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EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43) Date of publication:
05.01.2000 Bulletin 2000/01

(51) Int Cl.7: B65D 6/00

(21) Application number: 99830360.6

(22) Date of filing: 11.06.1999

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU
MC NL PT SE
Designated Extension States:
AL LT LV MK RO SI

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(30) Priority: 15.06.1998 IT MC980000 U

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(54) Multifunctional modular packaging

(57) The modular container 1 includes: a support stand 5 which is fitted, at the top, with a guide collar 5a shaped so as to make a continuous rim 5b; a jar 4 designed to couple, at its opening, with the guide collar 5a on the support stand 5, until it comes up against the continuous rim 5b; a lid 3, with a section complementary 5. to the aforementioned jar 4, which fits onto the stand or onto the opening of jar 4.

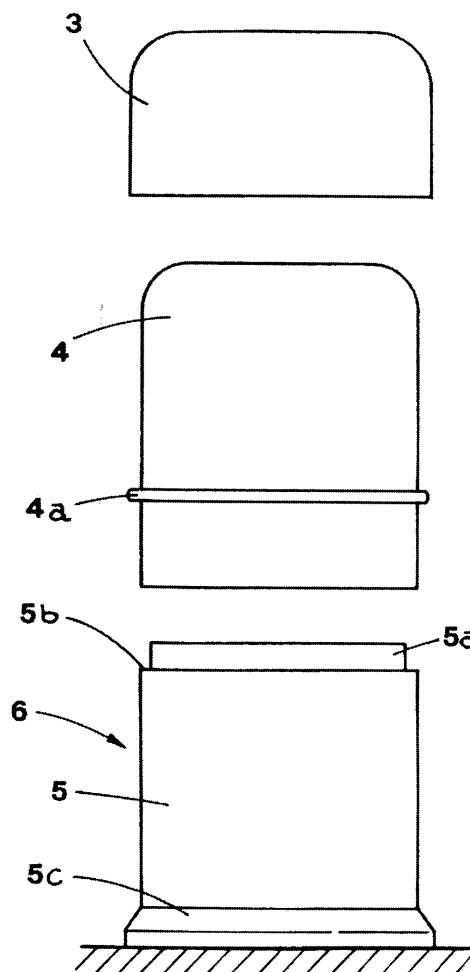


FIG. 2

Description

DESCRIPTION OF THE INNOVATION

[0001] This innovation concerns the special technical sector involving modular containers distinguished by many different purposes. It is well known that traditional containers, holding for example small objects, are mainly made of a transparent or semi-transparent material, so as not to hide the nature of the contents.

[0002] To guarantee a certain aesthetic quality these common containers feature coloured bands obtained through the use of various types of non-toxic paints, in the parts close to the base and the opening.

[0003] The zone in the middle, which is left undecorated, is usually used to advantage by affixing labels, cards or similar things with suitable glues.

[0004] The purpose of this is to identify the contents of the container and/or to allow writing of various kinds such as, for example, jokes, greetings, personalisations, etc.

[0005] The chief aim of this innovation is to offer a modular container, the constituent elements of which can be used for a plurality of purposes, independently of the contents of the container itself.

[0006] A further aim of this innovation is to offer a container created through a simply designed, extremely functional and particularly reliable technical process.

[0007] To this can be added the intention of offering a low-cost modular container which allows easy identification of the contents without altering the highly multi-purpose use for which it is designed.

[0008] The above aims are achieved in accordance with the contents of the claims.

[0009] The characteristics of the innovation will be shown below, describing a preferred, but not exclusive, production shape, with reference to the attached drawings in which:

- Fig. 1 represents in outline a front view of the proposed container;
- Fig. 2 represents in outline an exploded front view of the container shown in Fig. 1;
- Fig. 3 illustrates in outline a front view of the elements making up the proposed container in an advantageous configuration for use;
- Figs 4a, 4b are outline views of the IV-IV section of Fig. 3 in two particularly significant cases of a production variant;
- Figs 5 and 6 are outline front views of some elements making up the container in a further possible use configuration.

