

Annual Report



2008



Sweden Emilia Romagna Network



THE SERN MEMBERS IN 2008

AICCRE EMILIA-ROMAGNA
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 ÄLVSBY;
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 FORLÌ;
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 SAN POLO D'ENZA;
MUNICIPALITY OF SCANDIANO;
MUNICIPALITY OF SKÖVDE;
MUNICIPALITY OF SÖDERKÖPING;
MUNICIPALITY OF TRAVERSETOLO;
MUNICIPALITY OF VÄNESBORG;
PROVINCE OF PARMA;
PROVINCE OF REGGIO EMILIA;

REGIONAL GROWTH NORTH OF BOHU-
SLÄN;
REGIONFORBUNDET OSTSAM
UNIONE DI COMUNI "TERRE VERDIANE";
VÄSTRA GÖTALAND REGION;
APINDUSTRIA PARMA;
COOP PROGES;
INTUR FIPE RIMINI;
KOOPERATIVUTV. VÄSTRA GÖTALAND;
MAT PRODUCENTERNA I NORR;
OSTGÖTA COOP;
STRADA DEL PROSCIUTTO PARMA;

REGIONE EMILIA-ROMAGNA* (MEMBERSHIP
REGULATED AD INTERIM BY A MEMORANDUM
LEADING TO FULL MEMBERSHIP)

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Activities in the Network

The activities in the working groups in 2008 was the implementation and the follow-up of thoughts, ideas and informal meetings which have begun with the General assembly 2007 and which have been carried on through numerous applications to the European Commission within the programme "Europe for Citizens". Below you will find a description of the activities divided according to the priority areas of the Network.

EDUCATION

Pre-school staff exchange project



The year 2008 was the first "working" year for this tri-annual project in the education field focused on the exchange of staff practises among pre-schools.

Two exchange sessions have seen (in Spring and Autumn) the participation of ten teachers in each of them. The Italian municipalities that participated in 2008 exchanges with their teachers and pedagogists were: Scandiano, Ravenna, Imola, Meldola, Rimini and Castelnovo di Sotto; the Swedish members participated with schools in the municipality of Vänersborg, Mölndal, Norrköping, Motala (through Östham) and the Stockholm district of Rinkeby Kista. For the 2009 activities new organisations will participate in the exchange; in particular the Parma Province,

the municipality of Parma and the municipality of Trollhättan.

Most participating teachers applied for a mobility grant to the LLP agency.


Two main dissemination events have been implemented. The first one during the IV General Assembly in Norrköping with the aim of spreading information about the project mainly among the Swedish members.

The second one was the annual evaluation and dissemination seminar of the project which this year took place in Bertinoro. The participants, more than 70 people from Sweden and Emilia Romagna had the occasion to exchange and deepen their experiences related to the 2008 staff exchange and foster new links among the pre-schools and the municipalities

Particular attention was paid to the documentation of the good practises emerged (a first report is available for download on the website) and to four main themes which saw particular differences between the two education systems:

the relation children-teachers-families; indoor-outdoor activities; the educational activities; the daily routine

For the year 2009 both Spring and Fall sessions have been foreseen with the participation of new members. More information on: <http://pre-schools.sern.eu>



Activities in the Network

Promotion of local food through exchanges between hotel and restaurant schools

The event held from 10 to 17 November in Brisighella was the second phase of a project already started in 2007 which saw the participation of the Swedish municipalities of Kalix and Arvidsjaur (Norrbotten area) with their restaurant schools and the Brisighella restaurant school.

The project showed the opportunity to follow two different knowledge paths: on the one hand, the important didactic exchange among students of Italian and Swedish hotel and restaurant schools and on the other hand, the acquiring of knowledge on the working system of the typical products of the Brisighella area. These two elements have been overlapped thanks to numerous activities which the participants (students, chef teachers, local political representatives, entrepreneurs developed in order to understand the different didactic approaches, to appreciate the use of typical products in cooking processes and to see the promotion of traditional cultural heritage through local groups of citizens and through the local associations. In particular, the participants had the chance to do numerous study visits to some small and peculiar companies of the Brisighella area where they could see the production and transformation of typical charcuterie and cheese, of the olive oil and of wine.

The added value of the study visits was the possibility to see all the product's life from its origin until its marketing and promotion. The implementation of activities gave also the opportunity to the Italian students to exchange their didactic approaches and methods with their Swedish colleagues. This happened with the organisation of a Swedish dinner cooked by both Italian and Swedish students and chefs.

