

Annual Report

2009



Sweden Emilia Romagna Network



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The SERN Members in 2009

Aiccre Emilia-Romagna	Mjölby Municipality
Ass. of Municipalities Norrbotten	Mölnadal City
Ass. Intercomunale il Tricolore (5 Mun.)	Norrköping Municipality
Ale Municipality	Norrbotten County Council
Arvidsjaur Municipality	Parma Municipality
Bertinoro Municipality	Parma Province
Boden Municipality	Piteå Municipality
Borgo Val di Taro Municipality	Proges Cooperative
Brisighella Municipality	Ravenna Municipality
Canossa Municipality	Reggio Emilia Province
Cervia Municipality	Regional Development Norra Bohuslän (5 Mun.)
Collecchio Municipality	Regional Development Council Östergötland (Östsam)
Com. Montana Valli del Taro e del Ceno (16 Mun.)	Rimini Municipality
Coompanion Kooperativ Utveckling Skaraborg	Russi Municipality
Falköping Municipality	Sala Baganza Municipality
Felino Municipality	San Polo D'Enza Municipality
Forlì Municipality	Scandiano Municipality
Imola Municipality	Skövde Municipality
Intur Fipe Scarl Rimini	Söderköping Municipality
Jokkmokk Municipality	Traversetolo Municipality
Kalix Municipality	Trollhättan Municipality
Matproducenterna i Norr	Uddevalla Municipality
Meldola Municipality	Vänersborg Municipality
Montecchio Emilia Municipality	Västra Götaland Region
Montechiarugolo Municipality	Unione of Municipalities "Terre Verdiane" (10 Mun.)
Motala Municipality	Älvsbyn Municipality
	Östgöta Coop Center



Dear members,

It is a great honour for us to introduce the 2009 annual report. This report marks five years of activities that have been developed in context of our network and we can proudly underline the strong links that have been created and strengthen between our two countries. This joint framework of cooperation that we have built together in the past years has offered a context for those interested in contributing to the creation of an ever closer relationship between local and regional communities in the context of European Union.

The numbers of the activities that have been unfolding in SERN are the most evident proof that our network can be an effective tool of transnational cooperation. The network has led to more than 46 projects and activities among its members granted with 1,47 million Euros between 2005 and 2009 from the European Commission. But most importantly we should be proud of the fact that we have actively involved more than 3.000 people in our activities and contribute to actively engage them in knitting closer ties between our countries.

We therefore look ahead with an increased confidence in your capacity to make SERN stronger and more and more successful in the future since an active participation in the network and results in terms of projects and activities for your community are closely related to one another.



Roberta Mori
Province of Reggio Emilia
Chairman of the
SERN Executive Board since 2009



Kent Ögren
County Council Norrbotten
Chairman of the SERN Executive Board
2005-2009



Introduction

Despite the economic crisis that has been hitting Europe since the beginning of 2009 and the consequent cuts in the budgets of the member organisations, which have also been affecting the international engagement of the local and regional authorities, the activities of the Network have been developing positively throughout 2009. This has been possible thanks to, on the one hand, an effective project planning carried out in 2008 and, on the other hand, to the multiplier effect of the training project run by the Secretariat. As shown below, the indicators concerning the EU grants received by the Network as a whole (member and SERN as an organisation) demonstrate a greater focus and efforts put on the development of EU projects. The total grants obtained in 2009 equals 750.000 €. This has been in quantitative terms the best result since the creation of SERN and it is a clear indication of an active and growing network.

The members of the Network have focused on the development of projects of cooperation in the context of the Measure 1.2 of the Europe for Citizens programme. Given the interest shown by the members in this typology of EU project, the Secretariat has designed and successfully submitted two EU projects (in 2008 and in 2009) aimed at improving the skills of the civil servants interested in developing thematic network projects. This has also given the opportunity to build new processes of cooperation among the members leading to new thematic network projects.

