

SERN ANNUAL REPORT 2012



SERN

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The SERN Members in 2012

Aiccre Emilia-Romagna	Mölnadal City
Ass. of Municipalities Norrbotten	Norrköping Municipality
Ale Municipality	Norrbotten County Council
Arvidsjaur Municipality	Parma Province
Asp SudEst Parma	Piteå Municipality
Bertinoro Municipality	Proges Cooperative
Boden Municipality	Ravenna Municipality
Borgo Val di Taro Municipality	Reggio Emilia Province
Brisighella Municipality	Regional Development Norra Bohuslän (5 Mun.)
Cavriago Sezizi	Regional Development Council Östergötland (Östsam)
Cervia Municipality	Rimini Municipality
Collecchio Municipality	Russi Municipality
Coompanion Skaraborg	Sala Baganza Municipality
Darvoce	Scandiano Municipality
Drivhuset Trollhättan	Sinettica
Falköping Municipality	Smedjebacken Municipality
Felino Municipality	Skövde Municipality
Forlì Municipality	Söderköping Municipality
Imola Municipality	Traversetolo Municipality
Kara Bobowski Soc. Coop.	Trollhättan Municipality
Linköping Municipality	Uddevalla Municipality
Jokkmokk Municipality	Vänersborg Municipality
Kalix Municipality	Västra Götaland Region
Matproducenterna i Norr	Unione "Terre Verdiane" (10 Mun.)
Meldola Municipality	Älvsbyn Municipality
Montechiarugolo Municipality	Ängelholm Municipality (from Nov 2012)
Motala Municipality	Östgöta Coop Center
Mjölby Municipality	

Introduction

In occasion of the 2012 General Assembly a set of indications emerged about the main processes characterizing the development of the network. These processes do not pertain only to 2012 as they are part of a long-term development of SERN as one of the successful examples of bilateral networks in Europe.

In the 2011 annual report three main elements were identified as key: thematic networks building, capacity building processes and valorization of the results. The first two elements are strictly connected to one another as the Network has identified and develop a process of capacity building, which continued in 2012, through the PLANET project which has led to the development of new thematic networks projects in the context of the Europe for Citizens programme. The main strengths of the process have been an activation of a substantial number of members (14) through a single project and the development of 5 new projects (3 of which were approved in the second round of selection in 2012).

In the light of the increasing competition for resources at European level, which saw an unprecedented number of applications submitted (141) and only 21 granted with the lowest rate of approval (15%) for the Measure of the Programme, the result achieved show the value and quality of the activities carried out. The work done in 2012 will continue in 2013 through a new support measure project in which the network is currently a partner and that will give the

possibility to consolidate and enlarge the network of contacts at European level.

The issue of increased competition for EU resources does not only pertain the Europe for Citizens Programme but emerges as a generalized trend in Europe which is likely to be strengthened by the effects of the economic crisis. In 2012 the network has been able to achieve the largest amount of EU grants requested (1,8 Mill €) and number of project proposals since its creation. At the same time, however, there has been a lower success rate of (57% in terms of number of projects approved) a 20% decrease compared to 2011.

The new Programming Period of the European Union and the increasing competition at European level open up a set of issues that the network will have to deal with. The first one pertains to the quality of the proposals. The strategy based on the use of thematic networks as a first step for the development of more complex and large projects has indeed set in motion a large number of cooperation processes but only some of the partnership have been able to elaborate and initiate follow-up processes. The quality of the achievements of some projects (particularly in the field of social welfare and education) has been the remarkable both in terms of products and impact on the processes at local level. However, it has to be recognized that some other thematic networks have performed poorly.

