



FRANCESCA GALLISAI

ERASMUS+ INTERNSHIP REPORT

EU PROJECT MANAGEMENT

09/2021-03/2022



Co-funded by the
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HOW IT STARTED

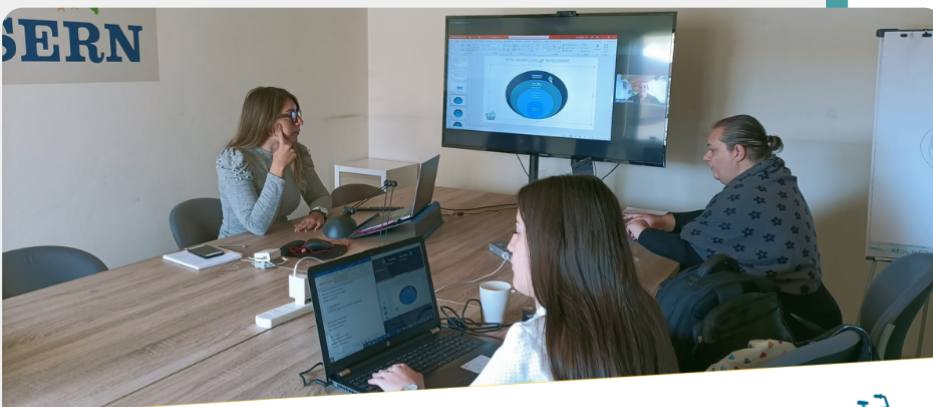
Hi, my name is Francesca and I was a student in the master's program Rural Development and Natural Resource Management at SLU. During my last semester, while I was writing my thesis, I started to feel a bit confused and undecided about my future and overwhelmed by the idea of having to find a job. It was during this period I realized it would have been a good idea to proceed step by step and try to find an internship linked to both my bachelor's degree (International Relations) and master's degree. It was exactly during this time that I came across the Erasmus+ internship opportunity outside the program through the SLU website.

This kind of exchange is thought for students who have recently graduated but still want to have an international working experience without having to apply to permanent positions abroad and still have a connection with their home university. As soon as I found out about this opportunity I felt it was perfect for me for two reasons: I could have had an experience abroad which I was not able to have during my program due to the Covid-19 pandemic and gain some practical experience related to my program. The only thing I had to do was to independently find an internship, send my application to SLU for the Erasmus+ grant, and go through the selection of the hosting organization.



SERN EXECUTIVE BOARD

11 March 2022

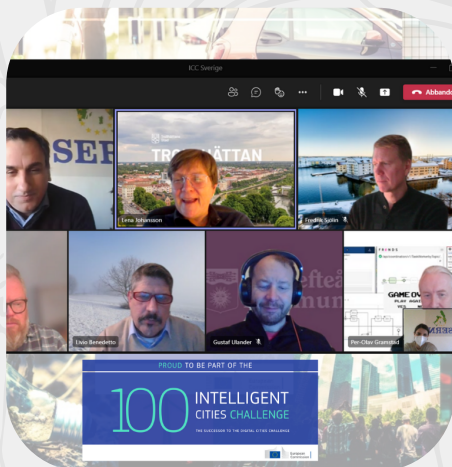


MY POSITION AT SERN

I would say the most difficult part of my experience was finding the internship, it can be a long process (not only looking for a position but also contacting, sending the application, and going through the selection procedure), if you are interested in this opportunity I would suggest starting well in advance to make sure to stick to the timeframe you would like to follow. Luckily for me, it went relatively quick and I managed to get the position I wanted and I first applied to: EU project management intern at SERN (Sweden Emilia-Romagna Network) based in Parma, Italy.

What does an EU project manager do? In short, it manages transnational programs and projects financed by EU funds (Erasmus+, Interreg, Life, Horizon, etc), ensures that all steps fulfill the requirements set by the European Commission, takes care of the budget, writes reports and applications, works together with project partners to achieve the objectives of each project, coordinates project activities, and participates in transnational project meetings. In addition to these tasks, I was also providing general office support, helping with translations (most activities were in Italian, English, and Swedish), and communication activities (social media posts, creation of a new website, and its regular update).

The office where I worked for six months are the headquarters (called Secretariat) of a non-profit network between organizations (public and private) in Italy and Sweden (SERN), working with three main priority areas: inclusive communities, green and sustainable communities, and digitalized communities. I naturally worked mostly with projects related to sustainability focusing for example on sustainable waste management, reuse practices, sustainable transportation, cooperatives as drivers for sustainable transition, and the role of agriculture in learning processes.



A SMALL FAMILY

SERN Secretariat was a very small office with only 5 employees working all together in the same big room. One of the aspects I liked the most from this experience was the familiar and friendly atmosphere I found every day at work. All my colleagues always cared about the well-being of everyone at the office, their workload, and support, I have never felt I was asking "wrong questions" or that I was lacking support and guidance, everyone always took their time to explain to me every step of my tasks and their contexts so that I could always have a general understanding of what I was doing. But not only that, everyone always tried to make sure I was getting the best out of this experience and know the local contexts and especially its traditional food, everyone was a food lover at the office (typical Italian) and they could not allow me to leave without making sure I learned how to cook some traditional dishes (the pictures below are from a cooking lab we attended all together).



ALL IN ALL

My experience as an Erasmus+ intern and especially at SERN was extremely positive, not only for the professional skills I gained but also and foremost for the personal growth, I went through these months in terms of interpersonal relations, self-awareness, and future plans. I consider myself very lucky to have had the opportunity to take part in this program and with SERN. A big thank you to SLU that gave me the opportunity first place, to the European Commission to provide the funding, and to SERN to host me as part of their team. If you are interested in Erasmus+ experiences apply, you won't regret it! Contact me at francescagallisai@gmail.com if you want to know more about my experience or contact SERN if you are interested in working with them, they are always happy to have new interns!!