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(54) **Presentation and distribution device**

(57) The present invention is related to a device for presenting and distributing products, said device comprising a lower shaft (2) placed on a basis (1), a centrally placed product holder (3) and an upper shaft (4) placed on top of said holder, said upper shaft being arranged to comprise a bulk quantity of said products so as to allow said products to be retrieved from said product holder (3), characterized in that :

- the basis (1) and the product holder (3) of said device are equipped with plugs (13) to which are connected detachable profiles (8), thereby forming a connection between said basis (1) and said holder (3), so as to form said lower shaft (2),
- said device further comprises a top ring (7), equally equipped with plugs (13), to which are connected further detachable profiles (8,20), connecting said ring (7) to said product holder (3), thereby forming said upper shaft (4),
- said device comprises a detachable sleeve (5), attached to the profiles (8) making out said upper shaft (4).

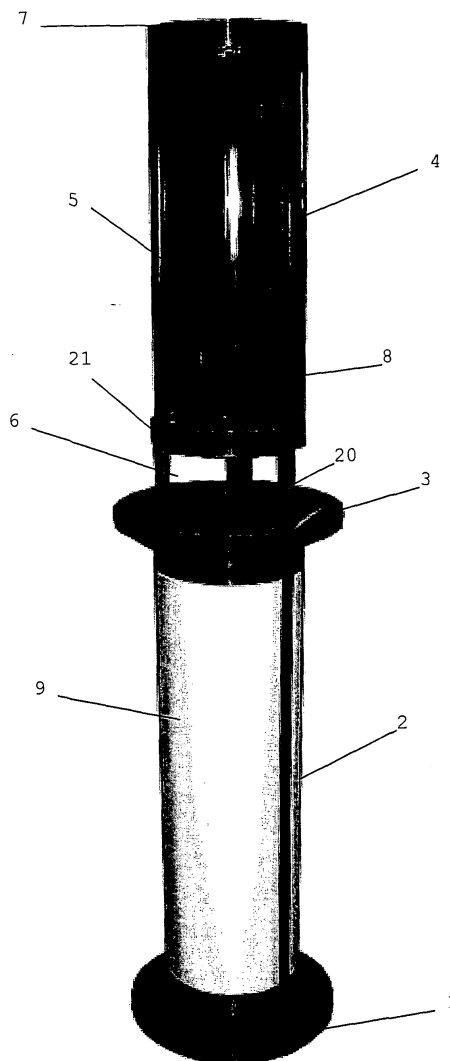


FIG. 1

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Description

Field of the invention

[0001] The present invention is related to a device for the purposes of displaying and distributing products.

State of the art

[0002] The state of the art comprises a display device comprising a lower and upper shaft, and a centrally placed product holder, in connection with the upper shaft. The upper shaft can be filled with products in 'bulk' fashion, so that a number of products become available in the product holder. People can then take out products from the holder, which remains filled as long as products are present in the upper shaft. These devices are presently available on the market under the name 'Totem®', and produced by the applicant.

[0003] This type of presentation and distribution device is known today in the form of a non-modular or semi-modular device. In particular, only the top shaft can be taken off, resulting in two large parts which are difficult to move and transport.

Aims of the invention

[0004] The present invention aims to provide a presentation and distribution device similar to the one known and described above, but which is more easily transportable.

Summary of the invention

[0005] The invention relates to a device such as described in the appended claims.

Short description of the drawings

[0006] Fig. 1 represents a view of an assembled device according to the invention.

[0007] Fig. 2 represents a view of the basis of the device of the invention.

[0008] Fig. 3 represents a view of the profile used in the device of the invention.

[0009] Fig. 4 represents a view of the product holder of the device of the invention.

[0010] Fig. 5 represents a view of another embodiment of the product holder.

[0011] Fig. 6 represents a view of the top ring used in a device of the invention.

[0012] Fig. 7 represents a detailed view of the plugs according to the invention.

[0013] Fig. 8 illustrates the connection of a sleeve to the profiles.

