

Europe

Poland



Gliwice

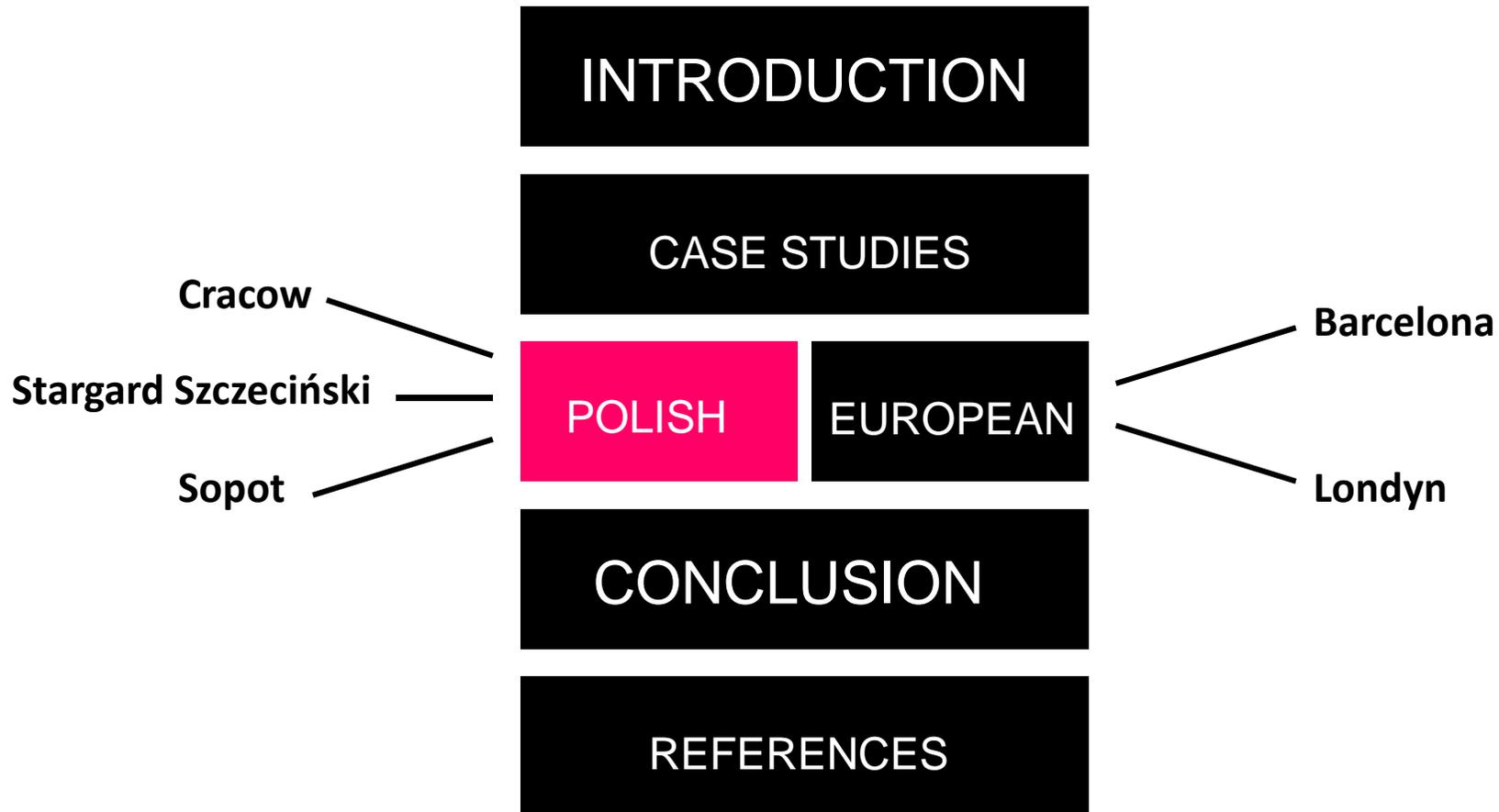
Silesian University of Technology



**CONCEPTS OF URBAN RENEWAL IN AN AGING SOCIETY
IN THE 21st CENTURY
– CASE STUDIES IN THE POLISH CITIES**

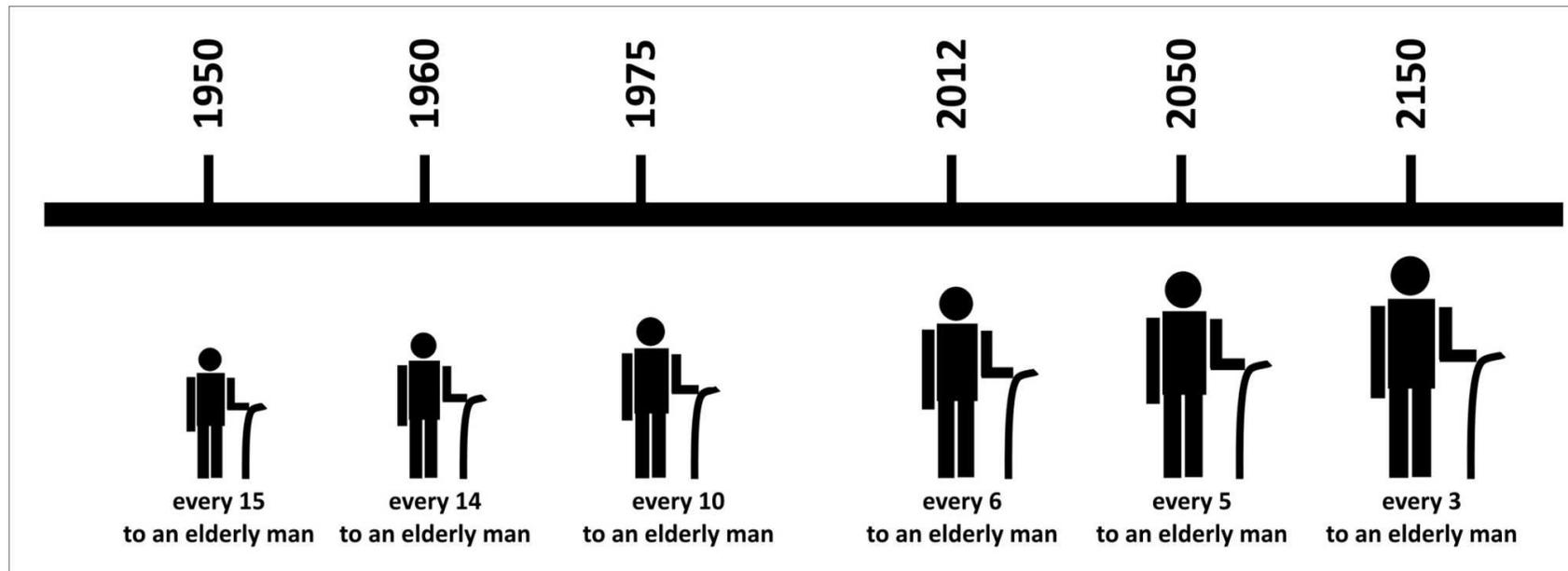
MA Agnieszka Labus

POLAND, Silesian University of Technology in Gliwice
labusagnieszka@gmail.com



CONTENTS

Nowadays in the cities one observes an increasing number of the elderly and the decreasing number of young people, both of which are the causes of the process of aging.



Source: Author, based on: Giertych M.: Prognoza demograficzna ONZ, , Opoka, kwiecień 2010

INTRODUCTION

How the cities will change in an aging society?



Is aging a threat for European cities or is it an opportunity?

in modern world we all depend on cars



availability to the elderly may be restricted



limited access to city services and other facilities



**it hinders integration with the rest of the society and
exposes them to risk of social exclusion**



**modern cities require rearrangement and renewal so as
to satisfy the needs of senior citizens**



**WHAT ACTIONS ARE TAKEN WITH REFERENCE TO THE AGING
POPULATIONS IN SELECTED CITIES IN POLAND AND WHAT
GENERAL CONCEPTS OF URBAN RENEWAL EMERGE OUT OF
THEM?**

Urban renewal with reference to the ageing population is understood as adjusting the city to the changing needs of the elderly.

