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(54) **Backpiece for sectional furniture**

(57) A backpiece (1) for sectional furniture comprising at least two panels (2, 3) substantially of equal thickness, each panel (2, 3) being able to rotate about a predetermined folding line (X-X) common to two panels (2, 3), along said folding line (X-X) there being defined two matching edges (2a, 3a) of the two panels (2, 3), said backpiece (1) being able to assume a utilization configuration in which said panels (2, 3) are coplanar, and a

rest configuration in which said panels (2, 3) are superposed, a strip (4) of deformable material being associated with said two matching edges (2a, 3a) to couple said panels (2, 3) together in such a manner as to render them indivisible and enable the two matching edges (2a, 3a) to be mutually abutted when the backpiece (1) is in said utilization position, so making said strip (4) substantially invisible.

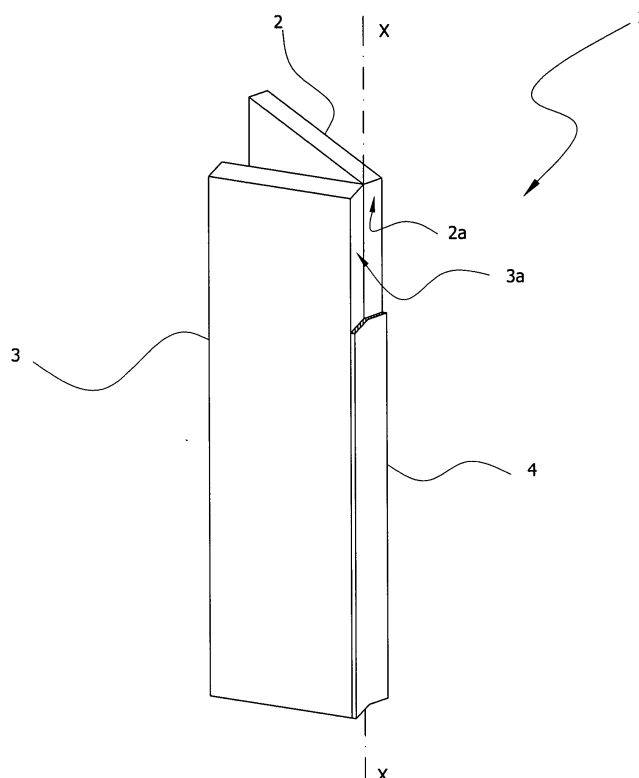


FIG. 3

Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a backpiece for sectional furniture in accordance with the introduction to claim 1.

[0002] More particularly, the present invention relates to a backpiece comprising at least two panels which can be closed into book form.

[0003] Furniture items purchased in kits in the form of components for subsequent assembly are known.

[0004] The need for furniture of a required size and the opportunity for making savings by do-it-yourself assembly mean that this type of furniture has been well received by purchasers.

[0005] Of considerable importance is also the facility for assembling the various components with a wide margin of freedom, to obtain a furniture item made to measure.

[0006] Further advantages obtainable by using sectional furniture is the small bulk of the various components for storage purposes.

[0007] However, one component of a furniture kit which cannot be easily further reduced in size is the backpiece.

[0008] In this respect, the backpiece means the rear wall of a furniture item, usually in the form of a fibreboard panel.

[0009] For space reasons, backpieces for furniture sold in kit form comprise two panels.

[0010] Backpieces of the known art present a side facing the interior of the furniture item which is usually finished, and a side facing rearward on the outside of the furniture item which is left in its unfinished state.

[0011] According to a first solution known in the art, the two constituent panels of a backpiece are held together by a single adhesive tape.

[0012] The adhesive tape is applied with the two panels lying flat and their edges touching.

[0013] This tape is generally applied to the unfinished side of the backpiece so as to be visible only on the rear of the furniture item.

[0014] A second solution known in the art uses a silicon bead applied along the adjacent tapered edges of the panels when disposed one on the other as if closed together in book form. When the panels are opened out into coplanar disposition, the rear face of the backpiece presents a groove, for example of V cross-section and therefore visible only on the rear of the furniture item.