Detailed description of the invention

[0014] The present invention is related to a presentation and distribution device such as shown in figure 1. The device comprises a circular basis 1, upon which a lower shaft 2 is placed. Upon the lower shaft 2, the product holder 3 is placed, which itself supports the upper shaft 4. The holder 3 has an inner circular base of essentially the same diameter as the lower shaft and an outer circular base of a larger diameter and at a higher level, so as to form a plate-like receptacle. The upper shaft 4 is placed on top of the inner base of the product holder 3, and has a diameter which is essentially the same as the diameter of the lower shaft. This upper shaft is also equipped with a circumferential and preferably transparent sleeve 5, which does not reach the bottom of the product holder 3, so that an open space 6 is left between the lower edge of the sleeve 5 and the bottom of the product holder. This type of presentation device is designed for showing and distributing small products, for example candies, lipsticks, gloves, and the like, mostly in commercial areas. The size of the products is such that when the upper shaft is filled in 'bulk' fashion with these products, a number of products will spill over into the product holder through the open space 6. People can then retrieve products from the holder. The upper shaft is closed off at the top by a closing ring 7, and a lid (not visible). The device as shown in figure 1 is known today. It is however large and difficult to transport.

[0015] The device of the invention, when assembled, looks like the device of figure 1. It consists however of a larger number of subparts. The basis, the product holder and the top ring are equipped with plugs, onto which longitudinal profiles 8 can be attached, for assembling the lower and upper shaft, and thus the device in its entirety. In this way, the device is fully modular, and can be transported in an easy way.

[0016] The drawings show the preferred embodiment of the different components. Figure 2 shows the basis 1, which comprises a large circular base 10, and a smaller circular base 11. When assembled, the basis will rest on the ground by its large circular base 10. Rising up from the smaller circular base, is a cylindrical portion 12, which is equipped on the inside with a number of plugs 13. The shape of these plugs 13 is shown in more detail in figure 7 and will be discussed further in the description. Longitudinal profiles 8 of which the section is shown in figure 3, are placed onto the plugs 13 to form vertical columns, onto which the product holder can be placed.

[0017] According to the preferred embodiment, the lower shaft is surrounded by a sleeve 9 (fig. 1), which is attached to one of the profiles 8, in a manner described further in the description.

[0018] The product holder 3, shown in figure 4 is shaped in a way similar to the basis. It also has a larger base 14 and a smaller base 15, a cylindrical portion 16 rising up from the smaller base, said portion being

equipped with a series of plugs 13, for attaching the product holder to the vertical profiles attached to the basis 1. Two levels of plugs 13, said levels being separated by a the bottom plate 18, are present on portions 16a and 16b of the cylindrical portion 16. This allows for profiles 8 to be attached easily on both sides of the product holder. These two levels of plugs are also present in the basis shown in figure 2, even though for this basis only one level is strictly necessary.

[0019] Starting from the plugs on the inner base, and perpendicular to the inner base's circumference, straight gutters 17 run over the bottom of the holder towards the centre point. These gutters allows to install partitioning walls in the upper shaft, so as to obtain different compartments for distribution, within one device, of different kinds of products. It is preferred that a plug 13 is present at the end of every gutter 17, which is related to the specific shape of the plugs and the profiles, explained further.

[0020] Figure 5 shows another embodiment of the product holder, having a second series of plugs 13 around the circumference of its larger base 14. This second series allows for the upper shaft to be larger in diameter.

[0021] The product holder 3 is placed onto the vertical profiles 8 so as to form a plate-like receptacle. The profiles between the basis and the holder, preferably equipped with the sleeve 9, now form the lower shaft 2.

[0022] A second series of profiles 8 is then connected to the inner base of the product holder 3 (or to the outer base in the case of figure 5), and rising upwards from the holder to form the upper shaft 4. According to a preferred embodiment (see fig. 1), a first series of short profiles 20 is mounted on the product holder, and a ring 21 is placed onto said short profiles, after which longer profiles 8 are placed onto said ring, said ring being equipped with two levels of plugs 13 for this purpose. This is an easy way to obtain the open space 6.

