Introduction

Cultural heritage is a delicate issue in the process of European convergence, since the problems to be tackled do not concern only the identification of common tools, but also the harmonization of different traditions and ways of life, which are different in every country. The cultural richness of the Central Europe area is so high that cultural tourism is one of the main pillars in the economic development of many cities and towns. However this richness often produces non-positive effects, since famous destinations are overcrowded, while other nearby cultural centres are poorly visited by the main tourism flows. CUSTODES (www.custodes-project.net) intends to work in this direction, focusing on the development of tourist products specifically created for small cultural sites, according to their different vocations. The innovative aspect is the approach the project intends to use, where the promotion is integrated with the creation of new sustainable tourism infrastructures at local level, well integrated with and benefitting from the proximity of a well known tourism destination (e.g. 50 km). CUSTODES intends to work on less known cultural sites as archaeological areas, historical castles, natural pathways and small spas, enhancing their potential as sustainable tourism destinations and promoting the socio-economic development of these areas. To do so, the project will develop and apply new models to increase tourism accessibility, attractiveness and infrastructures in the chosen cultural sites in order to:

- Improve the attractiveness of the partner areas
- Increase accessibility to poorly exploited cultural heritage sites
- Create new services for tourism, in a sustainable framework, preserving the environment
- Promote new forms of entrepreneurship in areas which risk to lose population
- Create new jobs and improving adaptability of workers
- Support the transfer of innovation from the research, and the development of new knowledge

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The territories involved in the project are four, namely: the Province of Rimini in Italy, the city of Mikulčice for the Czech Republic, the municipality of Velenje in Slovenia and Kujawsko-Pomorskie region in Poland.

The Province of Rimini (Italy)

The Province of Rimini is an Italian Local Authority committed to the sustainable development of its community of 300,000 people living along the Adriatic Sea coast. The history of Rimini is strongly linked to tourism since 1843 when the first bathing establishment was set up, marking the birth of the seaside resort which over the years, was to become the holiday capital of Europe and Italy’s leader tourism destination, with more than 15 millions annual presences.

Ariminum was founded by the Romans in 268 B.C., but since the 9th century B.C. the Etruscans-Villanovans had already settled in the region which now hosts the Verucchio archaeological site.

This is the land of the Malatesta Seigniory which dominated the area from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, leaving a unique heritage of villages, castles and fortresses in a region full of natural charm and breathtaking landscapes.

The long and rich history characterizing the region is a special resource to the development of the cultural tourism. It constitutes the key strategy in the Province of Rimini commitment in favour of a sustainable and competitive tourist development pursued through the identity enhancement of its country, the deep research of new tourist needs and trends, and by the exploitation of its vocations.

According to this purpose, the CUSTODES project aims to develop cultural and tourist potentialities of the surrounding hinterland of Rimini, especially concentrating on the improvement of the archaeological park of Verucchio, the roman heritage sites and a castles route.

Castello di Verucchio (www.custodes-project.net)
Mikulčice (Czech Republic)

The area is situated close to the Slovakian border and Brno, the second largest city in the Czech Republic. It is a picturesque region with an interesting historical background and rich folklore (traditional folk songs, folk costumes, dances, festivities and arts and crafts). The overall atmosphere of the region is accentuated by the nicely winding Morava River, the flood plain forests and the ever-present vineyards. The most popular cultural sites are: the Slavic Settlement in **Mikulčice** which takes visitors back to the age of Great Moravia some 1,000 years ago, the Castle in Hodonin and Strážnice, the Open-Air Museum in Strážnice, the Tvarožná lookout tower, the windmill in Starý Poddvorov, and the preserved rural area of Petrov – Plže (a famous village with wine cellars on the hillside at the foot of which the village is situated), as well as many sacred buildings (churches, chapels etc.). However, it is not only cultural sites that attract visitors to the area. Various events, such as festivals and fairs, take place throughout the year and give a great opportunity to encounter traditional folk art. The most famous events include the Festivities of St. Vavřinec (St. Lawrance), the Imperial Feast and the Celebration of Wine in Hodonin, the “Great Moravia” Road Running Race in Mikulčice, the Spring Music Festival in Dolní Bojanovice, and the International Folklore Festival in Strážnice.