During 2009, four new projects started their implementation phase (Quality cities II : quality in pre-school and education and elderly care services, Twinnovate: innovation in local development, Forward policies and actions for the active seniors in Europe, Energy efficiency and territorial planning) and two were written and successfully submitted (Ecological food management in Public schools, Towards 3X20: reducing Co2 emissions and increasing energy efficiency). Furthermore, as a result of the training project four thematic network projects drafted in 2009 are expected to be submitted in 2010.

New projects have been developed also in the context of the Lifelong Learning programme like the Grundtvig Learning Partnership for Youth Sport trainers, the four Comenius partnerships among schools and the 14 individual grants for in-service training awarded by the LLP National agencies in the context of the pre-school staff exchange programme.

The increase in the number of activities and projects in the network has been in line with the objectives that have been prioritised by the Board and it has been the main focus of the activities of the Secretariat since 2007. The results of the report show a success in quantitative terms which is now opening an opportunity for reflection on the quality of the projects.

As pointed out in occasion of the 2009 General Assembly, some weaknesses have emerged in the context of the life-cycle of some of the projects in terms of management of the partnership, qualitative management of the contents of the events and dissemination/exploitation of the results of the projects.

One of the reasons can be found in the scarce experience of the small and medium-sized members in EU project management as leading applicants or as partners but more in general one can argue that the key weaknesses stands in turning into results with a good level of quality the



contents expressed during the planning phase.

Such elements are not common to all projects but it is important to raise awareness among the members about these issues in order to avoid mistakes made by others in the past and increase the level of quality of the EU funded project implemented in the context of the network.

Thanks to the NTT+ project the Secretariat, will be developing together with a group of experts, a set of tools aimed at improving the monitoring of the activities as well as quality of the project activities/results. This will contribute to improve the overall quality of the activities of the network and promote the positive results emerging from projects. Furthermore the support to the members that the Secretariat will be providing will be characterised by a greater attention devoted to quality related issues with the aim of enhancing the transfer of results, knowledge and skills within the network.

As pointed out the section of the General Assembly, a number of important changes have been introduced in the statute of SERN. Indeed the most important one has been the creation of the conditions for those organisations from other countries in Europe than Sweden and Italy to establish a permanent setting of cooperation with the members of the network by becoming a partner of the network. Such a decision has paved the way for those organizations that are getting closer to SERN as a result of collaboration with the members in the context of projects. This will, on the one hand, provide the conditions for established long-lasting relations with a few number of areas in Europe (regions or cities) that share common objectives and problems with the members of the SERN. On the other hand, the partnerships that will be established in a medium-long term perspective will strengthen the European dimension of the network in the context of projects and vis-a-vis the European institutions.

Activities

EDUCATION

Pre-School Staff Exchange Project



The year of 2009 was the second year of the project which focuses on the exchange of staff practices among pre-schools. This year the coordination group of the project held its third meeting in Mölndal in March where they decided the topics of the job shadowing activities. In particular the five main topics during the year were Outdoor Education; Documentation; Level of Interaction with the Family; Autonomy/Independence of the Child and Creativity and Innovation.

Two exchange sessions have taken place during the year. The first exchange took place in May as 8 teachers from 6 municipalities – Bertinoro, Meldola and Parma in Italy and Vänersborg, Mölndal and Trollhättan from Sweden – spent two weeks in another municipality of the other country. Also the autumn session of 2009 saw the participation of 8 teachers and this time from 5 municipalities – Bertinoro and Collecchio in Italy and Motala, Mölndal and Norrköping in Sweden.

In late November the second dissemination seminar took place in Mölndal. This seminar focused in particular on quality in pre-schools services. The participants discussed the five main topic defined for this year and they also had the opportunity to listen to presentations on quality indicators for pre-schools in the Italian and Swedish systems. The conference was selected as one of the events under the patronage of the Swedish EU Presidency and it was co-financed by the European Commission under the “Europe for Citizens”-programme.



As for the year 2010 two new exchange sessions will take place in the late spring and in the fall with the main topics; Creativity and Innovation; Documentation and reflection; Relation with the family; Outdoor education and Social inclusion.