[0023] The upper ring 7 (fig. 6) has a diameter corresponding to the diameter of the product holder's inner base (or outer base in the case of fig. 5), and is equally equipped with plugs 13 around its circumference. The intermediate ring 21 is preferably identical to the one shown in figure 6. In fact, the top ring theoretically doesn't need two levels of plugs 13 as shown in figure 6, whereas the intermediate ring does need these two levels, since profiles need to be attached to it on both sides. The profiles rising upwards from the holder's inner base or from the intermediate ring 21, are then connected to the plugs of the top ring 7 to form the upper shaft. The upper shaft, above the open space 6, is surrounded by a sleeve 5, which is preferably transparent, to allow the products in the upper shaft to be seen from the outside. The connection between the sleeve 5 and the profiles 8 is explained hereafter.

[0024] The invention is equally related to the specific shape of the profiles 8 and the plugs 13. As shown in figure 7, which shows detail C of figure 2, the plugs consist

of two symmetrical parts 25 and 26, each part comprising a first and second straight rib 27 and 28, at an acute angle to each other, and a rib 29, preferably curved in shape. At the end of the third rib 29 is another straight rib 30, more or less parallel to rib 28. The plugs are surrounded on the inside by a wall 40, running around the circumference of the holder/basis/ring, and which is interrupted by a gap 41 right before every plug 13. This gap allows to support partitioning walls, when installed.

[0025] The cross section of the profile 8 (figure 3) is equally symmetrical with respect to a central rib 31. On each side of the rib, a slanted rib 32 is present, at an acute angle with respect to the central rib, as well as another rib 34, at an angle perpendicular or essentially perpendicular to the central rib 31. Between ribs 32 and 34 is a third rib 33, preferably curved in shape. The ribs 32 and 34 extend over a given distance beyond their connection point with rib 33, so that a half-open space 37 is formed between the three ribs. The inside of the profile 8 corresponds to the outer circumference of the plugs 13, so that the profiles can be slid over the plugs. The respective dimensions should be such that a sufficiently tight connection is obtained, allowing however easy detachment of the profile from the plug, when the device is taken apart.

[0026] The half-open spaces 37 of the profiles 8 allow to fix to said profiles the sleeve/window 5 and/or 9. For this purpose, the edges of the sleeve are slid into the half-open spaces 37, so that a cylindrical shaft is obtained (see figure 8).

[0027] At both ends of the central rib 31, the profile has recesses 35 and 36 (fig. 3). The recesses 36 improve the stiffness of the profiles 8. The recesses 35, along with the gaps 41 in the wall 40 near the plugs 13 (fig. 7) allow for the support of partitioning walls placed in the gutters 17, said walls being able to be inserted into the recesses 35 and gaps 41. This is why preferably a plug 13 is present at the end of every gutter 17. As seen in figures 4 and 5, the number of plugs around the circumference can basically be chosen arbitrarily, and as a function of the number of partitioning walls which may have to be installed. When no partitioning walls are installed, it may be sufficient to use three profiles 8 to make the upper shaft.

[0028] The components of the device of the invention are preferably produced in a plastic material, preferably ABS. The cross-section of the device of the invention does not necessarily have to be circular.

Claims

1. Device for presenting and distributing products, said device comprising a lower shaft (2) placed on a basis (1), a centrally placed product holder (3) and an upper shaft (4) placed on top of said holder, said upper shaft being arranged to comprise a bulk

quantity of said products so as to allow said products to be retrieved from said product holder (3), **characterized in that :**

- the basis (1) and the product holder (3) of said device are equipped with plugs (13) to which are connected detachable profiles (8), thereby forming a connection between said basis (1) and said holder (3), so as to form said lower shaft (2), 5 10
 - said device further comprises a top ring (7), equally equipped with plugs (13), to which are connected further detachable profiles (8,20), connecting said ring (7) to said product holder (3), thereby forming said upper shaft (4), 15
 - said device comprises a detachable sleeve (5), attached to the profiles (8) making out said upper shaft (4).
2. The device according to claim 1, wherein said product holder is equipped with a number of gutters (17), running from a point around the holder's circumference, towards the centre point of said holder, for supporting partitioning walls. 20 25
3. The device according to claim 2, wherein a plug (13) is present at the end of every partitioning wall (17).
4. The device according to claim 1, wherein said plugs are formed of two symmetrical parts (25, 26), each part comprising a first and second rib (27,28), at an acute angle to each other, a third rib (29) going through the intersection of said first two ribs, and at an acute angle to one of said first two ribs, and a fourth rib (30) starting at the end of said third rib (29), and essentially parallel to one of said first two ribs (27,28). 30 35
5. The device according to claim 4, wherein said third rib (29) has a curved shape. 40
6. The device according to claim 1, wherein said profiles have a section formed of a central rib (31), with two halves which are symmetrical with respect to said central rib (31), each half comprising a first rib (32) starting at one end of said central rib, and which is at an acute angle with respect to said central rib (31) and a second rib (34), starting at the opposite end of said central rib (31), with a third rib (33) in between said first and second rib, so as to leave a half-open space (37) between said first, second and third rib. 45 50
7. The device according to claim 6, wherein said third rib (33) has a curved shape. 55
8. The device according to claim 6 or 7, wherein said section comprises two recesses (35,36) on either
9. The device according to any one of claims 6 to 8, wherein the edges of said sleeve (5) are detachably caught in the half-open spaces (37), on the outside of said profile, between said first, second and third rib (32,34,33).