Velenje (Slovenia)

**Velenje** is a modern European city with growing intercultural openness. It is situated in the eastern part of the Šaleška valley which was named after the castle and village of Šalek. It was first mentioned as a marketplace in the 13th century and became a city in the 1950s. Today Velenje is a municipality with more than 34,000 inhabitants and ranks as the fifth
largest city in Slovenia. It is a large economic business centre with modern infrastructure and it offers many opportunities.

It is also a place where sport, culture and music can develop alongside one another. With its modern architecture, Velenje is different from other Slovenian cities. It is open and green and as such sets new standards. Walking down the city streets and suburban routes, we will be attracted by the architectural beauty of Velenje. From the city centre we can catch a glimpse of the remains of the ancient times, such as the Velenje and Šalek castles or the Šmarska church, telling us the city’s interesting history, rich with cultural monuments and natural sites, but most of all with events and people. Our aim through the custodies project is to develop the cultural and tourist potential of the medieval heritage, present it to both visitors as well as the inhabitants of Velenje, and exploit the surrounding of castles as a potential tourist attraction.

Castle of Velenje (www.custodes-project.net)

Kujawsko-Pomorskie (Poland)

Kujawsko-Pomorskie is a region with two administrative capitals: Bydgoszcz, the seat of government administration; and Toruń, the seat of self-government authority. With its Old Town entered on the UNESCO’s list of World Heritage Sites of Europe, Toruń is one of the most interesting examples of Gothic architecture. Bydgoszcz is recognized as a center of economic activity as well as international sports and cultural events. Within the CUSTODES project Kujawsko-Pomorskie will promote the entire region through an inventory/database of tourist attractions which will include the following pilot areas: Kaldus near Chelmno, Szafarnia and Klobka, all of which are situated close to big tourist centers. Kaldus is an archeological site of Lusatian culture. The settlement, which dates back to the 9th century, had a pagan cult center on a hill. Kaldus led to the development of Chelmno (Culm) – a medieval center of Slavic legacy and culture. Today Chelmno is a small town of
20,000 inhabitants. Situated near Golub Dobrzyn, Szafarnia is a village famous for its piano competitions and the musical education center. It was here that the Polish composer, Frederic Chopin, took his artistic inspirations from folk music in the 19th century. His fiancée, also a pianist, Maria Wodzińska, settled in Klobka, a small village in the Kujawy region. Nowadays there is a beautifully situated ethnographic park with examples of traditional regional farms from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Chelmno (www.custodes-project.net)
In each participating area, a pilot deployment phase will start, to customise the common model to the local specificities and implement the tools and strategies jointly defined. The seven pilot actions are the following:

In Italy:
- Congressional tourism in ancient castles, creating new poles of cultural, tourist and economic attraction.
- Archaeological park in Verucchio, adopting wireless technology,

In Poland:
- Socio–demographic analysis to exploit historical sites into the cultural-tourist product, starting from the ethnographic park with example of traditional regional farms from the 18th and 19th century in Klobka and Chopin's Centre in Szafarnia;
- Diagnosis of elements of archaeological heritage in Kaldus, and development of an exploitation plan;

In Slovenia:
- Model for exploitation of Šaleška dolina valley, known as the ‘Valley of Castles’;
- Model for exploitation of archaeological site in Šaleška dolina valley;

In Czech Republic:
- Model for exploitation of Slavic fortified settlement close to the village of Mikulčice in Moravia,

Each pilot action will produce an investment plan for the full deployment of the pilot action and a manual of strategies & guidelines for further implementations in other areas.