Ecological food Management in Public Schools (2010-2012)

A new project concerning the use of organic food in public schools was submitted in September 2009 and later approved in December. This project aims to identify problems and develop solutions through an exchange of best practices around the use of organic food in public schools. An essential feature is to analyze the impact of increased use of organic food in the social, economic and environmental areas. The target groups involved will not be only those working with the management of catering services in schools but also decision-makers, producers, and other target groups relevant for the theme.

The leading partner is the municipality of Meldola (Italy) and the other partners participating in the project are the municipalities of Buje (Croatia), Verteneglio (Croatia), Wolfhagen (Germany) and Laives (Italy), the province of Reggio Emilia (Italy) and the city of Mölndal (Sweden).

The activities will start in the spring of 2010 and the project will last until the end of 2011.

WELFARE

Support to Parenthood



The Network Support to Parenthood carried on with its activities during 2009. The project, which was created in 2007, has a general objective to develop new conditions for the improvement of the services towards families both from a social and an educational perspective.

This year the second meeting on parenthood policy took place in Ravenna (Italy) from the 25th to the 27th of February. Delegations of the partners from the municipalities of Vänersborg (Sweden), Holmestrand (Norway) and Almansa (Spain) participated in the conference, which was focusing on the cooperation between pedagogues, school operators and families, in the framework of the support of children and families towards school policies. In particular, attention was paid to create a system of welcoming and supporting the integration of foreign and disable children, as well as creating a system for the support of parents.

The municipalities of Imola, Forlì, Ravenna, Scandiano, Vänersborg and Hyvinka (Finland) have been exchanging experiences starting off from the results of the Network in the context of a Grundtvig Learning partnership. The project has been characterized by national seminars in each country where the trainers were the practitioners working in the field of support to parenthood both from an educational and social perspective.

Partnership for youth Sport Trainers



This LLP Sub-programme, Grundtvig, was approved and started up in the Fall of 2009. The leading applicant Forlì municipality in partnership with Piteå municipality (Sweden) and Diputació de Jaén (Spain) will be implementing a learning partnership for youth sports trainers.

The project aims at sharing a method to promote health and psychophysical wellbeing through the formation of a key “educational figure”. The idea the project is based on, is that sports educators can be key players in promoting youth health. Starting from experiences of the project’s partners, and especially the one of the AUSL (Local Health Authority) of Forlì, the project aims at drafting an innovative training model destined to youth sports trainers. This model will then be experimented in the territories of the partner countries and finally harmonized to be used and replicated in other European contexts.

Main objectives of the partnership are:

- 1) Comparing different realities and sharing successful experiences (best practices);
- 2) Increasing sensitivity and awareness toward the role of sports coaches in the prevention of youth distress;
- 3) Developing skills and professionalism of trainers (educators, psychologists, etc.) in order to prepare training programmes addressed to sports coaches, also envisaging a direct involvement of the sports clubs' managers.
- 4) Drafting a shared training programme to be experimented in the three partner countries.

The project will continue until 2011, with a final seminar in June.

Forward Policies and Actions for seniors in Europe



The project was developed in 2009 and will last until September 2011 and consist of 6 transnational meetings. The aims of the project are creating cooperation among the participating cities on the issue of quality of life of the senior in Europe. The partners are all dealing with an ageing populations and this trend needs to be met by drafting new policies and services based on the needs of the senior citizens of the 21st century. Participants of this project are the municipalities Skövde, Norrköping (Sweden), Parma and Traversetolo (Italy), Enzkreis (Germany), the City of Tours (France) and the Social Agency Pedemontana Sociale(Traversterolo, Collecchio, Felino, Montechiarugolo, Sala Baganza).

The first event of the project took place in Skövde in mid-December with delegates from all of the partners. The leading applicant, the municipality of Skövde, hosted the meeting, which aimed to let the participants know the statistic situation of elderly people and the outlook for the coming years. In order to analyze which policies and action that could be useful to maintain healthy elderly, the gathered partners paid their attention comparing trends in the different countries. Another topic of the conference was the explanation of the word “ageism”, which is a word representing different forms of discrimination against individuals or groups based on their age.



