄUR;
MUNICIPALITY OF BERTINORO;
MUNICIPALITY OF BODEN;
MUNICIPALITY OF BORGO VAL DI TARO;
MUNICIPALITY OF BRISIGHELLA;
MUNICIPALITY OF CANOSSA;
MUNICIPALITY OF CERVIA;
MUNICIPALITY OF COLLECCHIO;
MUNICIPALITY OF FALKÖPING;
MUNICIPALITY OF FELINO;
MUNICIPALITY OF FORLÍ;
MUNICIPALITY OF IMOLA;
MUNICIPALITY OF JOKKMOKK;
MUNICIPALITY OF KALIX;
MUNICIPALITY OF MELDOLA ;
MUNICIPALITY OF MONTECCHIO EMILIA;
MUNICIPALITY OF MONTECHIARUGOLO;
MUNICIPALITY OF NORRKÖPING;
MUNICIPALITY OF OVERTORNEA;
MUNICIPALITY OF PARMA ;
MUNICIPALITY OF PITEA;
MUNICIPALITY OF RAVENNA;
MUNICIPALITY OF RIMINI;
MUNICIPALITY OF SALA BAGANZA;

MUNICIPALITY OF SCANDIANO;
MUNICIPALITY OF SKÖVDE;
MUNICIPALITY OF SÖDERKÖPING;
MUNICIPALITY OF TRAVERSETOLO;
MUNICIPALITY OF VÄNESBORG;
PROVINCE OF PARMA;
PROVINCE OF REGGIO EMILIARE-
REGIONAL GROWTH NORTH OF BOHU-
SLÄN;
REGIONFORBUNDET OSTSAM
UNIONE DI COMUNI “TERRE VER-
DIANE”;
VÄSTRA GÖTALAND REGION;

AICCRE EMILIA-ROMAGNA
APINDUSTRIA PARMA;
COOP PROGES;
INTUR FIPE RIMINI;
KOOPERATIVUTV. VASTRA GÖTA-
LAND;
MAT PRODUCENTERNA I NORR;
STRADA DEL PROSCIUTTO PARMA;
OSTGÖTA COOP;



SERN

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