[0010] With reference to the attached drawings, 1 is used to indicate a modular container with a vertical axis, for example in a cylindrical form, essentially made up of a jar 4, or box, which combines with a support stand 5 and a lid 3.

[0011] The jar 4 features, in proximity to the corresponding opening, at the opposite end from the base, an external rim 4a, of a continuous type.

[0012] The jar 4, preferably made of a transparent or semi-transparent material, has, in the example, the same external diameter as the support stand 5.

[0013] The lid 3, has a complementary section opportunely increased with respect to the jar 4, so as to allow union with the latter both at the base and at the opening (Figs 2 and 5).

[0014] The support stand 5, designed to be placed on a flat surface 6, is internally hollow and contains, at the top, a guide collar 5a.

[0015] It should also be noted that the support stand 5 can be shaped accordance with the technical solution described in the application for a patent for industrial invention No. MC96A000122, which concerns "a utensil for compacting plastic bottles", filed by the same Applicant.

[0016] The guide collar 5a, of a smaller diameter than the support stand 5, defines a ring rim 5b in correspondence with the relative upper part of the support stand 5 (Fig. 3).

[0017] In this way, when the jar 4 is put together with the support stand 5, the rim of the opening of the jar 4 fits closely into the relative guide collar 5a up to the rim 5b.

[0018] With the support stand 5 thus coupled with the jar 4, the lid 3 can be placed at the base of the said jar 4 (Figs 1 and 2).

[0019] To correctly extract the contents of the container 1 it is enough to turn the container 180°, place it on the flat surface 6 by means of its lid 3 and proceed to remove the support stand 5 from the combination of jar 4 and lid 3.

[0020] Used in another way it is possible to rest the base of the jar 4 on flat surface 6 closing its opening with lid 3, until this comes up against the external rim 4a of the said jar 4 (Fig. 5). In this case the combination of jar 4 and lid 3 thus obtained can contain any objects of a small size, including foodstuffs.

[0021] At the same time the support stand 5 can be used for many purposes, such as, for example, to keep items of stationery.

[0022] It should also be noted that the same support stand 5 can be used for the purposes described in the aforementioned patent application (No. MC96A000122).

[0023] Another possibility is to place Lid 3 on top of the flat surface 6 and use it as a container, although only for small objects.

[0024] To ensure the best possible fit between the lid 3 and the opening and base of the jar 4, according to a production variant, it is possible to add stabilizing features, the first 33 and the second 44, on the inner surface of the lid 3 and the outer surface of the jar 4, respectively.

[0025] These stabilizing features, the first 33 and the second 44, may consist, for example, of a certain number of longitudinal ribs in correspondence with the

relative lid 3 and jar 4, according to possible processes of production of the corresponding lateral surfaces (Figs 4a, 4b).

[0026] This is necessary to deal with the phenomenon of distortion, characteristic of the moulding process by which the elements making up the proposed container 1 can be manufactured.

[0027] The support stand 5 can be used to advantage for the application of labels and/or cards, informative or otherwise, without the use of any glue.

[0028] Once these cards have been placed in correspondence with the side surface, they are taken up by a special truncated cone rabbet 5c provided for in proximity to the lower part of the same support stand 5 and stabilised by the union of the opening of the jar 4 with the guide collar 5a.

[0029] In this way it becomes a very quick and easy task to replace the said cards and/or labels as fixing them does not involve the use of any kind of glue.

[0030] The proposed modular container can be used for many purposes through the use in different ways of the components that make up the container.

[0031] The high level of versatility of the container, furthermore, allows the constituent components to be used in a particularly functional manner, singularly or together, according to the different needs of the moment.

[0032] The fact that the identification card positioned on the side of the container in question can be easily and quickly replaced means that considerable promotional impact can be achieved by differentiating or personalising a certain number of containers with particular characteristics.

[0033] It should also be stressed that the components of the multi-purpose modular container described above are of a limited number and simple to produce, and this has a beneficial effect on production costs, which are thus very low.

[0034] These advantages can be achieved through a technical solution of a simple nature, extremely reliable and functional, such as to optimise a subsequent stage of re-use of the components making up the proposed container.