In May 2010, the next event will be held in Germany and the conference will focus on the actions and policies to let elderly people actively participate in the social and civil society.

ENVIRONMENT

Energy Efficiency and Territorial Planning



In the beginning of 2009, the new project Energy Efficiency and Territorial Planning was approved. The length of the project is 10 months; it started in the summer of 2009 and is ending in the spring of 2010. This project is closely linked to the EU goal of reducing consumption and to introduce a more sustainable energy use by 2010, with the specific aim to bring a deeper knowledge about the European approaches among the participant countries. Particular attention is paid to innovation in design in the building construction, communication actions within the local sector and energy efficiency and territorial planning. The specific aims of this project are:

The leading applicant is the municipality of Boden and the others participants are Jokkmokk, Norrköping, Trollhättan, Vänersborg, Falköping and Mölndal municipalities (Sweden), Forlì, Parma, Russi and Traversetolo municipalities (Italy) also together with the Peterborough municipality (UK), Tampere (Finland) and Karlsruhe municipality (Germany). In June of 2009 the first seminar was held in Forlì. The first meeting helped to deepen the knowledge about policy solutions, technical innovation and the best practices already adopted in the different EU countries. During the conference some important decisions were taken. The partners decided to take action on the planning of new industrial areas, the development of new energy efficient residential areas, the creation of databases on the energy efficiency of buildings and they have also planned activities to raise awareness of energy efficiency towards biogas experts.

Towards 3X20: Reducing CO2 Emissions and increasing Energy Efficiency

In 2009 a new project within the environmental area was submitted and approved. Rimini municipality (Italy) is the leading partner in the 3x20 Network, which general objective is to raise awareness among citizens on energy policies of the European Union and on the energy efficiency goals of 2020. More specifically, the main aim is to exchange good practices on the development of local energy plans and to analyze the role of the different local authorities on this subject.

The project sees the participation of Landkreis Offenbach (Germany), the city of Bydgoszcz (Poland), Norrköping, Linköping and Motala municipalities (Sweden) and finally the Reggio Emilia Province. The start of this project is foreseen for March 2010 as the planning and coordination meeting will be held in Reggio Emilia.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Twinnovate: Innovation in Local Development



This was the first year for the Twinnovate project which is focusing on innovation in local development. The participants will be developing a network of cooperation through which different public and private actors mobilize themselves in order to create innovation. The underlying idea is that this will support to reinforce and foster economic growth by using the economic, social, human and cultural resources of the different territories.

The project has three main objectives:

1. to **exchange good practices** on the implementation of innovative tools to local development policies
2. to **involve actively** a wide range of actors such as local authorities, private actors, voluntary associations
3. to **experiment** locally new solutions for the promotion of entrepreneurship, for the creation of sustainable jobs, for the promotion of public services for the community benefit and of cultural and leisure innovative services.



The first seminar was hosted by the province of Reggio Emilia (Italy) in September 2009. The four partner areas, Reggio Emilia, the Östsm Council (Sweden), the Province of Albacete (Spain) and the Province Enzkreis (Germany), had delegates participating. During the opening plenary session, there was the presentation of the various policies in the different countries in order to create the basis for the discussion in the different working groups.

The working groups deepened some of the issues raised during in the plenary session in particular related the interaction between private (profit and non profit) and public sector and cooperation between different levels of government (i.e. the governance of innovation processes.)

Next event will take place in Albacete, Spain, in March 2010, focusing on the role of the public administration in fostering development and innovation in local and regional level.





Study visit in Emilia-Romagna from Business Region Göteborg

Following an initiative of the City of Mölndal a group of 12 civil servants from Business Region Göteborg participated in a study tour in the Parma and Reggio Emilia area on September 24th and 25th in order to learn about business development at regional level and to discuss possible future project of cooperation.

Business Region Göteborg is a non-profit regional development company owned by 13 local authorities which constitutes the metropolitan region of Goteborg (Mölndal City is one of these 13 municipalities). Its interest is focused on cooperation between public and private actors, on structures to facilitate business development, innovation and internationalization and on industrial incubators.