WHO encourages the local governments to plan age-friendly cities.

- buildings in an age-friendly city should be equipped with elevators, non-slip flooring, ramps, etc.
- an adequate system of public transport (low floor vehicles, clearly displayed bus routes numbers, priority seats for the elderly).

The "Age-Friendly Cities" program identifies the main elements of the urban environment. These are:



Age-friendly cities.
A Guide

By 2050, Poland will have recorded a rate of decline in the number of people of working age twice as high as the Western European countries.

However, the Polish have not been yet affected by the urban problems that resulted in the **shrinkage of the cities** in Britain and Germany. On the other hand, many cities in Poland have been affected by the **ageing of the population**. This concerns mainly the post-war housing estates and blocks of flats of the 1960s and 1970s.



Aging housing estate blocks

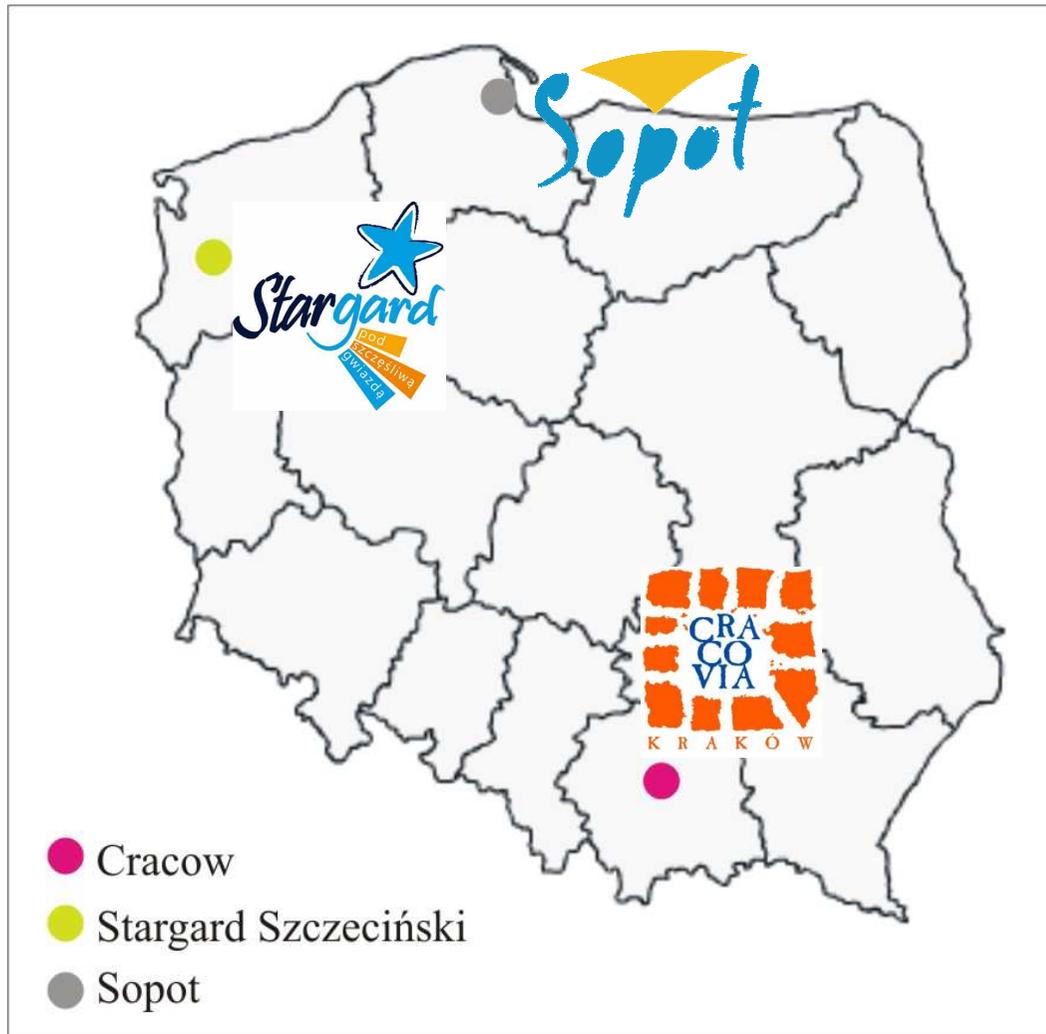
Life of the elderly in suburban areas can be very difficult and complicated.