[0035] It must also be noted, however, that the above description is only by way of example and does not set limits. Any modifications of details, as also variations in the shape and dimensions of the components described, are thus to be understood as included within the same patent rights, as claimed below.

Claims

1. Multi-purpose modular container, characterised by the fact that it includes : a support stand 5 which is fitted, in correspondence with the top end, with a guide collar 5a shaped so as to create a continuous rim 5b; a jar 4 designed to combine at its opening with the guide collar 5a of the support stand 5, until

it comes up against the continuous rim 5b; a lid 3, with a complementary section with respect to the above jar 4, which joins together with the stand or with the opening of the jar 4.

2. Container as in claim 1, characterised by the fact that the aforementioned jar 4 is fitted, in proximity to its opening, with an external rim 4a acting as a rabbet for the above lid 3, when the latter is fitted onto the above opening.
3. Container as in claim 1 characterised by the fact that it features, in correspondence with the internal surface of the above lid 3, at least a first means of stabilisation 33 provided for to stabilise the relative union with the aforementioned jar 4.
4. Container as in claim 1, characterised by the fact that it features, in correspondence with the external surface of the above jar 4, at least a second means of stabilisation 44 provided for to stabilise the relative union with the said lid 3.
5. Container as in claim 1, characterised by the fact that the above jar 4 is made of a transparent or semi-transparent material.
6. Container as in claim 3, characterised by the fact that the said first means of stabilisation 33 consists of at least one longitudinal rib.
7. Container as in claim 4, characterised by the fact that the said second means of stabilisation 44 consists of at least one longitudinal rib.
8. Container as in claim 1, characterised by the fact that the aforementioned support stand 5 contains a seating which opens out at the top.

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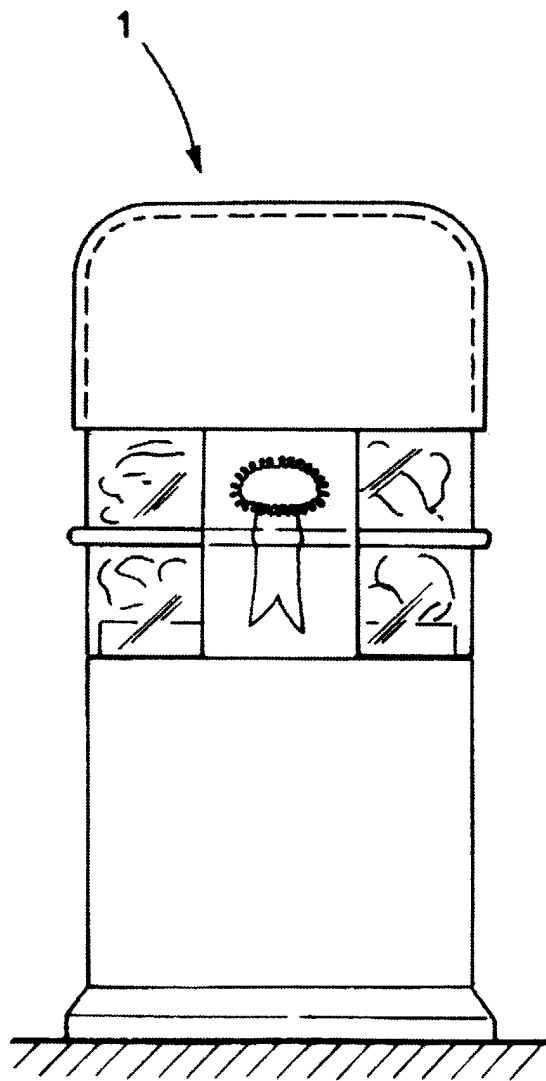