[0015] According to a third solution known in the art, the backpiece consists of two pieces which are assembled to assume their flat utilization form by a male-female joint.

[0016] These solutions involve some inconvenience and disadvantage from the aesthetic, versatility and rigidity viewpoints.

[0017] In this respect, the backpieces of the aforescribed known art imply the existence of a finished (attractive) side and an unfinished (unattractive) side or, in

other words, a side on which the tape, the bead or the joint is clearly visible.

[0018] Consequently, these backpieces are acceptable only if the rear of a furniture item is not visible, for example is positioned in contact with a wall.

[0019] Moreover the aforescribed solutions are suitable for holding together only panels of small thickness, generally not exceeding 4-6 mm.

[0020] Furthermore the solution using insertion-jointed panels does not ensure rigidity of the backpiece structure.

[0021] In the case of panels held together by adhesive tape, it may be necessary to suitably smooth that panel portion on which the tape is applied, to prevent the tape easily becoming detached.

[0022] There is therefore a much felt need for a backpiece for sectional furniture which is of simple construction, is of pleasant appearance on both sides when in its utilization configuration, and which at the same time ensures rigidity even with large-thickness panels.

[0023] The object of the present invention is to provide a backpiece for sectional furniture having structural and functional characteristics such as to satisfy the aforesaid requirements while at the same time obviating the stated drawbacks of the known art.

[0024] This object is attained by a backpiece for sectional furniture in accordance with claim 1.

[0025] The dependent claims define preferred and particularly advantageous embodiments of the backpiece for sectional furniture according to the invention.

[0026] Further characteristics and advantages of the invention will be apparent on reading the ensuing description provided by way of non-limiting example, with the aid of the figures shown in the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figures 1 and 1A are respectively an isometric view and a view from above of a backpiece for sectional furniture according to the present invention shown in its utilization configuration;

Figures 2 and 2A are respectively an isometric view and a view from above of the backpiece of Figure 1 shown in its rest configuration;

Figures 3 and 3A are respectively an isometric view and a view from above showing the backpiece of Figure 1 in an intermediate configuration. With reference to the accompanying figures, the reference numeral 1 indicates overall a backpiece according to the present invention.

[0027] In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, said backpiece 1 comprises two panels 2, 3 substantially of equal dimensions.

[0028] Each panel 2, 3 can rotate about a predetermined folding line X-X common to the two panels 2, 3.

[0029] Said folding line X-X defines two matching edges 2a, 3a of the two panels intended to be mutually abutted.

[0030] By rotating the two panels 2, 3 about the folding line X-X the backpiece 1 can assume various configurations, including its utilization configuration, shown in Figure 1, and its rest configuration, shown in Figure 2. While being moved from one position to the other, the backpiece 1 also assumes the configuration shown in Figure 3.

[0031] In practice, when rotating about said folding line X-X, the two panels 2, 3 behave as two pages of one and the same book during their closure and opening.

[0032] When in their utilization configuration, the two panels 2, 3 are coplanar and lie side by side along the common folding line X-X.

[0033] Moreover, the two matching edges 2a, 3a mutually abut to enable the backpiece 1 to form a substantially continuous surface.

[0034] When in their rest configuration, the two panels 2, 3 are superposed.

[0035] To enable the backpiece 1 to pass from its utilization configuration to its rest configuration and vice versa, a jointing rib is associated with said two matching edges 2a, 3a.

[0036] In the illustrated example, said jointing rib is a strip 4 of deformable material.

[0037] A material usable for forming the strip 4 is, for example, polyvinyl chloride (PVC) or polypropylene (PP).

[0038] To enable the strip 4 to adequately adhere, the abutting matching edges 2a, 3a are suitably trimmed by a trimming machine, to obtain an application surface for the strip 4 which is planar and homogeneous, while at the same time avoiding the undesirable effect of the typical slippage of the two panels commonly known as "scissoring".

[0039] The two abutting edges 2a, 3a are essentially perpendicular to the plane of the two panels 2, 3.

[0040] Adhesion of the strip 4 to the abutting edges 2a, 3a is ensured by interposing a thin layer of adhesive material, such as an EVA-based hot-melt glue, between the surface of the edges 2a, 3a and the surface of the strip 4.

