CONCLUSIONS

The main comments and case studies as well as the conclusions were presented at the end of the Seminar on Thursday, 5 May 2016. The main purpose of the seminar was to try to define the concept of “cultural tourism” since its cross-cutting characteristics brings into play a wide variety of agents, offering very different products with different motivations and behaviours.

Cultural tourism encompasses a range of offerings featuring culture-based products and resources that meet a highly diverse demand and address the particular motivations of each tourist. We can therefore say that it is one of the most important and diverse phenomena of contemporary tourism, and that it is open to a continuous process of innovation.

The majority of the panellists agreed that the rapprochement between tourism and culture is of particular benefit to local communities, as can be seen in destinations located near a World Heritage Site. With this in mind, management plans of these sites should be updated, and measures should be taken to promote sustainable tourism that can contribute to conservation and sound management of heritage elements.

Knowledge of the demand is essential for the development of new tourism products that not only appeal to those interested in culture, but also attract other segments of visitors not interested in the attractions of the destination, for example, with celebrations or music festivals.

In the development of new cultural tourism policies, it is essential for the public and private sectors to march in lockstep in order to meet the growing demands of travellers who seek not only comfort, but primarily an enriching experience: new models of partnership are crucial for ensuring the sustainable and responsible management of cultural tourism.

Only through sustainable tourism management can heritage be “lived”. To this end, it is important to work on the adaptation of public spaces, and to promote direct investments that create new jobs in the historical centres without neglecting local integration—both are essential conditions for the development of a tourism strategy for the enhancement of sites.

“Tourism without culture is like a person without an identity.”