The SERN Secretariat together with the provinces of Parma and Reggio Emilia organized an intensive study tour. The tour was opened with a conference focusing on the industrial and economic background of the Parma area with presentations of some important local economic actors such as the Chamber of Commerce, Tecninnova and the Parma University. The study tour also gave the opportunity to visit important industrial sites such as Parmalat and Landi Renzo.

Innovation was the main issue in two other meetings, at the engineering department of the Reggio Emilia University and at the department of regional development of the region Emilia-Romagna.

The study visit represented an important occasion to exchange knowledge and to put the basis for further cooperation and interaction with public authorities as well as with companies and universities.

TOURISM

Local Sustainable Tourism



The project, which has been in progress since 2008, has the objectives to understand the reciprocal influence of the protection and promotion of the local intangible heritage and of concept of sustainable tourism. Further, the aim is to create opportunity for exchanging best practices thanks to the involvement of private companies in the production and tourism field.

Municipalities from three different countries have participated and contributed to this project; Traversetolo, Canossa, Felino, Montecchio Emilia, Montechiarugolo, San Polo d'Enza in Italy, Jokkmokk and five municipalities from Norra Bohuslän association in Sweden and Oraison in France. These municipalities has developed and deepened the concept of sustainable development thanks to the comparison of tasks and competences in the three involved European cities.

The second and last event of the project was held in the five municipalities of the Norra Bohuslän area in March 2009. The participants represented a productive mix of public (political representatives and civil servants) and private (high quality food producers and representatives of tourist organizations) actors. This hybrid of different, but complementary, points of views helped when they approached the concept of sustainable tourism under different.

After an opening plenary session focused on the Swedish approach, in particular the Västra Götaland region and Norra Bohuslän ones, the discussion passed in three working groups defined according to the participant's target.

The political representative and the civil servants focused their attention on the main strategies to promote or improve the practice of a tourism which has on the one hand, to preserve the local tradition and the indigenous natural environment, and on the other hand to promote the economic and social development of the involved areas. The producers' group had a productive discussion starting from the Italian experience, of Parma and Reggio Emilia in particular, on how to certify their high quality food products and transform this high quality in a tool supporting the local economy. The tourist organizations discussed the opportunity to increase the level of tourism flow according to the Italian and Swedish territorial peculiarities.

A publication explaining the contents of the project, the participating organizations, the conferences and the results from the project has been produced. To download the publication "Local intangible heritage for a sustainable tourism", visit the SERN platform under the Tourism section.

HORIZONTAL ISSUES

Quality Cities



Quality Cities is the continuation of the Euroquality project and a result of a project group created in the context of SERN in 2007. From the beginning the group was started by some of the Italian (municipality of Scandiano, Unione Terre Verdiane) and Swedish (City of Trollhättan) members and today it also involves the municipalities of Almansa (Spain), Blansko (the Czech Republic) and Lymington (the UK).

As the project is striving for the development of a common approach to quality in the education and the elderly services, the objective of this project is to create a network of collaboration focusing on the comparison of various experiences in the management of quality in public services.

During the year, the partners have met at two separated occasions. The first event took place in Almansa in February. The main objective of the meeting was to analyze the results that the participants obtained between the June 2008 event and this one. In particular, the participants focused on the introduction for the preschool group and the joint development of new customer tools for the elderly care group. The seminar also set out the objectives for coming months and the definitions of common “European” indicators of performance and satisfaction and a common charter of services.



The second meeting was held in Trollhättan the 14th to the 16th of October, where the participants discussed essential methodologies in the field of quality and penetrations in the methods that the different working groups have worked with. The event also set the basis for the future activities of the project. Further, the participated members also visited an elderly care house and a preschool.



City of Trollhättan



SERN Training Programme on thematic Networks for Twinned Towns

The project began from the need coming small and medium municipalities, which are members in SERN, to develop and deepen their twinning relations in a more strategic ways in order to face new and more complex challenges posed by an active participation in the context of the European projects.