It is due to limited access to :

- services,
- health care,
- cultural and entertainment offer



- negative impact on the wellbeing of older people,
- alienation from social life.



- aging of the residents
- carrying out activities in order to adjust the cities to the needs of the elderly

POLISH CASE



AENEAS was a new European project in the framework of the Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) programme. Its acronym stands for "Attaining Energy-Efficient Mobility in an Ageing Society." The project's objective was nothing less than to become the cornerstone for international reference projects in the field of urban mobility of older people.

DONOSTIA - SAN SEBASTIAN
(SPAIN)

CRACOW
(POLAND)

MUNICH
(GERMANY)

ODENSE
(DENMARK)

SALZBURG
(AUSTRIA)

Since July 2007, residents of Cracow have had the opportunity to use **TELEBUS**, an innovative service by means of which passengers can call a dispatcher and book a bus pick-up at a desired destination.

The service is also a very good example of technology transfer and know-how on public transport on the international scale. One of the **key benefits** of "flexible bus routes" is a new, positive image of public transport in Cracow, which is associated with its flexibility and adaptability to customer needs.

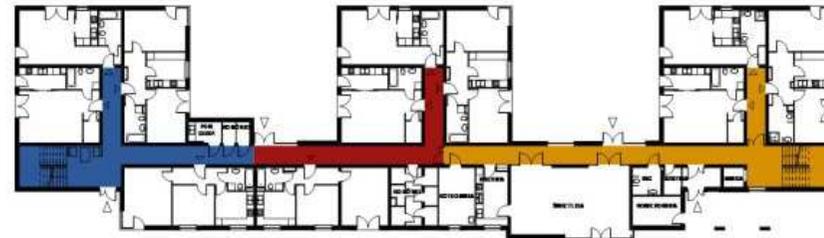
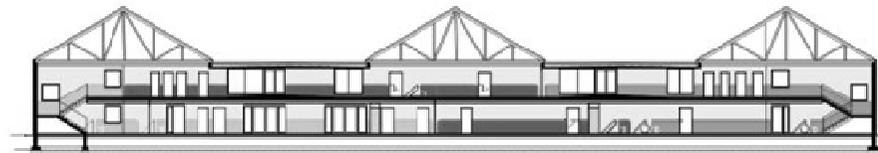
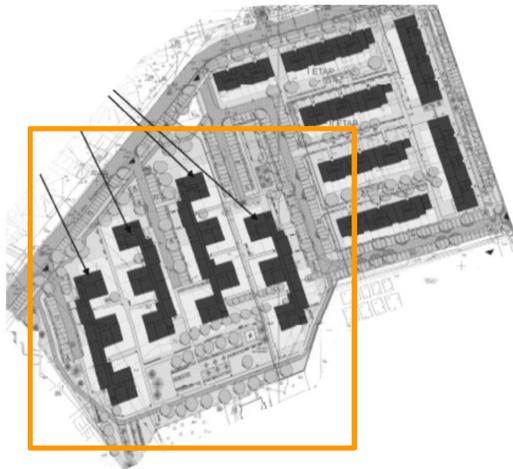


CRACOW – urban mobility of older people

Stargard Szczeciński is a medium sized city in north-western part of Poland and one of the oldest Polish cities. One of its problems is a decreasing trend of migration to the city and negative population growth.

Stargard Szczeciński focuses on providing **housing for seniors**, which is a pioneering project in Poland.

The project offers elegant middle-class housing estates located in the suburbs and in proximity to the metropolis.



The building was founded by the Society for Social Housing which implements many social programs, including: housing for children from orphanages and for the disabled, as well as housing for people older than 55 years of age.