[0041] The hot-melt glue is melted by means of the known art and spread on the abutting edges 2a, 3a, for example by a brush or roller.

[0042] After applying the glue, a pressing machine applies the strip 4 to the surface of the two abutting edges 2a, 3a and presses it thereon.

[0043] The aforescribed operations are carried out with the backpiece 1 in its rest configuration, i.e. with the two panels 2, 3 superposed.

[0044] The dimensions of the applied strip 4 are such as to cover at least the entire surface of the two abutting edges 2a, 3a.

[0045] If the strip 4 exceeds requirements, the excess projecting beyond the surface of the two abutting edges 2a, 3a must be trimmed.

[0046] The optimum thickness of the strip 4 has been

identified as 0.3 mm, however any other thickness not excessively different therefrom can be used depending on the specific utilization requirements of the backpiece 1.

[0047] The strip 4 applied to the two abutting edges 2a, 3a is folded along the folding line X-X of the backpiece 1 when passing from the rest configuration (Figure 2) to the utilization configuration (Figure 1), enabling the two panels 2, 3 to remain joined together.

[0048] In the utilization configuration the strip 4 is substantially invisible both because of its small thickness and because of the deformability of the material which is compressed between the two abutting edges 2a, 3a of the two backpiece panels.

[0049] In the accompanying drawings, the thickness of the strip 4 has been exaggerated to enable them to be more easily understood.

[0050] The backpiece for sectional furniture according to the present invention can be formed from panels of any material suitable for the purpose, such as chip-board faced with a plastic layer, or medium density fibreboard (MDF).

[0051] As will be apparent from the foregoing description, the backpiece for sectional furniture according to the present invention satisfies the requirements and overcomes the drawbacks stated in the introduction to the present description with reference to the known art.

[0052] The backpiece for sectional furniture according to the present invention enables backpieces to be obtained which can also be used for furniture items having their rear located in such a manner as to remain visible, for example room-centre furniture.

[0053] In this respect, the strip present between the two panels becomes substantially invisible when the backpiece is set in its utilization configuration.

[0054] Strips of the same colour as the panels can also be used, so further improving the appearance of the backpiece.

[0055] Moreover, the backpiece of the present invention can be formed with panels of any material.

[0056] Another significant advantage of the backpiece for sectional furniture of the present invention is the facility to form backpieces with panels of large thickness, for example 10 mm and more.

[0057] In this respect, as the thickness increases the gluing surface also increases, with consequent improved retention.

[0058] Numerous modifications and variations can be made to the aforescribed backpiece for sectional furniture by an expert of the art in order to satisfy specific contingent requirements, provided that they lie within the scope of protection of the invention, as defined by the following claims.

Claims

1. A backpiece (1) for sectional furniture comprising at

least two panels (2, 3) substantially of equal thickness, each panel (2, 3) being able to rotate about a predetermined folding line (X-X) common to two panels (2, 3), along said folding line (X-X) there being defined two matching edges (2a, 3a) of the two panels (2, 3), said backpiece (1) being able to assume a utilization configuration in which said panels (2, 3) are coplanar, and a rest configuration in which said panels (2, 3) are superposed, **characterised in that** a jointing rib (4) of deformable material is associated with said two matching edges (2a, 3a) to couple said panels (2, 3) together in such a manner as to render them indivisible and enable the two matching edges (2a, 3a) to be mutually abutted when the backpiece (1) is in said utilization position, so making said jointing rib (4) substantially invisible.

two fourth edges to be mutually abutted.

