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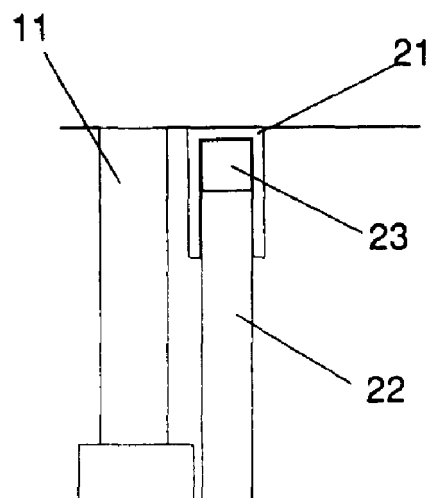
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(54) **Self-regulating skirting board for the base of furnishing units**

(57) A heel for furnishing units to cover the area between the base of the unit (1) and the floor (P), characterised in that its height is auto-regulating, being made up of two parts (21,22) that fit one inside the other transversally along their height, with a spring (23) interposed between the two parts that maintains a certain distance between one part (21) and the other (22).



**Fig. 5**

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## Description

**[0001]** The object of this invention is a self-regulating heel for the base of furnishing units.

**[0002]** The invention is applied preferably, but not necessarily exclusively, in the home and office furnishing sector to cover the space at the bottom of the furnishing unit.

### State of the Art

**[0003]** The technique currently used to maintain the base of furnishing units at a certain distance from the floor is by means of support feet, especially for practical reasons such as cleaning underneath the unit, or to avoid the base of the unit being damaged, for example by the infiltration of water between the unit itself and the floor.

**[0004]** The space between the unit and the floor is generally due to the aforementioned support feet, usually only a few centimetres high, attached to the base of the unit. The support feet may also be regulated to establish a steady, level position of the unit.

**[0005]** Since the support feet are not particularly attractive, and also to avoid dirt and dust accumulating underneath the unit, it is quite common to use a lath that clips on to the support feet of the unit to cover the space. It can then be easily removed for cleaning purposes, for example. This protective covering is generally known as a "heel".

**[0006]** The heel also serves as a form of skirting board, such as those found at the base of walls, and helps to avoid wear and tear of the unit since it can be easily replaced if subjected to damage.

### Drawbacks of the current systems

**[0007]** The drawback of the clip-on lath type of heel is that, in spite of the support feet being adjustable in height to keep the base of the unit away from the floor, the distance between the base of the unit and the floor is not necessarily always even and there will inevitably be gaps between the base of the unit and the lath, and the lath and the floor (due to the lack of parallelism between the base of the unit and the floor).

**[0008]** Another drawback is the high cost of this type of heel that clips on to the support feet or to the unit itself, and the fact that it is not always an easy system to use.

### The aim of the invention

**[0009]** The aim of the invention herein described is to overcome the aforementioned drawbacks, by introducing an extremely simple, quick-fitting and economical heel for the base of furnishing units, without complex and difficult systems that clip-on to the support feet or the furnishing unit, while at the same time eliminating

the gaps between the floor and the base of the furnishing unit.

### Essence of the invention

**[0010]** The aforementioned problems are resolved as claimed by means of a new type of heel characterised by the fact that its height is elastically self-regulating.

**[0011]** The self-regulation of the height is obtained by means of a heel made up of two parts that fit one over the other transversally along their height. Springs are positioned between the two parts in order to hold them apart at the required distance.

**[0012]** In this way, by pressing the two parts together against the springs, it is easy to slip the heel into the space between the base of the furnishing unit and the floor, without resorting to complex, expensive methods to fasten it to the unit. When released, the two parts will immediately position themselves correctly, even in those spaces that are not perfectly parallel, without leaving any gaps.

**[0013]** The fitting together of the two parts is obtained due to the fact that the upper part is basically an inverted "U" shape, and sits over the lower part, which is a rectangular shape. A series of leaf-springs are then placed between the two parts, but helicoidal springs can also be used.

**[0014]** With the upper part of the heel having the aforementioned inverted "U" shape, the accumulation of dirt will be avoided.

**[0015]** To sum up, through this simple and previously unknown solution, the problems associated with easy application and fastening, the elimination of gaps, the simplicity of substitution and, at the same time, low manufacturing Costs for a system that does not require means of fastening or hooking to the unit or support feet, are resolved.

### Description of a typical way of applying the system

**[0016]** These and other advantages, with the aid of the included drawings, will be outlined in the following description of a typical application of the system, although these particulars are not to be considered exhaustive but merely a typical example.

Figures 1, 2 and 3 are three-dimensional views of the three single components that, when fitted together, form the new type of heel described in this invention.

Figure 4 is a front-on view of the base of a furnishing unit with the new type of heel covering the space between the base and the floor.

Figure 5 is a sectional transversal schematic view showing the structure of the heel and how it is

installed beneath the unit, by simply pushing it against the support feet attached to the unit without using any type of fastening technique, as with traditional methods.

**[0017]** In the figures, the unit, or the base of the unit, is indicated by (1), the adjustable feet by (11) and the floor is indicated by (P).