FIG. 1

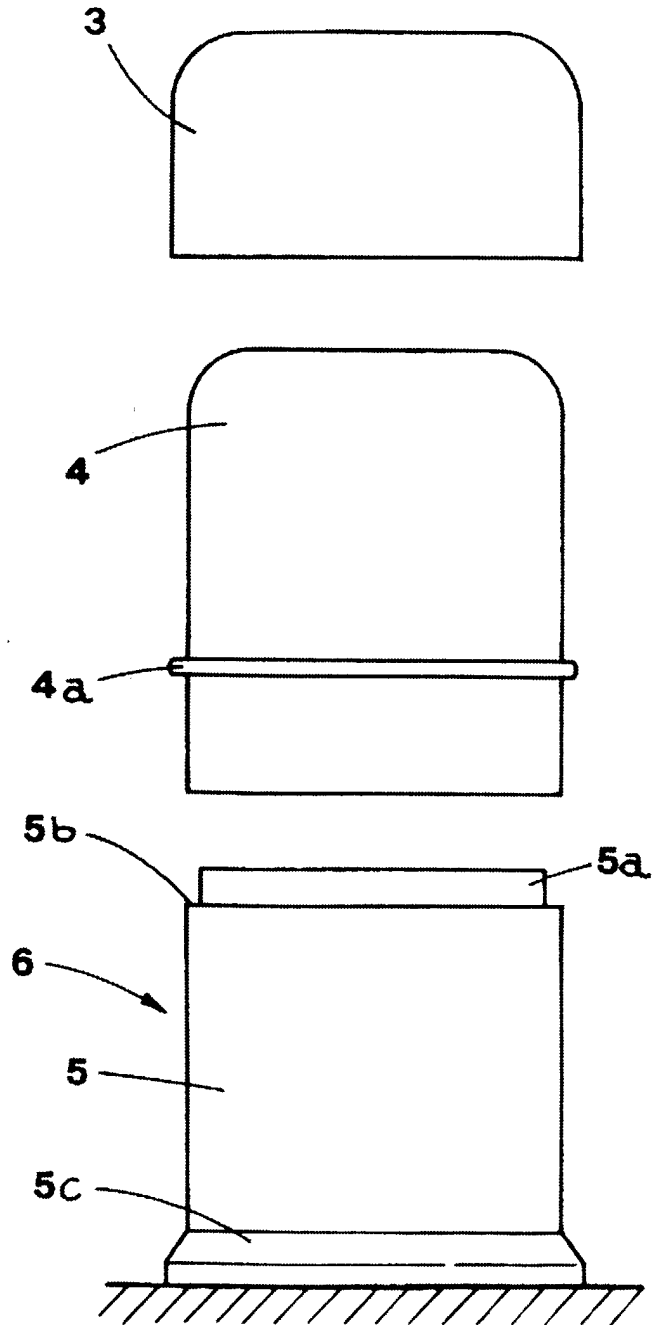


FIG. 2

FIG. 3

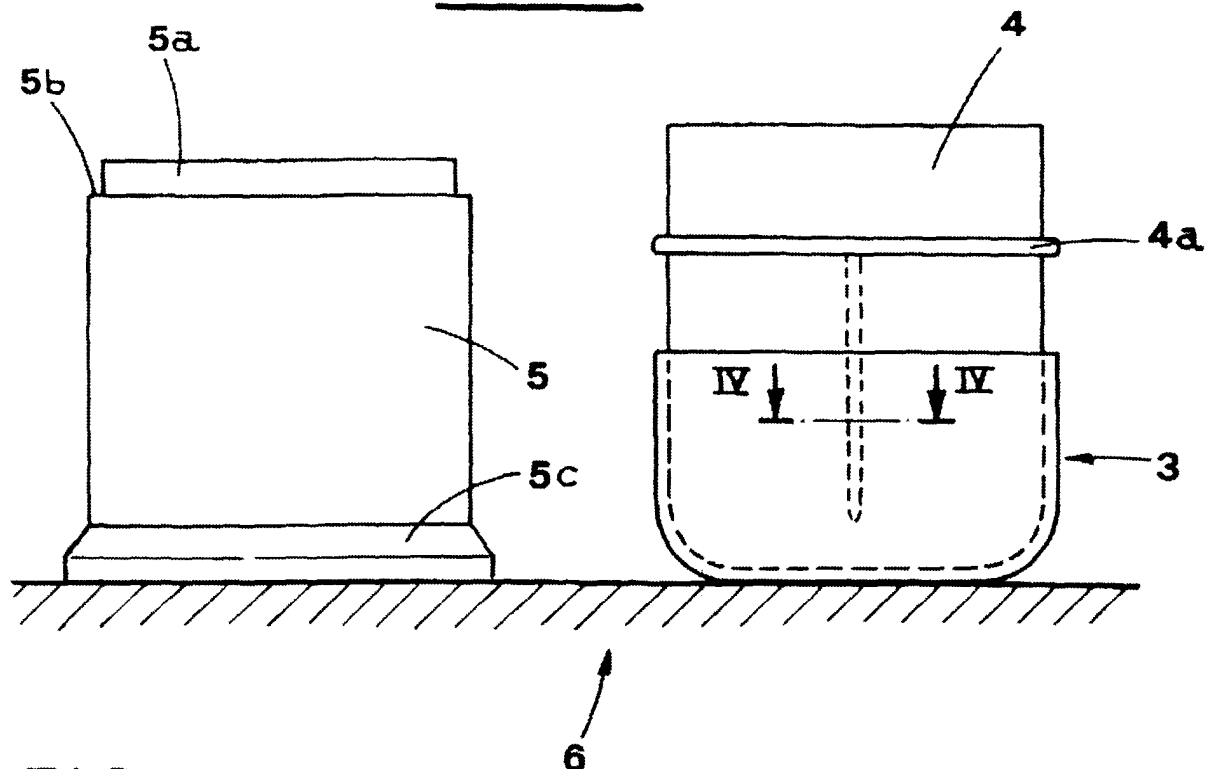


FIG. 4a

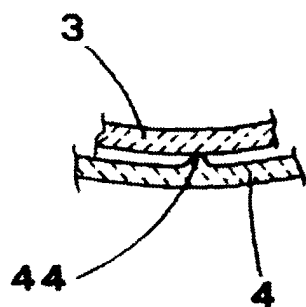
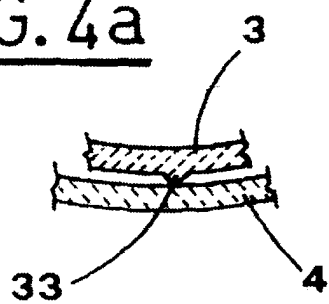
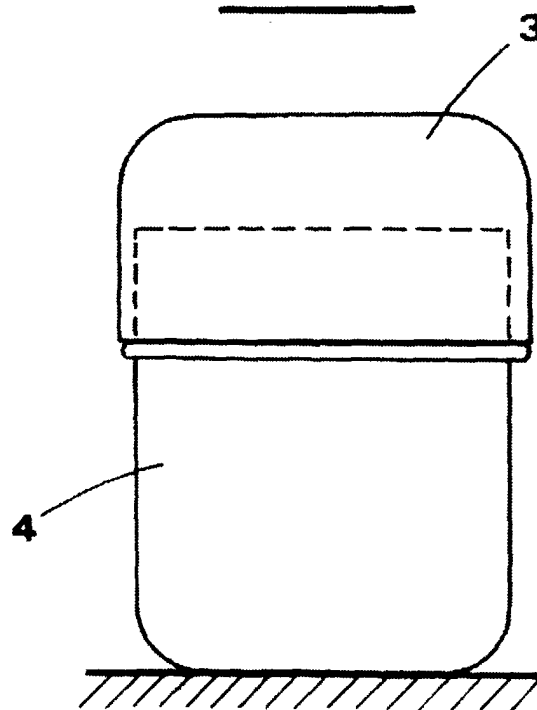
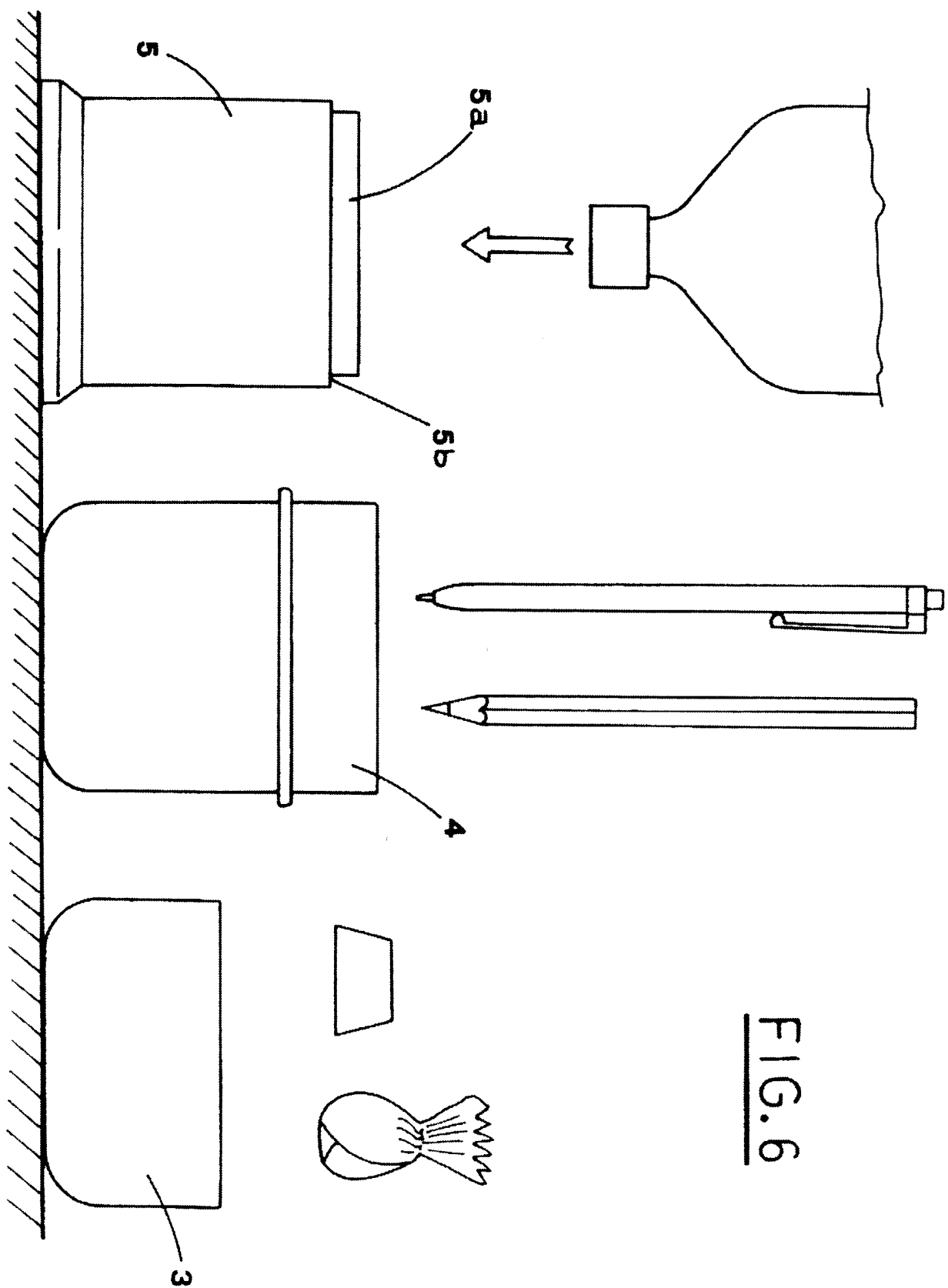


FIG. 4b

FIG. 5







European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 99 83 0360

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
X	FR 2 745 276 A (VERCHERE PLASTIQUES IND) 29 August 1997 (1997-08-29)	1-3,8	B65D6/00
Y	* page 4, line 35 - page 5, line 3 * * figures 1-3 *	5	
Y	GB 2 053 852 A (AMALGAMATED MINING TRADING) 11 February 1981 (1981-02-11) * page 1, line 50 - line 53 * * figures 1,2 *	5	
X	US 4 429 798 A (BOROWS ALLAN A) 7 February 1984 (1984-02-07) * column 3, line 9 - column 4, line 4 * * figures 1-4 *	1-3,8	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
			B65D B43M A45D
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 8 October 1999	Examiner Wennborg, J
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

EPO FORM 1503 03/82 (P04C01)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 99 83 0360

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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08-10-1999

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