Culture and Leisure policies

A delegation of the municipality of Piteå (Norrbotten region) visited three Italian municipalities (Forlì, Bertinoro and Scandiano and Reggio Emilia Province) in 2007 following that visit an Italian delegation composed of representatives of the same three municipalities participated in seminars, working groups and study visits in Piteå from 11 to 14 March 2008.

The focus of this project has been the importance to develop local policies and activities related to youth and school democracy, culture, sport and activities for functionally disabled people. The meeting was mainly aimed to citizens working in NGOs within the field of culture and leisure.

The main objective of the meeting was the creation of new links and relations in order to deepen knowledge within these sectors developing an action plan for youth democracy locally based on the experience of the Italian twinned towns. Moreover, the collaboration between non-profit organisations and municipalities was a special issue approached by the participants during the meeting in order to understand how this cooperation can stimulate social inclusion in the single municipalities and how to improve the already existing services in the field of youth and school democracy, of the activities for disabled people and of local museum and library activities.

The seminar sorted out numerous possible areas of collaboration between Italian and Swedish members. Particular attention has to be paid to the possible youth exchanges in the music field, to projects for health maintenance in schools and to the development of a strong collaboration in sport activities for disabled people.

Activities in the Network

WELFARE

Support to parenthood

The working group originated during the 2007 General assembly carried on its job applying for a grant to the European Commission in order to develop a process of cooperation aimed at creating the conditions for the improvement of the services towards families both from a social and an educational perspective. The first event was held in Vänersborg from 11 to 13 June 2008 with the participation of the Italian municipalities of Scandiano, Ravenna and Imola and the Vänersborg twinned town, Holmestrand.



Moreover, some municipalities applied for a Grundtvig project which will start in 2009 and continue until the summer of 2010.

The first result of the meeting was the creation of a strong knowledge exchange, in particular on specific projects carried on in the municipalities of Vänersborg. Particular attention has been put on the cooperation between families and schools and families and social local services, on the importance of preventive work in order to support families in supporting other parents with needs and on the essentiality of integration.

The second event of the project has been scheduled for March 2009.

More information on: www.parnet.eu.

Policy towards disabled people

The theme of developing a converging approach to the policies in support of disabled people has been analysed by a quadrilateral partnership composed of the Norrbotten County Council, the Parma Province, the District of Cluj (Romania) and the Troms region (Norway). In order to introduce and compare the different national approaches, partners in the project met in Lulea from 22nd to 24th September.



The general objective of the project is to create the conditions for the development of a long-term cooperation among the areas involved on issues pertaining the policies aimed at improving the living conditions of the disabled citizens and supporting their inclusion in the life of their community.

Three focus groups were created to deepen the general subject:

Activities in the Network

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Quality of life of the seniors in Europe

The working groups ENT1 on entrepreneurship and WEL 2 and WEL 3 on policies and actions for elderly people created during the SERN general assembly 2007, applied for a EU grant within the programme Europe for Citizens, with Parma municipality as leading partner. From 11 to 14 November 2008, the representatives of the Swedish municipalities of Skövde, Trollhättan and Norrköping and the twinning municipalities of Parma, the city of Worms (Germany) and the city of Tours (France) met in order to exchange their ideas in order to create a framework project proposal.

An added value of this meeting was the participation of the academic perspective with the University of Parma and the companies perspective with the work of API Parma, the association of small and medium companies of the Parma area, creating in this way a triple axis of implementation (University research, local municipal services and R&D companies). The services for elderly people have been represented by the social services Pedemontana Sociale which covers the activities of five municipalities of the Parma province.

Giving the increasing number of 60+ people in good mental and physical health with an active lifestyle, the main objective is developing policies in order to let seniors to cope better with living at home and to improve the quality of their everyday life. The expected result is the development of new policies, products and services that represent concretely the implementation of the seniors' needs.

Three phases can be foreseen:

1. the identification of the main characteristics of the target group studied by the academic perspective
2. the intervention of local municipal health services in order to test the main features emerged in the first phase
3. the analysis of the needs from an entrepreneurial and applied research perspective.

The partners agreed in looking for new sources of grant but giving the complexity of the issue and the variety of involved actors, it is impossible to find a single EU programme. They will try to identify a number of possible source of financing in order to implement the different phases.