It is therefore crucial that the new proposals build on the previous work and take stock of the achievements of

the projects that have now ended. As pointed out in the context of the General Assembly 2012, it is of utmost importance that the results are made available in such a way that can be easily accessed by other beneficiaries and target groups. The second element pertains the quality of the partnership. One of the main reasons for poor results in the context of transnational projects is linked to the quality of the partnership. With one or two exceptions, in the projects set up by the network the Italian-Swedish partnership has worked well and it has actually played a pivotal role in driving the process forward. Problems have arisen with partners from other countries not so much in terms of relations in the coordination groups but rather in terms of commitment and quality of the contribution given to the projects. The question of the partnership is crucial at project level but it is also key at network level. More attention will have to be devoted to the identification of a number of partners that are reliable and that the right ones for each specific project. The question of getting the projects going through NTT+ and PLANET has been given priority over the effectiveness of the partnerships which have been created. If on the one hand the network of contacts that SERN has established at European level is expanding, on the other hand the quality of the partners both in the projects of the network and in the projects developed by the members will have to play a more important than it has had in the past .

The third element relates to the level complexity of the projects. As the new generations of EU programme will be in place as from 2014, there will be a clear need emerging among the members concerning a process of preparation and information about the new opportunities offered by the EU. At the same time a key challenge will be to move the attention to a variety sources of funding in the EU without neglecting the opportunities that programs like Europe for Citizens will continue to offer. Those members that have started their engagement in Networks have already created a substantially solid basis that enable them to try to develop more complex projects in terms of management and planning. Within the limits set by its role and human resources, the Secretariat will encourage the efforts of the members, particularly of those engaged in previous projects, that will attempt to engage in more complex EU projects in partnership with other member organizations.

Activities

The project activities held during 2012 followed the priorities stated in the SERN Strategy 2010-2012: sustainable local and regional growth and competition and social inclusion. In 2012, the Network members participated and implemented events in a total of 13 EU projects, namely: 10 Networks projects (measure 1.2 of the Programme Europe for Citizens), 1 Support Measures project (measure 2.2 of the Programme Europe for Citizens), 2 projects under the Programme Comenius.

The Italian members involved were the Municipalities of Ravenna, Borgo Val di Taro, Meldola, Laives, Rimini, Collecchio, Bertinoro, Forlì, Cervia, Fidenza, Imola, Traversetolo, Scandiano and Union Terre Verdiane, Asp Sud Est, Region Emilia Romagna, Unione Montana Acquacheta, Cooperativa Sociala Kara Bobowski, Province of Reggio Emilia.

The Swedish members in the projects are the Municipalities of Mjölby, Norrköping, Mölndal, Linköping, Motala, Arvidsjaur, Piteå, Falköping, Trollhättan, Vänersborg and Region Västergötland, Norrbotten Läns Landsting, East Sweden Region.

The project activities described in this section, will be divided under 4 categories:

- Projects ended during 2012
- Projects in progress during 2012
- Projects approved in late 2013 and starting in 2013
- Projects in which SERN is partner coordinator

Projects ended in 2012

ELCANET:

Network on family support in elderly care policies



The partnership led by the Municipality of Ravenna, ended the project on sustainable elderly care, with the identification of shared guidelines under the four thematic transnational work groups defined along the project. 1. Home services group focused its attention on how to get access to services starting from the elderly's needs; 2. Education and training group identified as main need the necessity of updating the education of care givers analysing the different best practices in the management process; 3. Activation and prevention group paid particular attention to the role of seniors as volunteers and as a resource for the society; 4. ICT possibilities groups dedicated its attention to the role and use of ICT tools for elderly care at home (domotics).

The project ended in December 2012 with the final event where possible follow-up has been identified.



More info: www.elcanetproject.eu

SEAL

Current and future skills in the health and welfare sector



The SEAL project, Current and future skills in the health and welfare sector, ended in June 2012 with the presentation of the results of the local projects implemented from the SEAL project using the Swot analysis in the different partnering countries. The concrete transnational tool that can be considered as the main product of the project, is a transnational glossary in which Swedish, Italian, Spanish, Scottish and Danish participants and experts compared the meaning and the contents of different concepts in the education, social welfare and training/employment frameworks.

More info: www.socialwelfareskills.eu

Organic food in public schools



The project on the use of organic food in public schools ended in February 2012 with the presentation of some European guidelines resulting from the presentation

and analysis of the national best practices and the activities held in the work groups. Particular attention was paid on the environmental impact of the increased use of local organic food on the reduced emissions of CO₂ and on the education aspect with an increased raising awareness action towards parents and teachers for increasing the amount of organic food served in public schools. The Italian, German, Swedish and Croatian members of the partnership identified at least one national best practice which can be adapted and adopted in the other countries.