STARGARD SZCZECINSKI - assisted living residences

Sopot is located by the sea and has some features of a spa resort, so it could likely be a senior-friendly city.

Since 2008 city of Sopot has participated in the **Q -Ageing (Quality Ageing in an Urban Environment)** project, whose purpose is to bring the public space to the needs and limitations of older people and to develop comprehensive, transnational solutions to the problems arising from the ageing of society in areas such as:

- vocational guidance for people over 50 years of age,
- health,
- entertainment
- social integration of the elderly,
- architecture and infrastructure solutions tailored to the needs of senior citizens.



PARTICIPATING
EU COUNTRIES



One of the pilot projects in Sopot entails the creation of a **map the city's architectural barriers** and to develop guidelines to get around them.

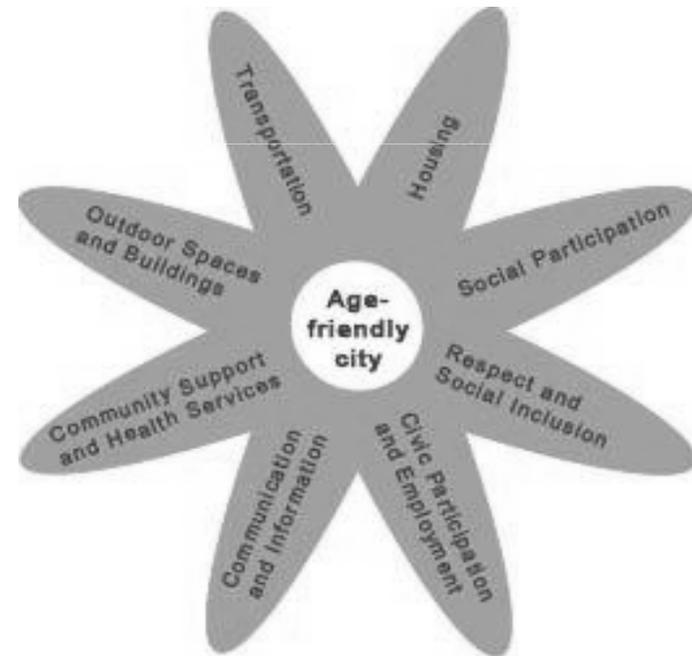


How does urban renewal look in some Western European cities?

What are the local authorities doing in order to adjust the cities to the needs of the senior residents?



In European cities that take part in the project, such as London and Barcelona, the effects of ageing have already become a more serious issue than in Poland.



EUROPEAN CASE

ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT

the city officials prepared a class of documents aiming at coordinating transport-related issues:

Mobility Pact: Urban Mobility Plan 2006-2012.

The documents are supposed to be the **instruments of urban renewal**, which should facilitate the access to many places and services around the city for the elderly.

As a result of approving other documents related to transport, several actions were taken in the city:

- eliminating the parking of cars and mopeds on the pavements,
- widening pavements in order to create a safe and comfortable pathway
- introducing elements of street furniture (benches, posts, railings, etc.)
- improving the general accessibility: lowering curbstones near pedestrian crossing, installing escalators and elevators
- placing visual cues near pedestrian crossings
- eliminating bikeways located between bus stops and bus lanes
- reducing public transport fares for senior citizens

FRIENDLY AND ACCESSIBLE URBAN SPACES

One example of a tool of urban renewal created by the local authorities is the *Green Strategic Plan*, which, along with the *Safety Plan*, responds to many of the demographic challenges. The plan introduces new ideas about the use of parks in the city and about the development of some functionality solutions that were earlier consulted with the elderly.

The strategic areas included in the plan are:

- Designing large-area green spaces
- Improving communication by means of green belts
- Preserving and appreciating the historical heritage of allotment gardens
- Managing the green spaces in accord with the principles of sustainable development
- Offering online courses informing about the value of green spaces in the urban area
- Educating about green spaces

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

The Senior Citizens Advisory Council in Barcelona has prepared a document ***Assisted Housing Plan*** which aims at providing seniors with a choice of their place of residence and to ensure that medical care and social security are easily accessible and located in its proximity.