Training Workshops

In March 2010 the Czech Republic held a meeting among all project participants CUSTODES to check the progress of the plans for tourism development. The Training Workshop was held in a small village in Moravia Čejkovice inside the castle recently restored and equipped hotel. This has allowed the workshops were held mainly within the premises of the castle itself, facilitating the interaction between the various delegations. On the first day the morning was dedicated to the presentation of the project CUSTODES and presentation of the pilot area of the Czech Republic, while the afternoon was devoted to “Cultural tourism as a strategy for the development of regions” and was divided into three sessions work. The first session involved the tourism experts, the second session saw the actors as institutional managers of the various destinations and the third session highlighted the operators of tourist services, all followed by discussion and conclusion of the workday. The second day opened with a press conference with local media followed by a report on the work session of the Czech state of the art analysis of pilot members custodies ending with the final considerations. The afternoon was devoted entirely to the study host of the meeting. Entering the specific reports have emerged of ideas and projects that the different pilot areas are fielding. The heads of the pilot of the Czech Republic have shown the organization of the structures that manage tourism in southern Moravia and the result is divided, in fact there are three major actors: the region of South Moravia (Department of Regional Development), the tourism authorities of South Moravia Regional Organisation of destinations. Each authority is responsible for coordinating and managing all aspects relating to the promotion and development of tourism in the area, all supported by mixed public-private funds. The problem that emerged at the end of the workshop is that this public-private combination is making it difficult to exploit the resources made available by the project CUSTODES not
allowing project managers to develop ideas and initiatives. Is not currently possible for them to present a strategic plan for development of cultural tourism in their pilot area. All this, despite being on the territory some interesting elements to attract a certain type of cultural tourism, among which the archaeological site of Mikulčice. This site, which we visited on the afternoon of day two, is trying to be listed as World Heritage by UNESCO with the support of the Minister of Culture of the Czech Republic, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture of Slovakia had presented a nomination for Archeopark Mikulčice.

Connected to this goal has been developed a project to build a pedestrian bridge over Morava River that connects the Czech archeopark than Slovak. The revitalization includes the reconstruction of the old building dedicated to visitors with a new structure dominated by a tower is divided into three parts: the first devoted to the exhibition (with two permanent exhibitions), the second and third congress for most commercial restaurants. Other objectives of the study of regeneration of the area are: the elevation of the foundations of the church and the palace of the Duke, the construction of three bridges on the Morava, regeneration of vegetation, new facade insulation of the second hall and new information system Tourist also the displacement of car parking in an area outer Acropolis.

Strong interest is directed to programs dedicated to young tourists and schools with the organization of literary and artistic competitions dedicated to them. Many cultural events are still held during the high season for tourists of all types, from exhibitions of photos and paintings and sporting events.

After visiting the archeological site of Mikulčice, we headed to the castle that is Milotice twenty-two km. Originally a Renaissance chateau the second half of the sixteenth century, rebuilt in Baroque style. The castle has a landscaped garden, a park and a greenhouse. Inside are several rooms, a library and a chapel, decorated with stucco and paintings. In the greenhouse is an exhibition of sculptures in the Baroque style. Different situation for the Slovenian delegation, as from November 2009 to date have created: a small working group with meetings once or twice a month and distributed specific responsibilities. They also developed a model for the exploitation of the valley through the creation of informative material on the sites, maps with GPS support, web portal and a model for the exploitation of the archaeological site on the Internet by presenting the study of the ruins of the castle. In the future are expected to prepare the final version of materials (text, video and audio presentations), production of maps with GPS support, create a web portal and a series of information boards on sites. The overall goal they have set themselves is to become recognizable and attractive tourist destination Velenje, with a rich selection of cultural events and sporting experiences and recreational programs for children and adolescents. The targets consist of a quantitative nature: in increasing the number of arrivals and overnight stays, increase receptivity (creation of 200 rooms), increase of tourist products, increase employment in tourism (a total of 200 new jobs), increasing average stay of guests. The objectives of qualitative matrix are: improving the tourist infrastructure, improve the quality of existing tourism and development of new tourism products, the design of Velenje mark as a tourist destination and business, building the image of the region as a whole and create promotion focusing on key areas of tourism, creating links with providers of tourist services.

The tourism strategy of Velenje will be directed in four areas: sports and recreation, children and youth tourism, events and cultural tourism and adventure tourism addressed. Regarding tourism aimed at children has created curiosity the choice of Velenje: have a festival dedicated to Pippi Longstockings, as is the question of what sort of connection there is between the Slovenian town and the famous character of Scandinavian origin. The response was that there is any particular connection, but the festival dedicated to Pippi a success!