More info: www.organicfoodinschools.eu

3x20

Network on reduction of CO₂ emissions



The Network, led by the Municipality of Rimini, on the Co₂ emissions reduction through awareness raising actions, focused its results on the comparison of local and transnational

experiences produced by the Italian, Swedish, Polish and German partners on communication campaigns and technical solutions. From the exchange of these best practices a new project proposal emerged in the education field which was submitted under the Comenius programme. Moreover, several partners expressed their interest in subscribing the Covenant of Mayors and to develop sustainable energy action plans involving citizens and local stakeholders in the CO₂ emission reduction.

More info: www.3x20net.eu

Ongoing projects in 2012

Go Green Now!



During 2012, the project partners met twice, in Germany in March and in Sweden (Motala) in October. The 3rd and 4th thematic seminars have been focused on the raising awareness in environmental issues on two target groups: private companies and economic stakeholders and citizens with particular attention to the role of an efficient and coherent communication towards the citizens. The event in Motala represented the occasion to see how the projects planned in Collecchio in November 2011 have been implemented and how they increased knowledge and attention in among children's families, school staff and pupils. Eight projects have been presented with the participation of schools located in all the municipalities members in the partnership from Italy, with Collecchio Municipality as lead partner, Sweden, Finland, German and Spain. Particular effort has been put in the analysis of the chosen themes for the different school level: Exploring the nature for pre-school pupils, Waste management and reusing and recycling for primary school students and water and its sustainable use for high school students.

More info: www.gogreen-now.eu

Volwe

Network on the role of volunteering in local welfare and integration



The project VOLWE, a network on the role of volunteering in local welfare and integration policies implemented in 2012 three events with the aim to define a regulatory framework and to analyse the current status of the volunteering associations in the partnering countries (Italy, Sweden, Finland and Spain). The participants, representing both the local authorities and the voluntary association, met three times with the creation of dedicated work groups aimed at analyzing the national experiences and starting to exchange best practices and networking.

The project will end in 2013 with a final meeting and the production of shared guidelines describing the interaction, the differences and similarities among the partnering countries.

More info: www.volweproject.eu

YPAD

Network on young people and development



The Network, on young people and development, composed of Italian, Finnish, Swedish and Spanish municipalities with lead partner the municipality of Pitea, met once during 2012 in Forlì with the 3rd thematic seminar on how to support young people with good ideas in order to avoid marginalization and to promote social integration. The project participants are mainly young people between 18 and 30 years old with the aim to share and exchange experiences and values in the field of local development and entrepreneurship. This objective derived from three main needs: the lack of competences for young people to be employed, the marginalization of young people in the civil society and a lack of competences of public authorities to interact and cooperate with young people.

During 2013, two more events will be developed on the communication and interaction between local public authorities and young people.

More info: www.ypadnetwork.eu

Flow4yu

Network on dialogue between young people and public institutions



The Network created on dialogue between young people and public institutions organized three meetings in 2012, one in Italy and two in Finland. The Italian and Finnish events helped young participants to analyse and compared European public policies to promote a sense of belonging of young people on the public institutions at local and European level in order to have an active participation in the society and in the public life. From the improved knowledge of the public systems, young people could increase their skills and opportunities to promote their entrepreneurship and life/self management.

More info: www.flow4yu.eu

DIAMI

Active citizenship and intercultural dialogue with migrant people



The network DIAMI, on active citizenship and intercultural dialogue with migrant people, developed and implemented three thematic seminar in 2012. During these meeting, the partnership led by Union Terre Verdiane includes Swedish, Finnish, Spanish, Italian and Maltese municipalities. The partners discussed and compared the national experiences in order to plan common policies related to the integration of migrants.

Participants dedicated their attention to three focus areas:

1. Education and training: in order to increase competences of migrant people with a higher level of education;
2. Work: the introduction of migrant people in more skilled jobs in order to achieve the goals fixed in Europe 2020 strategy;
3. Socialisation: fostering the participation of migrants in the community life.

