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(54) **Distribution column for vending machines**

(57) A distribution column for vending machines includes two side walls forming a substantially vertical chamber for containing products, such as cans or bottles, stacked internally for vending, the mutual distance of the walls being adjustable in order to vary the dimensions of the chamber according to the products to be contained. The distribution column has an adjusting and locking means for adjusting the mutual distance between the side walls and locking the plates in a position that corresponds to a selected distance.

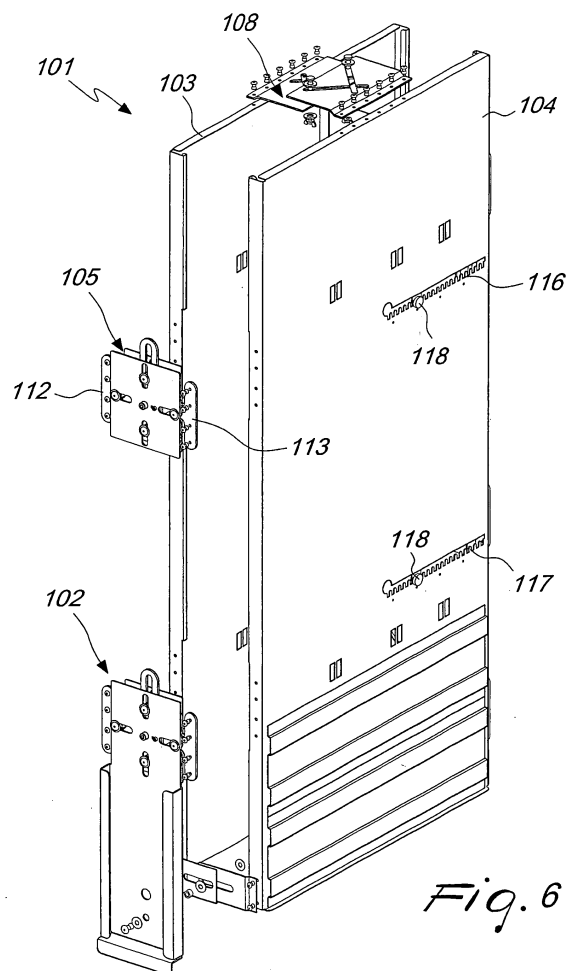


Fig. 6



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 04 01 6405

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
X	US 3 300 086 A (WOOD LEONARD J) 24 January 1967 (1967-01-24) * figure 2 * * column 1, line 38 - line 64 * -----	1,5-9	INV. G07F11/04
X	US 3 360 091 A (BAUM HAROLD D) 26 December 1967 (1967-12-26) * column 3, line 5 - line 58 * * figure 4 * -----	1,5-9	
X	US 5 799 824 A (GASIEL ET AL) 1 September 1998 (1998-09-01) * column 2, line 14 - line 32 * * column 4, line 9 - line 26 * * figures 2-4 * -----	1,5-9	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			G07F A47F B65G
<p>3 The present search report has been drawn up for all claims</p>			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
Munich		22 September 2006	Stenger, Michael
<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 & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing more than ten claims.

- ☐ Only part of the claims have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims and for those claims for which claims fees have been paid, namely claim(s):
- ☐ No claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims.

LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

see sheet B

- ☐ All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, the Search Division did not invite payment of any additional fee.
- ☐ Only part of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the inventions in respect of which search fees have been paid, namely claims:
- ☒ None of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims, namely claims:

1-9



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**LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION
SHEET B**

Application Number
EP 04 01 6405

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. claims: 1-9

Problem to be solved:

To provide a distribution column with adjustable width.

Solution:

Providing an adjustment lever being pivoted with respect to a first adjustment plate by means of a central supporting pivot according to claim 2 taken in combination with the subject-matter of claim 1 of the present application.

2. claims: 10-23

Problem to be solved:

To provide a distribution column with adjustable width.

Solution:

Providing plate assemblies comprising pantograph members according to claims 10 and 11 taken in combination with the subject-matter of claim 1 of the present application.

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

EP 04 01 6405

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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22-09-2006

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 3300086	A	24-01-1967	NONE	
US 3360091	A	26-12-1967	NONE	
US 5799824	A	01-09-1998	NONE	