2. A backpiece (1) as claimed in claim 1, wherein said jointing rib (4) is shaped and dimensioned such that when the backpiece (1) is in its utilization configuration said panels (2, 3) form a substantially continuous surface on both sides of the backpiece (1).
3. A backpiece as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein said jointing rib is a strip (4) of polyvinyl chloride or a strip of polypropylene.
4. A backpiece as claimed in claim 3, wherein said strip (4) has a thickness of about 0.3 mm.
5. A backpiece as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein said jointing rib (4) is associated with said matching edges (2a, 3a) by interposing a thin layer of adhesive material.
6. A backpiece (1) as claimed in claim 5, wherein said adhesive material is a hot-melt glue.
7. A method for constructing a backpiece for sectional furniture, comprising the following steps:
 - providing a first and a second panel, each panel having two parallel faces and four edges, at least three of said edges being substantially perpendicular to said faces;
 - superposing said first panel on said second panel such that the faces of the first panel are parallel to those of the second panel and such that said at least three edges perpendicular to the faces of the first panel are disposed coplanar with the corresponding three edges of the second panel;
 - trimming the fourth edge of each panel such as to obtain coplanar edges;
 - irremovably associating with said fourth edges a jointing rib of deformable material arranged to couple said panels together in such a manner as to render them indivisible and to enable the