The project is in progress and will end in mid 2013 with an evaluation and follow-up meeting.

More info: www.diamiproject.eu

Projects starting in 2013

In the framework of the PLANET project, the participating Municipalities submitted 5 projects in September 2012 and three of them have been approved with activities starting in February 2013.

AGE

Active Generation Exchange

The main objective is facilitating active ageing by increasing social integration of elder people with the expected results of increased Participation of Elderly, improving Cooperation among local authorities and associations and facilitating intergeneration dialogue. The lead partner is the Swedish Municipality of Falköping and the partnership is composed of the municipalities of Buje (HR); Culleredo (ES); Dabrowa Gornica (PL); Langhirano (IT); Imola (IT); Piteå (SE); Ponteceso (ES).

EUC4BIZ

European cities network for business friendly environment

The focus of the project is to create conditions for economical growth in urban areas and a more favourable climate for entrepreneurship by exchanging competences in supporting entrepreneurship, creating a set of guidelines for promoting entrepreneurship and creating a long lasting cooperation among the members of the network . The Lead partners is the City of Zagreb and the project partners are Bydgoszcz (PL); Ferrol (ES); Kielce (PL); Norrköping (SE); Warsaw (PL).

ECOWAS

Raising awareness for eco friendly behaviours in waste collection

The partnership, guided by the Spanish municipality of Abegondo and composed of the Municipalities of Lublin (PL); Mölndal (SE); Travesetolo (IT); Sosnowiec (PL), focuses its attention on promoting common values and strategies through sustainable waste management models as a part of wellbeing of the European citizens. Increasing eco-friendly behaviors in recycling and reuse through interaction and participation are the main aims. These objectives will be achieved by acquiring a deepen knowledge of good strategies in waste management comparing the European experiences. The expected results are linked to increase the percentage of separate waste collection, recycling and reuse and to raise motivation toward eco-friendly behavior among European citizens.

ACT4T

Twinning cooperation as a tool for active citizenship

The project is aimed at enhancing the skills of civil servants in the field of town twinning and international relations. These activities can provide new impulses and insights for improving the quality of public services. Municipalities will also learn how to benefit the most of EU programs and to develop international competences. The lead partner is the association of Polish cities, which has collaborated with SERN during PLANET. SERN will participate in the projects together with other associations of municipalities from France; Germany; Czech Republic and Slovakia.

ACT4T foresees two international conferences planned in Poland with the participation of representatives from each country. SERN will identify 6 participants from member organizations, 3 from Italy and 3 from Sweden for each conference.

An open contest will be targeted to young people in the project's countries to create a documentary on "*International Cooperation in My Municipality as Seen from My Perspective*". Short films or documentaries (max length 7 min) on the topic of the contest have to be sent to local coordinators (SERN for Italy and Sweden) by the 14th of June 2013. The authors of the selected video will participate to the Second international conference in Krakow from the 26th to the 27th of September where the final award ceremony will take place.

Projects in which SERN acted as project partner/coordinator

GUT

Growing up together



GUT is a Comenius Regio partnership between the Region Emilia-Romagna and the Swedish Östergötaland and with SERN as a partner supporting the Region Emilia Romagna in the coordination of the activities, ended in June 2012. The SERN municipalities involved were Linköping and Norrköping in Sweden and Cervia and Forlì in Italy.

The project focused its attention on the exchange of good practices on the integration of pupils with a foreign background in the educational system. The activities included two transnational seminars, study visits in Emilia-Romagna and in the East Sweden aimed at identifying practices and tools fostering integration in relation to:



- Intercultural mediators/cultural mediation practices
- System/structure for reception/introduction
- The family perspective
- Mapping and evaluation of former knowledge of pupils
- Mother tongue teaching/study guidance in mother tongue/study material in mother tongue

The project GUT, because of the important themes it has approached and the results it has reached, has been identified at European level as one of the best practices and it was included in a publication of the DG Education and culture of the European Commission.