**[0018]** The heel is indicated by (2) and is made up of a traditional rectangular lath (22), over which an inverted "U" shaped piece made of aluminium or plastic (21) is positioned, with springs (23) to hold the two parts at a certain distance from each other.

**[0019]** The springs (23) may be either free, or fixed to one of the two parts.

**[0020]** The springs may also be of a different type, for example helicoidal, with a cylindrical seat on the inside surface of the upper part (22), or even other forms of leaf-spring with only one leaf, for example, (231 or 232), instead of the indicated optimum solution with two leaf-springs and an intermediate part that can be glued or screwed to the inside of the heel.

**[0021]** The central interconnecting part (233) is also an inverted "U" shape that fits over the top of the lower part of the heel (22). In this way, there is no need to use any fixing technique, further reducing the overall cost of this alternative solution.

**[0022]** The interconnecting "U" part can obviously be positioned in various combinations of shapes and numbers without changing the essence of the invention.

**[0023]** The shape and number of the springs, as stated, may vary without altering the essence of the invention.

## Claims

1. A heel for furnishing units (2) to cover the space between the base of furnishing units (1) and the floor (P), characterised by the fact that its height is elastically self-regulating.

2. A heel for furnishing units according to the previous claim characterised by the fact that it is made up of two parts (21, 22) that fit easily one inside the other transversally along their height, with springs between the two parts (23) that keep the two parts of the heel at a certain distance from each other (21, 22).

3. A heel for furnishing units according to the previous claim characterised by the fact that the upper part is basically an inverted "U" shape (21) and fits over the lower part (22), which in turn is basically a rectangular shape with the springs (23) positioned between the two parts.

4. A heel for furnishing units according to the previous claim characterised by the fact that the springs (23)

are of the elastic inclined-leaf type.

5. A heel for furnishing units according to the previous claim characterised by the fact that the springs (23) are of the elastic inclined-leaf type with two opposing legs (231, 232).

6. A heel for furnishing Units according to the previous claim characterised by the fact that the springs (23) are of the elastic inclined-leaf type with two opposing legs (231, 232) with a central interconnecting part.