Activities in the Network

Young entrepreneurs

The private and public actors working on this project, the Parma province and API Parma for the Italian members and the municipality of Trollhättan for the Swedish part, created a project proposal for the creation of a creativity helpdesk network.

Giving the necessity to introduce new entrepreneurship skills and the need to preserve the existing entrepreneurial base at local level, in particular family businesses, the project focuses its attention to the developing entrepreneurial skills among youngest, business start up and take over companies process and the implementation of a real cooperation between public and private actors.

Due to some problems emerged in the partnership the project has not been submitted in the context of the INTERREG IVC call 2009.

An added value of this project is the role of creativeness because of its importance both in the development of new policies and in the whole life cycle of a company.

Activities in the Network

HORIZONTAL ISSUES

Quality in public services



From 17 to 19 June, representatives from Trollhättan municipality, Scandiano municipality, Terre Verdiane Union and from the Spanish municipalities of Almansa and Villarrobledo met in Scandiano for the first event of the project dedicated to the analysis of quality in public services at local level: the Euro quality benchmarking seminar.

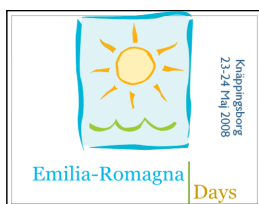
The participants compared their experiences both during plenary sessions, in which they introduced their different tools and actions related on the main theme, and thanks to working group activities. Indeed, four working groups have been created: two dedicated to pre-school services and two related to elderly care services. These group analysed two different perspectives of the quality concept: the customers orientation tools and the measurement tools for services.

The participants agreed on a work schedule that will help to prepare the second event, which is scheduled for late February 2009 in Almansa (Spain).

More information on the project development on: www.qualitynetworkpa.eu

Emilia-Romagna Days

In occasion of the General Assembly 2008 the Italian members arranged in cooperation with Norrköping municipality the Emilia-Romagna days initiative aimed at promoting the territories of the network in all their peculiarities.



The first approach for some Swedish representatives of tourist agencies was a seminar with the introduction of the different areas from the tourism point of view. In order to complete the picture of the regional excellencies, the participant had a “guided tour” in the food and wine delicacies of the promoted areas, namely Parma, Reggio Emilia, Ravenna, Forlì and Rimini.

Market

People living in Norrköping had also the opportunity to taste typical food of the region during the two days market held at Knäppingsborg where some Italian companies could present and sell some of their products. The market had a great success and numerous products were finished long before the end of the market.

From the cultural point of view, Italian music and cinema were present in Norrköping with two young bands called Khorakhanè and YCN Orchestra and movie show with the screening of the film “Cinema Paradiso”.

Activities in the Network

TOURISM

Local Sustainable Tourism



The municipalities involved in this project since 2006 (Traversetolo as leading partner, Felino, Montechiarugolo, Montecchio Emilia, San Polo d'Enza, Jokkmokk and Norra Bohuslan), during this year met twice in order to continue their cooperation and exchange of good practices.

The first meeting took place in Jokkmokk with the occasion of the traditional winter market and the focus theme was the local intangible heritage and its protection and promotion.

The initial seminar had the main objective to define the concept of local intangible heritage, to analyse its components, to introduce Italian and Swedish experiences, to understand if these elements can be seen as European values and as a mean of spreading European local peculiarities and to continue in the exchange of good practices.

The first analysed element was the power of tradition and culture on nowadays events. The second presentations tackled the importance of environment and nature in the promotion of local intangible heritage. In particular, the aim of the held lectures was to understand the promotion of a particular type of tourism, ecotourism, which is a sort of business idea that allows commercial tourism to be combined in a respectful and profitable way with nature, traditional economy and culture. A further element, which has been analysed, that connects tradition and local people activities is the promotion of typical food products and how these can be seen a part of the promotion of the intangible heritage.

This meeting helped to organise the continuation of the collaboration with the decision to apply for a EU grant within the programme Europe for Citizens.

The application was successful and the first event took place in September in Italy with the participation of the French twinned town of Traversetolo, the municipality of Oraison.

The focus of the seminars, working groups and study visits was the sustainable tourism and the elements which define a sustainable tourist destination.

The second meeting has been scheduled in March 2009 in the municipalities of Norra Bohuslan.



General Assembly 2008—Norrköping

The IV General Assembly

The IV General Assembly took place in Norrköping on Friday 23rd May with the participation of 220 delegates which covered more than 80% of the member of the association.