More info: www.gutproject.eu

EUNET

Network on international relations policies and town twinning



The projects aimed at creating a European network on international relations policies and town twinning saw the implementation of the first three events in 2012. Particular attention has to be dedicated to the

outcomes of the 1st and 2nd thematic seminar which had as target groups political representatives (governing and at the opposition), managers and civil servants in the field of education and social policies.



Both seminars saw the participation of around 70 people with an active involvement thanks to the alternance of plenary session and work groups activities led by a facilitator. The 1st seminar, held in Vänersborg in April 2012, was focused on the interaction between international relations and the political strategy at local level, and the importance of communicating the project results, giving visibility to the project activities. The 2nd seminar, held in La Coruna, Spain, in December 2012 focused its attention on the analysis of the European Strategy 2020 and in particular with work group discussion on two flagship initiatives: Youth on the move and Fight against marginalization in society.

The project will continue in 2013 with two more transnational seminars dedicated to the relation between the public authorities involved in town twinning relations and the local twinning committees and supporting NGOs.



More info: www.eunetwork.eu

PLANET

Thematic networks planning process



The thematic networks planning process took place in 2012 with three planning events organized under the Project Cycle Management planning methodology.

The project has been promoted by a partnership of 5 associations of local authorities that represent a North-South and West-East European extension: Sweden Emilia-Romagna Network –SERN (Italy), the Association of Municipalities of Norrbotten (Sweden), the Province of La



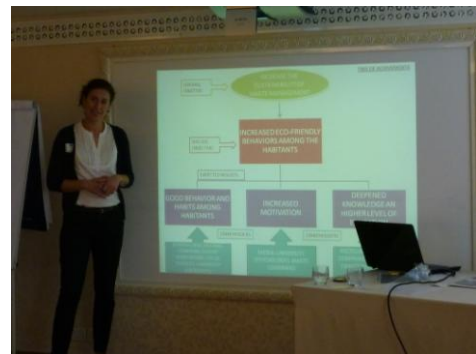
Coruna (Spain), the Association of Polish Cities (Poland) and the ALD Verteneglio (Croatia). The PLANET project can be understood as the third step in the planning and managing thematic networks projects after the 2010 (NTT+ project) and 2011 (MaNTT project) training projects focused on giving guidelines to participants to optimize strategies and tools for efficient project development and managing.



The project concretely provided training to 36 civil servants representing municipalities from the 5 partnering countries by delivering specific knowledge and competencies to the participants and, at the same time, giving life to new Thematic Networks at the end of the process. Participating Municipalities were of medium dimension. The exceptions were

the participants in the specific group of “Urban development” who came from big cities or country capitals such as Warsaw or Zagreb, too.

Participants participated in plenary sessions and work groups activities on five themes: 1) Active ageing with questions related to longer working life, healthy lifestyle, active contribution of elderly to society through volunteering; 2) Local Rural development strategies with aspects related to the promotion of local products, the development strategies based on tourism and the promotion of entrepreneurial skills among farmers; 3) Local urban development policies focused on themes as employability and new skills for new jobs; 4) Cultural policies as a driver for local development with issues related to the planning and implementation of cultural policies at the local level and the support to creative industries; 5) Waste management strategies focused on waste management processes and approaches , awareness - raising actions targeting the population, and innovative use of wastes.



The three training seminars followed the first three phasis of the PCM approach:

1st seminar, Poznan, Poland: Indicative programming

2nd seminar, Rimini, Italy: Identification

3rd seminar, La Coruña, Spain: Formulation.

The seminars represented a step-by-step experience of the managerial implications tied to each phase, and concretely produced the conditions for an effective and shared planning and project formulation.

The PLANET training project had as outcomes the identification of five project proposals, one per each work group. All five projects have been submitted under the programme Europe for Citizens, measure 1.2. and three of them were approved (see section before).

The other two projects, on cultural policies and local rural development strategies have been submitted in the first round 2013.

The project ended with a dissemination and valorization seminar which took place in Brussels in October 2012. The meeting saw the participation of representatives of the European Commission, EACEA and several regional offices located in the city. Particular attention was paid to the explanation of the training methodologies and tools employed and to listen to the experiences and feedback from participants.