The programme has been designed as a process divided in three phases:

Phase 1 - A two-day-module carried out locally with two meetings in Italy (in Parma and in Forlì) and two meetings in Sweden (in Trollhattan and in Linköping). The module was focused on the transnational dimension of networking and on the networking within the organization in order to manage effectively the participation in and the implementation of EU

projects.

Phase 2 - A transnational event with Italian and Swedish participants aimed at project development with the possibility of inviting one of your twinned towns from any EU country. The event is aimed at testing the notions learnt during the regional training module and at the development and discussion of project ideas. Participants could choose between two events, one in Rimini in April and one in Salsomaggiore Terme in November according to the project proposal they wanted to discuss with the partners.

Phase 3 - Tutoring and project development for the calls of the Thematic Network of Twinned towns.

The training programme saw the participation of 10 Swedish municipalities and 12 Italian ones with representatives of other European countries, such as Spain, Germany, Finland and Croatia. Around 90 people participated in the activities both at local and transnational level with the discussion of nine project ideas on environment, education and welfare policies issues:



1. Exchange of methods to increase technical and scientific interest and competences in order to support competitiveness
2. Current and future skills in the health and welfare sectors
3. Public procurement and climate implications
4. Towards 3x20: reducing of CO2 emissions and increasing of energy efficiency through the use of renewable energy sources
5. Ecological food management in public sectors
6. Improvement of scientific skills through the relation with nature/ environment
7. Network on local welfare policies and active civil society
8. Network of EU/international relations management at local level
9. Local authorities and civil society supporting integration

Two of these proposals were successfully submitted under the programme “Europe for Citizens” and both have been approved. Some others have been submitted under the February 2010 deadline.



SERN meets the Swedish Royal Family



Roberta Mori, chairwoman of the Sweden Emilia Romagna Network, and Nicola Catellani, the coordinator of the Network, took part of a lunch on March 26th organized in the framework of the state visit of the King of Sweden Carl Gustav XVI and Queen Silvia. The royals, after having met the highest authorities in Rome, stopped in Bologna with their delegation in order to learn more about the links established between Italy, and in particular the Emilia Romagna area, and Sweden through the Sweden Emilia Romagna Network (SERN). At the lunch participated also the Foreign Minister Carl Bildt and the Swedish Ambassador Anders Björner.

The meeting constituted an important recognition of the work carried out by the Network and its potential in the context of the bilateral relations between the two countries. Nicola Catellani and Roberta Mori showed the majesties and the other participants the activities and the dynamics of cooperation that characterize the Network. In particular, the attention was devoted to the five areas of activities – Welfare, Environment, Education, Tourism and Entrepreneurship – of the network in which the 55 members collaborate since 2005.

Matter of discussion were the projects of the networks and the perspectives of further development of the organization, a unique context where European integration is fostered through concrete cooperation developed from the needs or the best practices that each municipality or region participating expresses.



The V General Assembly

The 2009 General Assembly took place in Rimini on the 18th April at the end of three intense working days with seminars, workshops and conferences on various issues.

The Assembly voted on important decisions for the future of the network. Firstly, the members approved some statutory changes such as the new rules for withdrawal from the network, voting rights, the rights and obligations of partners participating in EU projects, the set up of the Presidium (a quick decision structure composed of chair and vice chair people) and small adjustments of the membership fees.

Secondly, the Assembly approved the proposal made by the Board to nominate Roberta Mori as chairwomen and Li Teske as vice-chairwomen of the SERN network.

Thirdly, the Assembly approved the renewal of the Executive Board members and of the Board of auditors.

SERN Assembly had the pleasure to host the Swedish Ambassador in Italy, H.E. Anders Bjurner who indicated SERN as an integrated way of territorial cooperation. He also introduced the main themes that guided the Swedish government during the six months presidency of the EU (July-December 2009), which are: environment, globalisation and migration, combat criminality at local and transnational levels and climate changes.

During the General Assembly days, the first transnational meeting of the SERN training programme 2009 took place where three work groups met with the participation of Italian, Swedish, Spanish and German organisations. Moreover, the Rimini municipality proposed and hosted various conferences such as on sustainable city planning and on policies to combat violence against women introducing an important comparison process between Swedish and Italian policies and best practices.