Very interesting was the proposal of the Polish leaders. The project is now based on the creation of the road by Chopin. Within this project we can say that the road was conceived of Fryderyk Chopin: The path is designed to cover all places of Kujawsko-Pomorskie region associated with the composer's life. The areas of interest in the path are located in Szafarnia...
and Klobka. In both cities there are special offers for pupils, students and individual tourists: a Szafarnia you can enjoy the "mixed grilled Chopin", shows, concerts and participate in specialized meetings on the subject. A klobka you can find the painted plates inwardly and you can experience the atmosphere of the villages at the time of Chopin. The project road Chopin has just left for the future but some points have been fixed. First Kujawsko-Pomorskie region participates in several travel fairs, including: International Tourism Fair in Wroclaw, Gdansk and Lodz International Fair "Tourism and leisure 2010 Warsaw", ITB Berlin and the regional tourist products fair Poznan. The intention for the future is to cooperate with all the associations of Polish Fryderyk Chopin, in order to extend the road to all villages by Chopin related to his life and that are located in other regions of Poland, were also two scholars called external experts on tourism, instructed to examine aspects of sustainable tourism in the region of Kujawsko-Pomorskie and developing the basics of the program of tourism development in the same region. The leaders of the Polish pilots are planning to establish cooperation with the Golub-Dobrzyn’s castle, to create a special offer, combined with the way Chopin and the various attractions and Klobka Szafarnia. In any case closer to achieving the objectives are: implementation of the project methodologies CUSTODES organization of training courses for stakeholders in the road of Chopin. The Polish project is certainly interesting on paper and well articulated, but it certainly distracted from the initial premises. This is evident especially noting the fact that the assessment of the archaeological heritage of Kaldus, and development of a strategic plan for the local area are not mentioned in any way at any point of the pilot project. Last in order of presentation, but not least, given the abundance of the delegation, Rimini presented the state of the art of its pilot project and has involved stakeholders to explain their actions to increase the effectiveness of the project. We start from the pilot project. After establishing a conceptual map of what is meant by "Castle Route", Rimini has created a database of its castles, decided what was possible to build the project and designed the event that will soon come to life on the ground. The first step was to identify the castles. The project came four forts in the Rimini: San Leo, Montebello, Verucchio and Montefiore. Analyzing together with operators the Vocational tourism map linked to castles and decided that, according to our forts specificities, and trying to anticipate new trends and become one reference point for particular vocational communities, has found a sweet spot meeting on the theme of Fantasy, in particular on the role plays and literature. In Italy an important Fantasy festival with Role Playing Games already exists and takes place in Parma, quite near from Rimini. Another similar one is in Tuscany. To set up a work of this kind had to analyze a few points:

- Tourist resources
- Financial resources
- Immaterial resources

Financial resources are limited. Tourist resources are relevant but not enough to become the unique reason for visits. So we have to appeal to immaterial resources. The theme of fantasy professional that best fits the needs of the event and that is less busy in the market is that of fantasy literature (authors - Publishers - reading and writing - a sense of community).

Activities can be for several groups may include specialized or not, publishers can make meetings with authors, writing and rewriting courses, workshops, readings and more. The places where work will certainly be able to play the four castles, where the main events will take place, the hinterland for the hospitality, tourist and other activities and involvement of the Coast as part of the project. The day of the event should be on 18-19 July. During the same period the Riviera has planned some events that have interconnections possible with this castles. So a real partnership with the Riviera is possible. The event will be a unique concept, which involves a region from the inland to the Riviera, and offers various activities in different ways, but remained in the same field of fantasy literature.
You could call fantasy week? The highest sense of the event is to attract a specific professional community in the region and, hopefully, create an annual event. Each castle will focus on a specific fantasy theme and will have a specific program according to the publishers concerned. The idea would be to assign each bunker a literary genre that accords with the specificity of each castle:

- St. Leo the theme of alchemy
- Montefiore with fairy tales for children
- Montebello with dark presence
- Verucchio with school writing

What are the indicators to see if the event has been successful or not? Certainly the employment rate structures inland, the significance of the event fail to attract the media and non-specialized, and the market position that this event will be able to play in specific market fantasy.

An important action has been to design and print flyers for the 5000 “Fantastic Four castles”. This was to achieve an important goal, because it is the first time that four different castles in the Rimini agree to appear together on a single wheel. The flyer built on four doors and available in English will be distributed in all the castles and offices of tourism is that the hinterland of the Riviera, with a possible future reprinting.

The actions that are being carried out in this period to define the structure of the event are: contact various publishers to check their availability to participate, the definition of the format of the events and activities in agreement with publishers and other stakeholders, study visit of the castles, budgeting, finding sponsors and the establishment of a communication plan.