After the welcome speech made by Li Teske, chairman of Norrköping Municipal Council, Kent Ogren, chairman of SERN Executive Board welcomed the members and the Italian ambassador in Sweden, H.E. Anna della Croce Brigante Colonna. He said that the process of creation and development of the Network began already in 2004 and since that moment the organisation has achieved numerous objectives through the creation of various working groups but at the same time, the Network has different challenges in front of it. Indeed, during the next months and during the next general assembly, the subjects which have to be tackled will be:

the revision of the SERN statute, the role of the executive board with the opportunity to reduce the members' number and the necessity to find new income sources for the development of the network.

The General Assembly approved the Annual Report 2007 in which three points was highlighted: the increased number of members, the good results reached by the working groups and the importance to have a strategy to direct the network's activities. From the financial point of view, the Assembly approved both the balance sheet 2007 and the budget proposal 2008.

Several seminars were organized in order to give the opportunity to the SERN members to exchange their opinions and ideas about ongoing and future projects. Particular attention was paid to the seminar on pre-schools staff exchange, to the seminar on the role of cooperatives in the management of the public services, to the seminar on innovation and new technologies in the field of education and to the seminar on the equal opportunities policies in Sweden. Moreover, an important study visits has been organized to the Norrköping industrial eco-park in order to understand the recycling system of the city.

The particular feature of the IV General assembly days were the organization of the Emilia-Romagna days, two days dedicated to the promotion of the Emilia-Romagna region in all its peculiarities.



SERN Executive Board

The SERN Executive Board

The Board has met three times in 2008: in Forlì (in February), in Norrköping (in May) and in Traversetolo (in November).

In 2008 the Executive Board worked first of all in order to guarantee an efficient and coherent development of the activities inside the Network both from a financial point of view and from the content of the projects point of view. Particular attention has been put on the coherence between the working groups activities to the priority themes set up in the SERN Strategy 2007-2009: sustainable local and regional development and social inclusion.

The creation of the Rapporteurs, that is to say member of the Executive Board with the task to report periodically about the activities in one of the five Network's sections, was an important step in the direction of communicating to all the members the development and implementation of the projects and to create a good working synergy between the Executive Board members and the Secretariat.

In the end of 2008 the Board took also the decision to establish a group of civil servants with the task of proposing a revision of the statute and the drafting of a proposal for a sustainable financial development of the network.

In the Executive Board of Norrköping, three new members were welcomed: Jan Owe-Larsson (Regionförbundet Östsam), Eva Andersson (Norrköpings Kommun) and Anna Hövenmark (Jokkmokk Kommun) and in the Traversetolo one, two new Italian members joined the Executive Board: Elettra Stamboulis (Ravenna municipality) and Gianluca Manelli (Scandiano Municipality).



The year 2008 from the Secretariat perspective

General evaluation

The activities carried out in 2008 are to a great extent the result of the groups that were launched in Salsomaggiore. This confirms that the methodology identified goes in the direction of fostering links and projects among the members. During the General Assembly 2008 two new groups were launched (youth policies and a culture network) while as a result of the work done in 2007 and the first part of 2008 a new group on energy efficiency was created in the autumn.

The indicators on the following pages tell us that the majority of the group established in 2007 have produced results in terms good practices, knowledge and, in the case of the pre-school staff, also personnel exchanged. The main difficulties emerged in some project groups on wellness industry, violence against women, leadership issues were due in part to the lack of capacity to articulate or put into practice the ideas identified during the meeting.

Another interesting element that has emerged concerns the fact that the groups that have made most progress are those that were capable of accessing EU funding. At the same time one could point out that an element of success in terms of quality of the project group(s) has been the capacity to build solid networks locally and a clearly defined and organised process of cooperation both transnationally and with the partners of the same country. In this sense European projects provide a set of deadline and a framework that helps to achieve results in the context of the groups.

As a result of the implementation of some of the projects from 2008 a number of local and regional authorities from third country have come into contact with the Network, in particular municipalities from Germany, France, Norway, Spain, Czech Republic as well as one county on Norway and one in Romania. This new trend, that is likely to be stronger in the future if the number EU projects increase, has been raising questions about how to define the role of these partners vis-à-vis the network as organisation. Undoubtedly, they constitute a resource for the development of EU project but in perspective the establishment of closer links of cooperation with the most reliable and interested in the work of the network could indeed strengthen the added value and the European dimension of SERN.