The Norrbotten County Council proposed its candidature to host the 2010 General assembly. The SERN members welcomed and approved this invitation.

The SERN Executive Board

The Board members met three times in 2009, twice in Sweden (in Mölndal in February and in Arvidsjaur in November) and once in Italy, in Rimini in April). All the 2009 meetings have been characterised by the effort to think, under different perspectives, about the future of the SERN network.



During the meeting in Mölndal, members of the Executive Board had to take important decisions concerning (1) the role of European partners who participate in different EU co-financing projects together with SERN members in order to establish strategic relations with them. The Board proposed to introduce in the SERN statute the figure of “partner of the network” with obligations and rights (2) a financially sustainable strategy for the network until 2012.

The theme of the future of the network has been also recalled during the meeting in Rimini in April where there was a change-over in the presidency of the Executive Board: the mandate of Mr Kent Ogren came to an end and Ms Roberta Mori was appointed as new chairperson of the network and Li Teske as vice-chairperson.

Other changes happened during the last meeting in 2009 held in Arvidsjaur when new Board members have been introduced: Patrich Leech for Forlì municipality, Åke Eltoft for Norrbotten Läns Landsting and Francesco Trivelloni for Union Terre Verdiane.

The Executive Board members paid particular attention to the revision of the SERN strategy and its guidelines. They decided to give mandate to a group of Italian and Swedish civil servants to adapt the strategy 2007-2009 and to adjust the guidelines on the basis of the changes operated inside the network both from a project content perspective and from the number of members and partners involved in the SERN activities.



Financial Outlook

The 2009 balance sheet of SERN is characterised by a positive financial result with an increase of the fund balance from **5.818,86** at the beginning of the year to **13.762,15** at the end of 2009. This very positive results is in line with the 3 year projection presented by the Secretariat and approved by the Executive Board in Mölndal has been achieved through an effective control of the expenses and an increase of the incomes from other sources than the members' fees. The EU project that the Secretariat has been running has contributed to important savings and the reimbursement of staff costs as well as other operational costs of the network.

The total income for the year 2009 has been € 169.967,95 while the total expenses amounted to 132.993,98. The income statements 2009 (incomes generated in 2009 and expenses paid in 2009) has produced a net income after tax of 37.004,13. The net income from operations therefore does not take into account expenses related to 2009 but not yet incurred or incomes not yet cashed in. The fund balance document complements the income statement by indicating the amount of the fund balance at the end of the year in the light of assets (credits) and liabilities (debts).

This results has been due to a generalised lower expenditure on most of the statement's items in particular general expenses, travel expenses. The fees for the VCP platform from the previous years (2007 -2009) have been settled positively with a substantial discount on the fees of 2009.

On the incomes side a substantial extra revenue for the network has derived from the support provided to some of its members in the development and submission of applications for EU funding as well as from the participation fees in the project run by the network in 2009. The incomes deriving from the membership fees have been lower than planned at the beginning of the year (91,1%) but in comparative terms they percentage is similar to the year 2008. This lower income has been due to the fact that some members (particularly two associations of municipalities) have been dissolved. The transfer of the credit to the single municipalities has proved difficult to claim and as a result of that that the collection has not been possible.

In general the payment of the fees has improved significantly in terms of punctuality if compared to previous years furthermore the incomes derived from the new members has been in line with the forecast. To note also the payment of a contribution of the Emilia-Romagna region of 8.300 Euros.

Finally, another key source of income (balanced by an equal expenses) that has contributed to a cash flow for the network has been the pre-financing of the NTT+ project that will be running for the whole 2010.

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. Such tools 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 or implemented 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.

INDICATORS	
Number of EU projects submitted at EU level in 2009	13
EU grants for projects approved in 2009	13
LLP Individual mobility grants submitted in 2009	15
LLP Individual mobility grants approved in 2009	13
EU grants awarded in 2009	€ 748.168,00
Number of member organisations involved in the activities	32