Regarding the enhancement of the Etruscan archaeological site of Verucchio-Villanova is studying the best strategy for tourism that can be applied according to local circumstances. This is broadly the result of the pilot project of the Province, but attended the workshop in Moravia with interest some of the local tourism actors: the municipality of San Leo, Rimini Reservation¹ and the Consortium "Castles and Valleys Romagna"².

The Councillor of San Leo, Mrs. Carla Bonvicini, after having explained the rich history of St. Leo emphasized the importance of tourism to its common, in fact, the economy appears to be prevalent.

The city centre houses a number of ancient monuments and museums. The two Romanesque churches, the bell tower, the renaissance fortress and the museum of sacred art can be visited all year long.

The museums of the city attract between 80.000 and 120.000 visitors every year.

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¹ Rimini Reservation is a mixed public-private partnership formed in December 2006 and formed by the city of Rimini and the Cooperative Promotion Hotel, from January 2007 handles information offices (IAT) of the Rimini area. The company has 1,100 hotels Rimini Reservation associates and over 300 hotels using the web created by them, carry out training to hoteliers and members use the same procedures and platforms in the information offices as well as studying joint initiatives of service territories. The interest of Rimini Reservation inland and there is strong their full readiness to expand the web even in internal communication.

² Consorzio "Romagna Castles and Valleys" was born in 2007 (thanks to a law that sought to promote regional tourism enterprises of the Emilia Romagna), aiming to offer visitors products and services of high quality, with attention to details.
As for tourism, our audience is mainly represented by school groups and social tourism together with households visiting monuments and museums but also enjoying a walk in the old city centre.

Main actions carried out in the last two years:
- Further promotion of two main events
- Joining the network Paesi Bandiere Arancioni (The association of Orange flags Town) and Borghi più belli d’Italia (association of most beautiful villages in Italy)
- Joining the network of theme parks
- Creation of San Leo’s internet site for tourism
- Project for a new lay-out of the fortress museum

Further promotion of two main events

The Fortress, the Parish Church, the Cathedral, the Bell Tower and the Noble Palace, are evidence of the ability of men to create wonderful works of art, merging art to the overbearing nature that characterizes the whole area.
And it’s this harmony between nature and arts that have inspired other men and women creating a strong tie with history and, sometimes, with legend.
That’s why, in 2006, the City Council decided to celebrate two key historical figures: Saint Francis of Assisi and Cagliostro.
The event “San Leo Giullari in Festival – San Leo incontra Francesco” revolves around the figure of Saint Francis whereas the event “AlchimiAlchimie” was inspired by the key figure of Cagliostro.
With the event “San Leo Giullari in Festival – San Leo incontra Francesco”, without neglecting the religious side linked to Saint Francis of Assisi, we try to enhance the modern attitude adopted by the Saint who defined himself as the “God’s jester " and his message, for which he can be considered as the forerunner of a “green, ecologic approach”.
What makes the event specific, peculiar, is the fact that it is not just an historical evocation of the year 1200, but a celebration of jesters in all their forms. The event brings the city back to the Middle Ages thanks to craftsmen, stall keepers, buskers, musicians, street singers, poets, knights and, of course, jesters. Over the years high quality shows and artists of great renown performed on the natural stage of San Leo. The 2009 edition had an attendance of over 8.000 people during the weekend.
The anniversary of Cagliostro’s death has always been one of the most long-awaited events of summer.
Form 2006 on, we felt we had to give new momentum to the anniversary of Cagliostro’s death. The event “AlchimiAlchimie” widens the scope and enriches the content of this important anniversary.
The event can therefore be seen as a moment to reflect on the multiple aspects of Cagliostro’s role and personality and on alchemy itself, in the broader sense of the term, as a discipline closely linked to the figure of this “Martyr for free thought”.
We believe that “AlchimiAlchimie” has all the necessary requirements to establish itself as a high quality cultural event. Our challenge, in the years to come, is that of organizing an event of even greater importance in order to do even better than in 2009, when the attendances amounted to over 15.000 people.
Joining the network “Paesi Bandiere Arancioni” (The association of Orange flags Town) and “Borghi più belli d’Italia” (Association of the most beautiful villages in Italy)

The label is awarded on the basis of 135 criteria, subdivided in 5 categories:
1. Reception
2. Tourist Facilities and Additional Services
3. Tourist Attraction Elements
4. Environmental Quality
5. Organisation and Quality

The award by “Bandiera Arancione” allowed our Municipality to enter one of the most prestigious organisation gathering small towns and villages, which stand out for their culture, nature, traditions and cuisine.