On the basis of the above mentioned elements in 2008 the Secretariat has successfully submitted an application for a support-oriented project in the framework of the Europe for Citizens Programme aimed at strengthening the skills and the civil servants of the network and at developing stronger thematic groups. The project will run in 2009 and it is likely to result into a number of project applications in the framework of the Action Thematic Networks of Twinned Towns.

Indicators 2008

Finally, the Emilia-Romagna days constituted the second large attempt to launch promotion activities. Despite the good outcome of the market and the related cultural events, the organisation of the meetings among the entrepreneurs in the field of tourism and food products as well as the logistic of the event has been extremely time consuming for the Secretariat as well as for the hosting municipality and has not produced the expected results. The experiences of 2006 (Italy) and 2008 suggest that for the future the decision of setting up such events should be carefully examined beforehand and that in general the attention should be kept on the core cooperation activities of the Network.

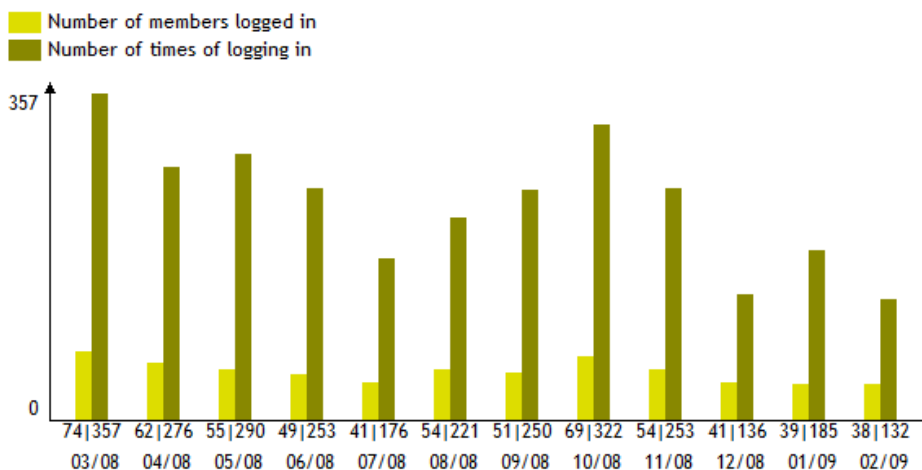
Indicators

The guidelines approved by the SERN Executive Board included a process of reporting and follow-up to be established in the context of the Network. The process of evaluation includes a report made by the project coordinators yearly and the Rapporteurs of the Board. Such instruments do constitute an important instrument to evaluate progress in the areas of cooperation covered by the Network since they will add a qualitative character to the evaluation of the outcomes of the different groups.

The guidelines include also some quantitative indicators concerning the activities started in 2008 but actually unfolding in 2009.

Special attention has been given by the Executive Board to the electronic platform. The number of users is slightly lower than the previous year but of course there is a great space for improvement through training sessions and more consistent use of the platform at least among contact persons and project group coordinator.

Logins the last 12 months : 2851
 Unique logins the last 12 months : 148
 Search engine visits in the last 30 days: 15771



Indicators 2008

INDICATORS	
Number of project groups launched at the General Assembly 2008	3
Other groups (Young Entrepreneurs, Pre-schools staff Exchange, Energy Efficiency)	3
Number of groups that made progress through planning or implementation of activities in 2008 (Support to Parenthood, Violence Against Women, Policies towards Disabled, Hotel and Restaurant School exchanges, Quality in public services, Young Entrepreneurs, Sustainable Tourism, Pre-Schools Staff Exchange, Culture and Laisure Policies, Quality of Life of the Seniors in Europe, Energy efficiency Network)	9
Number of EU projects submitted in 2008 by SERN members involving at least another SERN members.	13
Number of EU projects approved	11
Comenius mobility grants submitted (Mobility grants approved 14)	18
Total EU grants (only co-financing) awarded in 2008	€ 367.333,62
Number of member organizations involved in the 2008 activities (excluding Board and General Assembly):	44 (27 from Italy and 17 from Sweden)

The indicators for the year 2008 if compared to those of 2007 indicate that the number of activities has been slightly decreasing and indeed the number of new project groups launched at the General Assembly has been clearly lower (3 in 2008 against 11 in 2007). However, the number of EU project submitted has increased considerably (from 8 to 13) and so has the total amount of EU grants awarded to SERN members which has doubled from 157.000 in 2007 to approximately 367.000 in 2008.



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