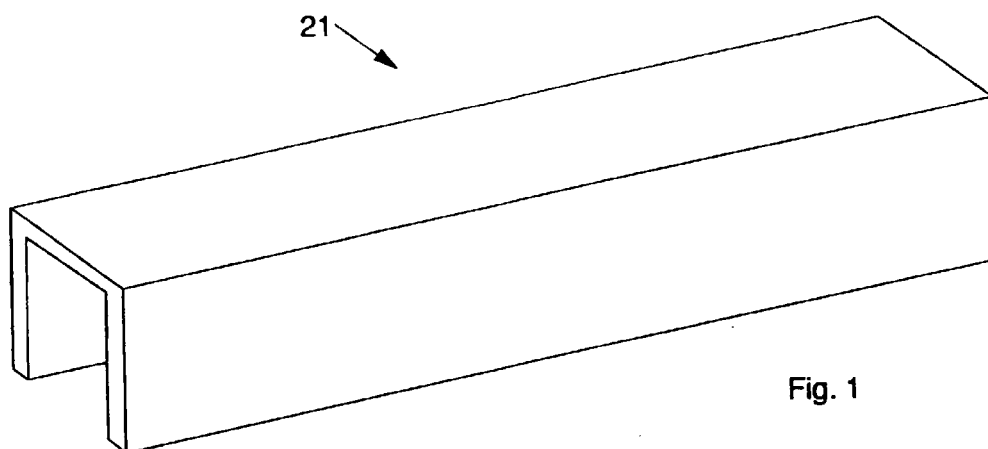


Fig. 1

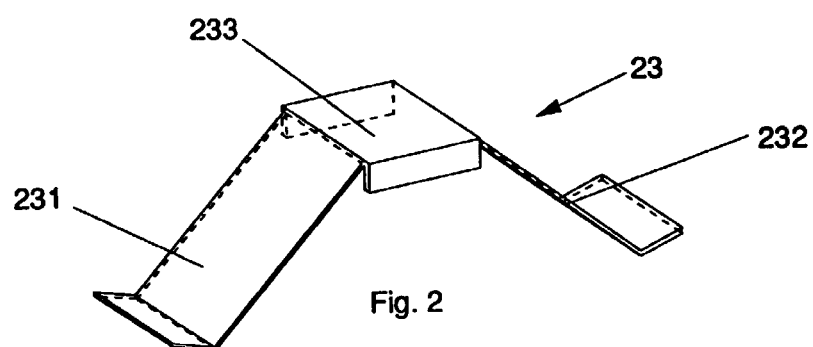


Fig. 2

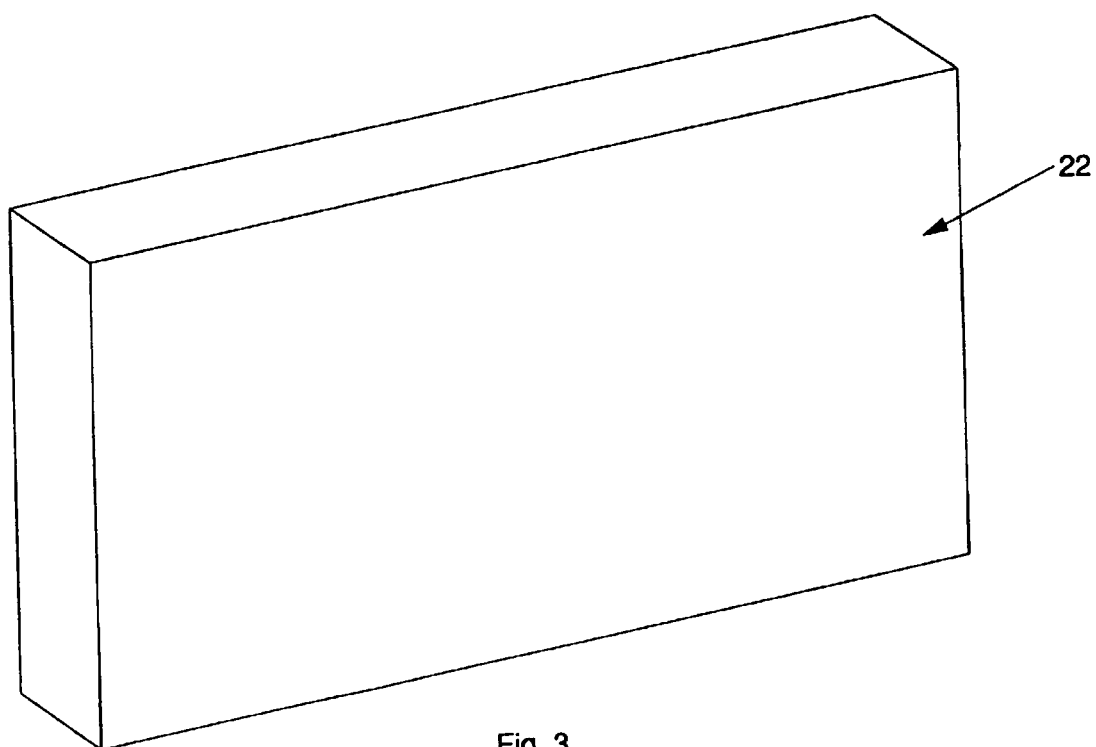


Fig. 3

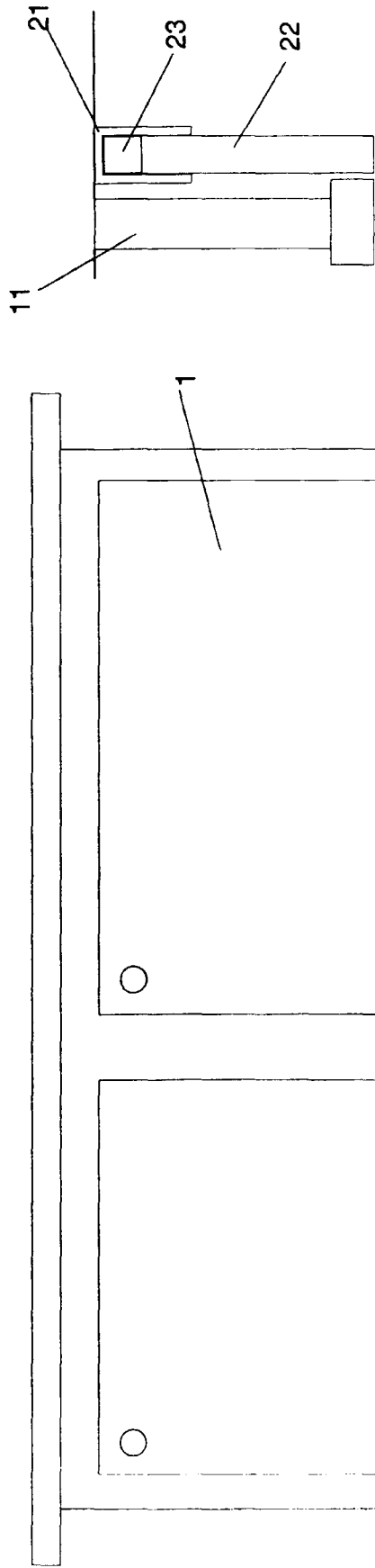


Fig. 5

Fig. 4



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# EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number  
EP 00 11 2986

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.7)
X A	DE 22 60 650 A (DREYER HEINRICH WILHELM) 20 June 1974 (1974-06-20)  * page 1, paragraph 1 * * page 5, paragraph 3 - page 7, paragraph 2 * * figures *  ---	1,2  3-6	A47B95/00
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X A	DE 87 16 644 U (MÖBELWERKE MOSER GMBH & CO. KG) 25 February 1988 (1988-02-25)  * page 2, line 34 - page 3, last paragraph * * figure 2 *  -----	1,2  3-6	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
			A47B
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search <b>THE HAGUE</b>		Date of completion of the search <b>6 November 2000</b>	Examiner <b>van Hoogstraten, S</b>
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>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</p> <p>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 ..... &amp; : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

EPO FORM 1503 03/82 (F04C01)

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

EP 00 11 2986

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The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on  
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06-11-2000

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