Joining the network of theme parks

Important local agreements signed in the last few years, were confirmed again in 2009. These set up a system of incentives and discounts on entrance tickets for those who will visit a series of places indicated in the agreement “Di Parco in Rocca, di Rocca in Parco”. More specifically, these are the tourist destination taking part in the project: San Leo, Castle of Gradara, Castle of Verucchio, Le Navi park, Italia in Miniatura, Zoo Park of Falconara, Fortress of Sassocorvaro and the Castle of Pietrarubbia. In 2009 the Municipality of San Leo adopted several conventions and signed agreement protocols with 20 other tourist destinations and institutions.

Creation of San Leo’s internet site for tourism

The sites translates into action the need to consecrate a web page to tourism and events. Thanks to it, tourists can always keep themselves up to date and get to know what’s new in San Leo.

The site has about 5,000 visits every month with peaks of 17,441 visitors in August (2009).

Project for a new lay-out of the fortress museum

The aim of the new layout:
- A Fortress that shows its treasures and itself
- Historically consistent contents
- Combination between history and new technologies
- Promotion of new visiting methods and techniques
- Increase in the number of motivated tourists

CUSTODES project, co-financed by the “Central Europe” program, coordinated by the Province of Rimini, focuses on developing specific tourist products conceived for small towns and villages, usually left out of main tourist flows, but located near to main tourist destination. The aim is that of applying new methods and ways of conceiving tourism in order to make it easy for tourists, to visit these important historic sites and whose potential has not been full explored yet.

As regards San Leo the main attraction, for tourists, is obviously Rimini and the Adriatic Coast.

The strategy we will adopt, within the CUSTODES project, is try and reverse this situation. We will launch pilot action for archaeological sites, castles and fortresses promoting convention
tourism in castles and creating new economic, cultural and tourist districts connecting the different actors taking part to the project.
The Consortium wants to suggest a holiday on the Adriatic coast, but typically not be sponsors of all the beauty of the Emilia-Romagna as its green landscapes, rolling hills, the quiet countryside and mild climate.
“Romagna Castles and Valleys” acting in partnership with the CNA (National Confederation of Artisans and SMEs), which has a valuable role in supporting and promoting activities in the territory of Rimini, and “Union Apennines Green” Emilia Romagna.
Thanks to the synergy of these major forces, have already joined the Consortium of 25 companies cottages, restaurants, hotels and bed & breakfasts.
The great value of this project is that it brought together all the specific features of various companies in the area Valconca and Valmarecchia.
The “Castelli Vivi” project points to a seasonal adjustment of tourist flows and a strong disclosure of the cultural, natural and gastronomic heritage of the Valmarecchia and Valconca territory.
The hotel hospitality is at the base of the product the Consortium offers, a holiday package usable not only in summer but also all over the year, made of naturalistic itineraries, sports, events and catering; an offer firstly designed for convention and fair attendees only, but now open to anybody: sportsmen, families, couples or groups.
For this reason, each activity will be promoted tourism in the hinterland of Romagna farms, hotels, restaurants and shops as well as museums and historical centers. The Consortium offers packages for customers consisting of interchangeable and adaptable services, suggests paths through all the castles and creates a series of events connected with the historical and cultural heritage of the most beautiful. The presentation of the Consortium “Castles and Valleys Romagna” we were able to draw conclusions of the workshop. One can say that: Rimini and Velenje are working on medieval castles, Kujawsko-Pomorskie Region is creating the “Road of Chopin”, all regions are working on archaeological sites. Although the contexts are different, the methodology is the same and is aimed at developing tourism in the regions involved, and in particular to cultural tourism.
The targets set for the forthcoming workshop to be held in Rimini in May are:
• share knowledge and skills
• build a network of professionals from partner regions
• implement strategies through the local tourist methodologies known in the workshop
• exchange of ideas and methodologies.
The appointment is for everyone to May in Italy hoping for new developments on its projects and new ideas to improve cultural tourism.