The brainstorming meeting with EACEA representatives represented an important moment of discussion and reflection on thematic network and other several issues, such as the main challenges encountered by the participants in the planning process; the effective matching between the Project Cycle Management /Logical Framework Approach and the application form and the evaluation criteria; the elements that make a thematic network a successful project; the role of DG COMM, EACEA and the associations of local authorities and European networks in improving the quality of the EFC projects.

More info: www.planetefc.eu

CREANET



The Network project Creativity in pre-schools, led by the municipality of Scandiano and coordinated by SERN, entered its second year of activities with many events, meetings and exchanges.

The main event is represented by the second annual conference which took place in Klaipeda, Lithuania, in May 2012. The conference saw the participation of more than 120 people from eight European countries mostly



pre-school teachers and civil servants. The programme of the event foresaw symposiums to present researches conducted by academics from the participant universities during the last years together with the results of questionnaires and the focus group surveys which analyzed how teachers deals with creativity in local contexts.

Participants had the opportunity to share their professional experience with colleagues in different thematic groups: Technology and media; relations; storytelling and language learning; aesthetic expression. A contact-making seminar has been arranged during the conference to present new project proposals mostly came up at the working groups meeting in Scandiano and Norrköping.

Particular attention, after the discussion of the work groups in Klaipeda, was paid to the proposals to be submitted under the Comenius programme. The project proposals followed the two main themes of the work group activities. Under the issue "Expressive languages", two project proposals emerged, one on getting to know music and sound and the other on materials as new expressive languages. Under the issue "Contexts" five project proposals emerged: space and creativity in pre-schools; Tecnology and Media in pre-schools; Environmental education; materials and logical mathematics; quality of early child education services.

The project activities in the eight European countries members in the partnership were introduced and promoted by several dissemination seminars during all the year 2012.

More info: www.creativityinpreschools.eu



SERN Executive Board

The executive board members met three times during 2012: in February in Ravenna, in April in Vänersborg and in November in Boden. The main issues to which the members of the board dedicated their attention were:

- the communication strategy of the Network, with a reinforcement of the network's communication tools such as the presence on the social networks and not only the use and update of the public website and the platform;
- the strategic plan 2013-2015. Through a long participative process the Board defined the future focus areas of the network; the sustainability, not only financial, of the Network; the valorization of the project results among members; links with other actors from other EU countries.

The Board approved the budget 2012 and the proposal for 2013.

The participation of SERN as support institution of the Covenant of Mayors.

The Covenant of Mayors is a European cooperation movement involving local and regional authorities. Signatories of the Covenant of Mayors voluntarily commit to increasing energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources on their territories. By their commitment, they support the European Union 20% CO2 reduction objective to be reached by 2020. In the Boden meeting, after a meeting with the responsible person of the Covenant of Mayors Secretariat, the Board member decided to adhere to the agreement that enroll SERN as support institution for its members. The formal signature of the agreement will be taken during 2013 General assembly

New members who joined the Network

In 2012 the Swedish municipality of Ängelholm, in the Skåne region, and the welfare provider and Cavriago Servizi joined the network. The first one is interested in activities in the field of welfare policies, the second one is focused on education matters.

The Covenant of Mayors

After the European Union climate and energy package was adopted in 2008, the European Commission launched the Covenant of Mayors to endorse and support the efforts deployed by local authorities in the implementation of sustainable energy policies.

SERN General Assembly 2012



The SERN General Assembly 2012 was hosted by the Municipality of Vänersborg, in collaboration with Västra Götaland region. Several activities were scheduled for the occasion from the 19th to the 21st of April, more than 120 participants attended the events. Project seminars were arranged to present the latest activities carried out within the network while a contact seminar gave the possibility to the members to share ideas for new projects. The activities of the Assembly were complemented by the sessions of the EUnet project.



The project seminars were the occasion to valorise the results and outcomes of several major projects such as the Network on Creativity in pre-schools (CREANET), Yourope project, increasing organic food in schools project and quality of life of seniors in Europe.