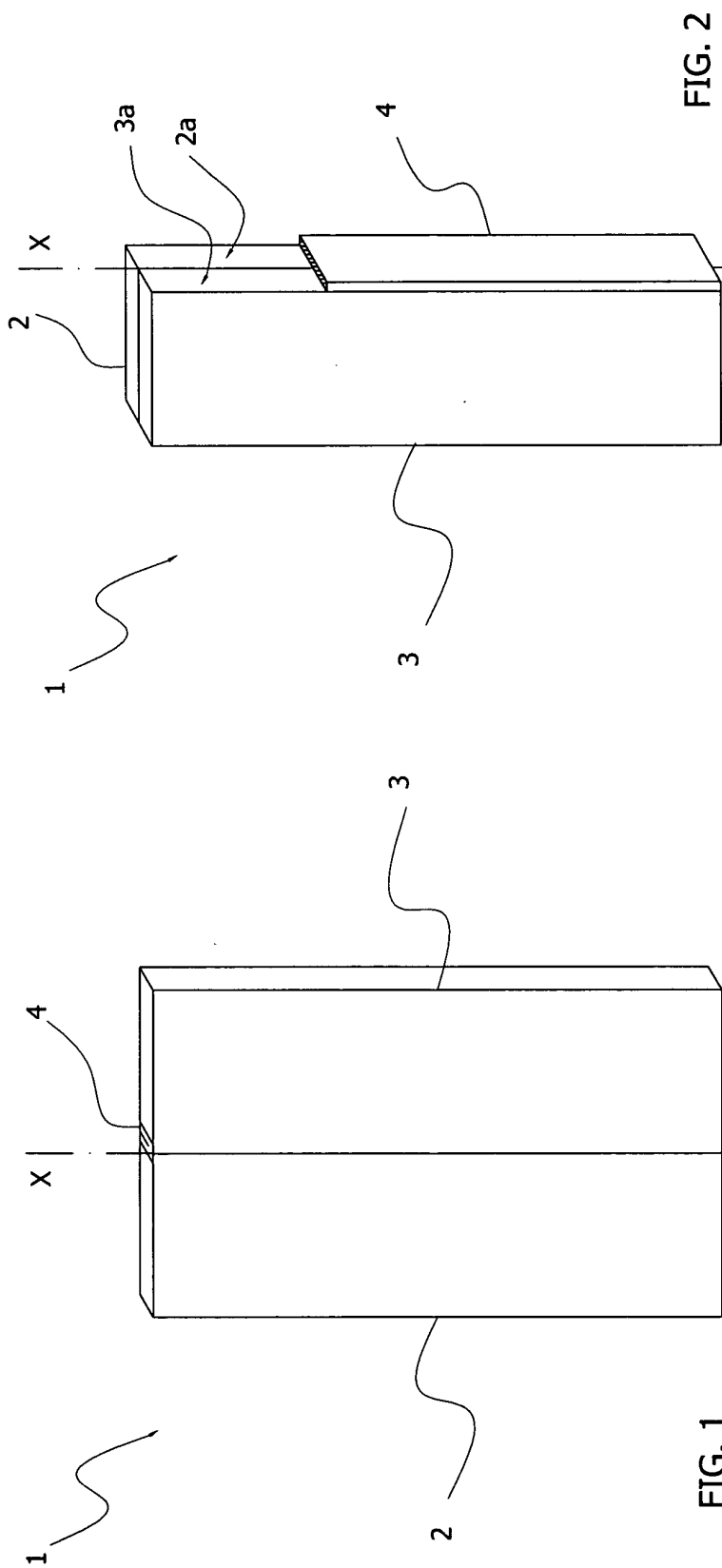


FIG. 2

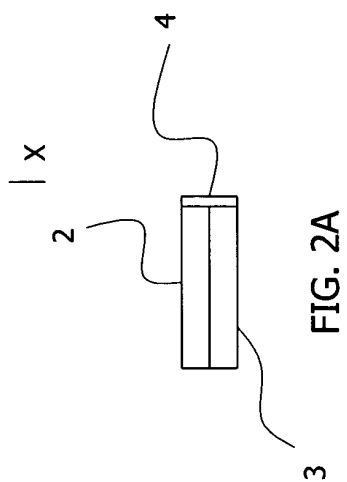


FIG. 2A

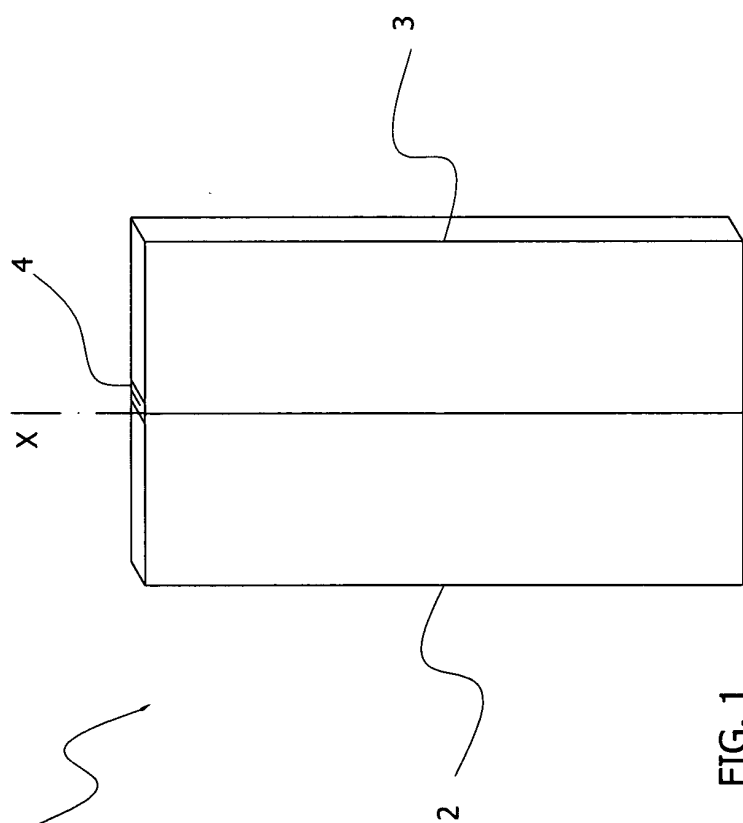


FIG. 1A

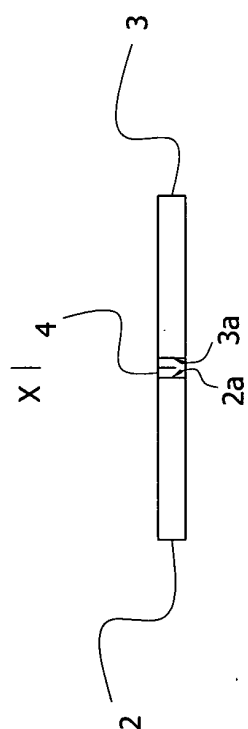


FIG. 1A

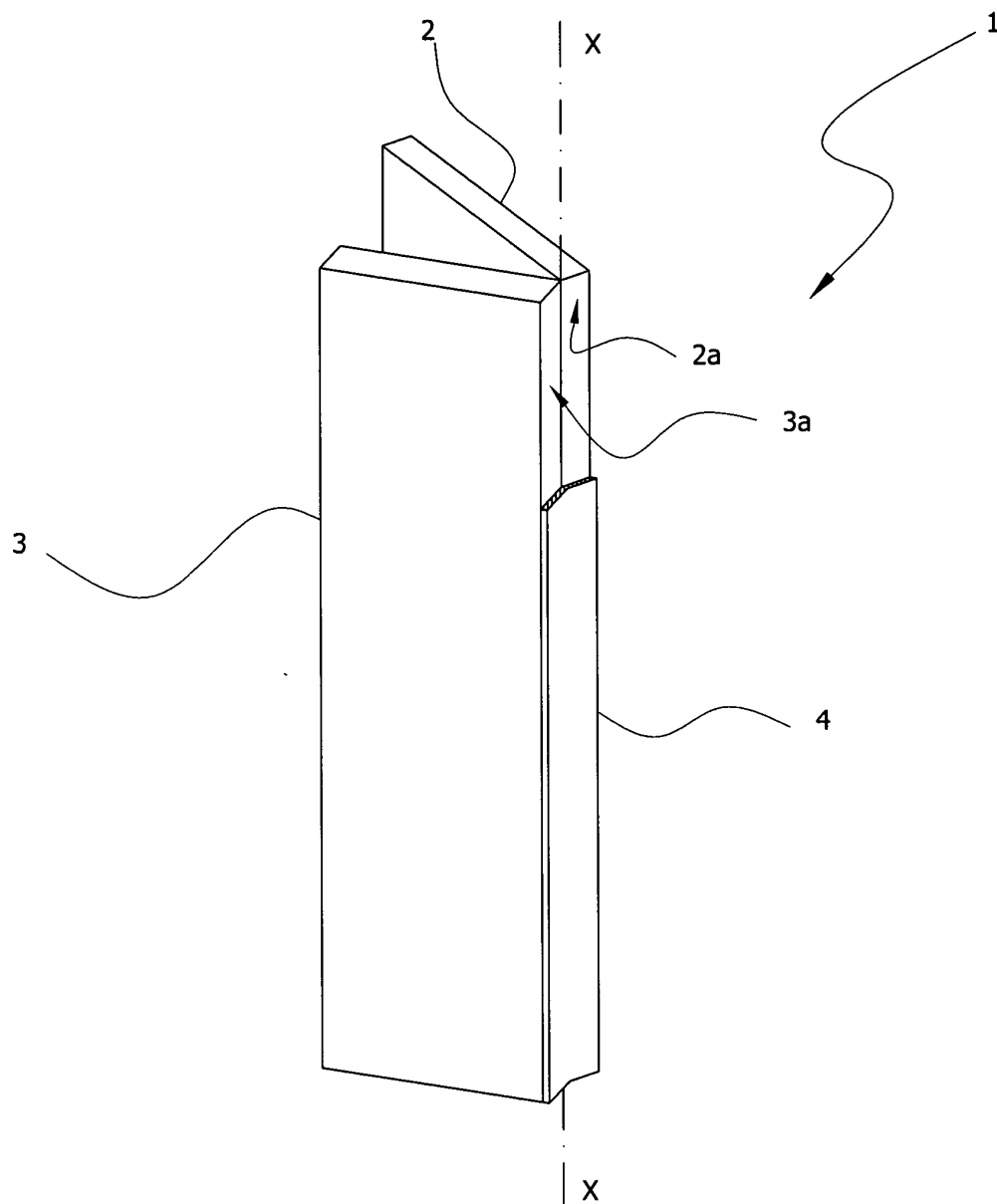


FIG. 3

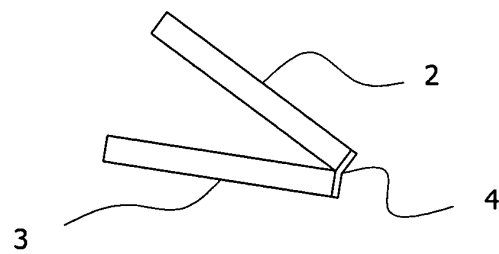


FIG. 3A



European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7) A47B E05D
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
MUNICH		10 March 2004	Di Renzo, R
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			

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EPO FORM 1503 03.82 (P04C01)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
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