The city renewal plan is an excellent example of a successful attempt to encourage adaptation and integration of the new apartments or estates in a new environment.

Its purpose is to create new intergenerational housing estates in order to encourage and maintain contact between different generations.

London has participated in *Age-Friendly Cities* project.

ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Offer for the senior citizens:

- fare reduction which makes it possible for the elderly to use the public transport,
- adapting the buses needs of the disabled,
- introduction of a door-to-door taxi service for people with limited mobility who cannot use buses.

FRIENDLY URBAN SPACES:

- streets and squares were equipped with appropriate streetlight,
- the pavements were clean and had lowered curbs,
- ramps for wheelchairs,
- the car parks had a proper ratio of disabled parking spaces.

SOCIAL SUPPORT AND MEDICAL CARE :

- involvement in social life is absolutely necessary for the elderly.
- cultural centers is one of the most important factors that located in the city area offer a wide spectrum of social events and activities,
- facilitate access to medical care and other services.

- Polish local authorities in many cities have recognized the challenges of an ageing population
- the Polish cities participate in some of the European Commission's projects, such as AENEAS, Q-Ageing, etc. This can help to specify the course of action necessary in appropriate adaptation of the city to the needs of an ageing society
- major European cities, such as Barcelona and London implement urban policies that refer to various spatial issues related to carrying out age-friendly urban renewal.

CONCLUSION

- The Polish cities unfortunately lack a thorough approach to urban renewal which requires high-level coordination and integrity.
- Actions are taken in a selective and partial manner; they often refer only to very specific issues, such as housing and building of new estates for the elderly.

There is NO COORDINATION of these actions on a national, regional, or even local scale.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR URBAN RENEWAL CONCEPTS

- challenges to building estates on the suburbs,
- spatial planning should enable flexible shaping and using of the urban space,
- the need to recognize the complexity of each of the factors.

Senior citizens are an important but often neglected part of society. Encouraging mobility and more active lifestyle benefits all seniors, and the idea of **age-friendly cities means a better quality of life for everyone.**



These actions can lead to long-term improvement in the quality of lives of all citizens, regardless of their age.

- FERRY, M., & BAKER, R.: Strategie regionalne a starzenie się społeczeństwa. Age Proofing Toolkit – zestaw narzędzi służących uwzględnianiu zagadnień związanych z wiekiem społeczeństwa, Komitet Regionów UE, AEG, 2006.
- FRĄCKIEWICZ, L.: W obliczu starości. Katowice, 2007.
- Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide, WHO, 2007
- HELLER C.A.: Rewitalizacja obszarów miejskich, Praktyczny przewodnik: Jak opracować lokalny plan rozwoju?, Europejski Fundusz Rozwoju Regionalnego w Polsce, 2002.
- KOWALEWSKI J.: Ludzie starzy w polskim społeczeństwie w pierwszych dekadach XXI wieku, Wyd. Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź, 2006.
- Podręcznik rewitalizacji. Warszawa: Mefisto Editions, 2003.
- SZATUR-JAWORSKA, B., BŁĘDOWSKI, P., & DZIĘGIELEWSKA, M.: Podstawy Gerontologii Społecznej. Warszawa, 2006
- TURNER, J. H. : Socjologia. Podstawowe pojęcia i ich zastosowanie. Zysk i S-ka, 1998.
- What makes a city age-friendly? London's contribution to the World Health Organization's Age-friendly Cities Project, Help the Age, 2007
- WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION: Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide. Geneva: WHO, 2007.

Web sites about AENEAS Project:

<http://www.aeneas-project.eu/?page=home>

http://www.aeneas-project.eu/pl/?page=about_pl

Web sites of Q-Ageing Project:

<http://www.qageing.eu/> (14.01.2012)

http://www.seniorzy.sopot.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=69&Itemid=2 (14.01.2012)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

MA Agnieszka Labus,
POLAND, Silesian University of Technology in Gliwice
labusagnieszka@gmail.com