The contact seminars have been the occasion for the members to present new project proposals, namely on: the creation of a European network of libraries (Linköping Municipality), on systems and methods for planning and monitoring finances and services of community organizations (Trollhättan municipality), on children at risk (Vänersborg municipality).

The session of the General Assembly was opened by the President, Roberta Mori, pointing out the peculiarity of this network, which was born from a bottom-up perspective, and which has grown stronger and stronger over the years. She highlighted also that particularly in 2013, the year of European citizenship, SERN will have to



increase its efforts through new projects focusing on themes affecting the life of the citizens.

The Assembly received also the support from the Italian Ambassador in Sweden, Angelo Persiani, who highlighted the peculiarity of SERN as a good example of transnational Network built on a multilevel perspective, and the remarkable number of financed project in priority areas at the top of the EU agenda (such as welfare policies, education and entrepreneurship). The number of projects approved indicate the solid structure of the network, an enlargement in this sense is more than welcome to foster the good relationship between Italy and Sweden, two countries that have a lot to share and learn from each other's cultures. The Assembly approved the Board of Auditors report for the year 2011 and the budget proposal 2012 as well as accepted the invitation from the Municipality of Scandiano to be the hosting member of the General Assembly 2013.



Economic and Financial report

The 2012 financial report of SERN shows a positive result with an increase of the fund balance from € 45.464,74 at the end of 2011 to more than 50.077,88 € at the end of 2012. The total incomes for the year 2012 equals € 236.285, while the total expenses for the year 2012 amount to 231.672 €.

The income statement 2012 shows a net income from operations which is lower than the one of 2010 this is due to an increase of the reserve funds for the employees and the creation of a fund for the devaluation of the credits derived from unsettled fees. Despite a lower amount of the net income from operations, the total operational costs of the Secretariat (€ 83.444 against € 93.000 in the budget proposal) have been kept in line with costs of the previous years as shown in the image below.

The participation in EU projects (PLANET, CREANET, EUNET and GUT) has permitted a rationalisation of the travel expenses. At the same time it has led to a reimbursement of staff costs for 16.682 €, approximately 24% of the total staff costs of 2012.

In general the payment of the fees has been reflecting an increasingly negative trend of last years in terms of punctuality. As a result of this the credits towards members have increased between 2011 and 2012. The incomes derived from the new members has been lower than expected (due also to the fact that the fees of two organisations that joined SERN in April (Cavriago Servizi and Drivhuset) while Ängelholm municipality joined in November 2012. The Secretariat has also been providing services to the members through dedicated support in project management or in the organisation of study visits and other activities.

In general the network has consolidated further its financial situation however the increasing amount of credits related to fees paid with delay could potentially play a negative role in the future. The increased number of activities and projects in which SERN has been taken part as a partner have contributed to a positive situation at the end of the financial year. However, as it was pointed out also in the 2011 annual report it will be increasingly important to identify a sustainable balance between incomes derived from the membership fees and incomes (through reimbursement of staff costs and general costs) derived from EU projects which by definition are and should not be considered as a permanent item in the budget. This in order to avoid an excessive reliance on external sources of funding.

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 project groups. The guidelines include also some quantitative indicators concerning the activities started or implemented in 2012.

The number of projects submitted (14) has been higher the previous year (11) however, the percentage of approved projects has decreased (due mainly to a sharp increase of the competition (i.e. number of proposals submitted) at EU level possibly fuelled by the economic crisis . This has also been possible thanks to good results and effects of the training activities.

Special attention has been given by the Executive Board to the electronic platform. The number of visitors to public pages has increased while the number of users logging into the platform is in line with the previous year. To note also that the MANTT platform has been set up and it has been attracting a substantial number of users of the SERN platform. The MaNTT platform it is currently used for the management of many of the ongoing projects.

INDICATORS	
Number of EU projects submitted at EU level in 2012	14
Amount of EU grants requested	€ 1.884.840,00
EU grants for projects approved in 2012	8
Amount of EU grants awarded in 2012	€ 568.882,00
Number of members involved in activities	41
Number of logins to the platform in 2012	3.325
Number of members that logged in 2012	139 out of 284
Visits (unique visitors)to the public pages in 2012)	9.121