end of said central rib (31), one of said recesses (35) serving for the support of a partitioning wall.

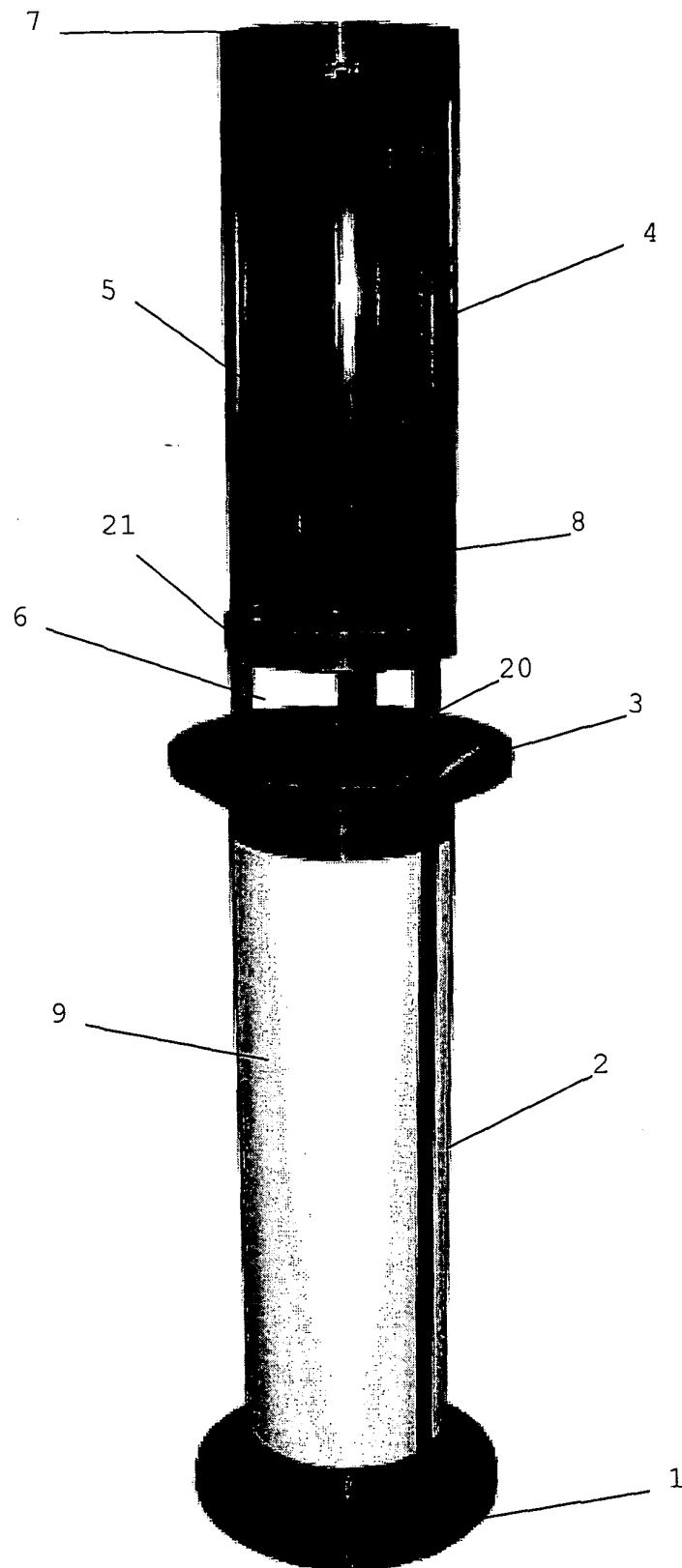


FIG. 1

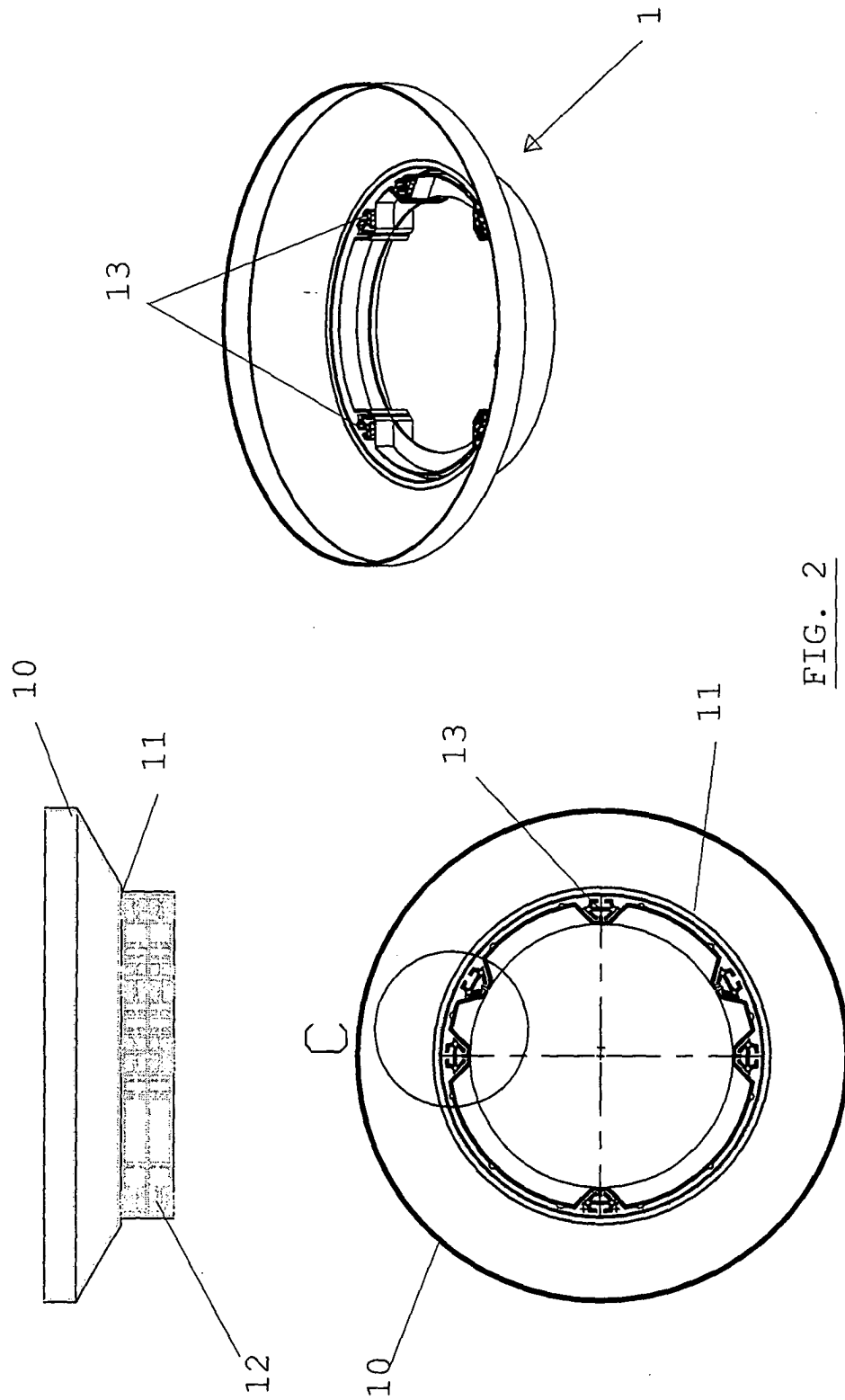


FIG. 2

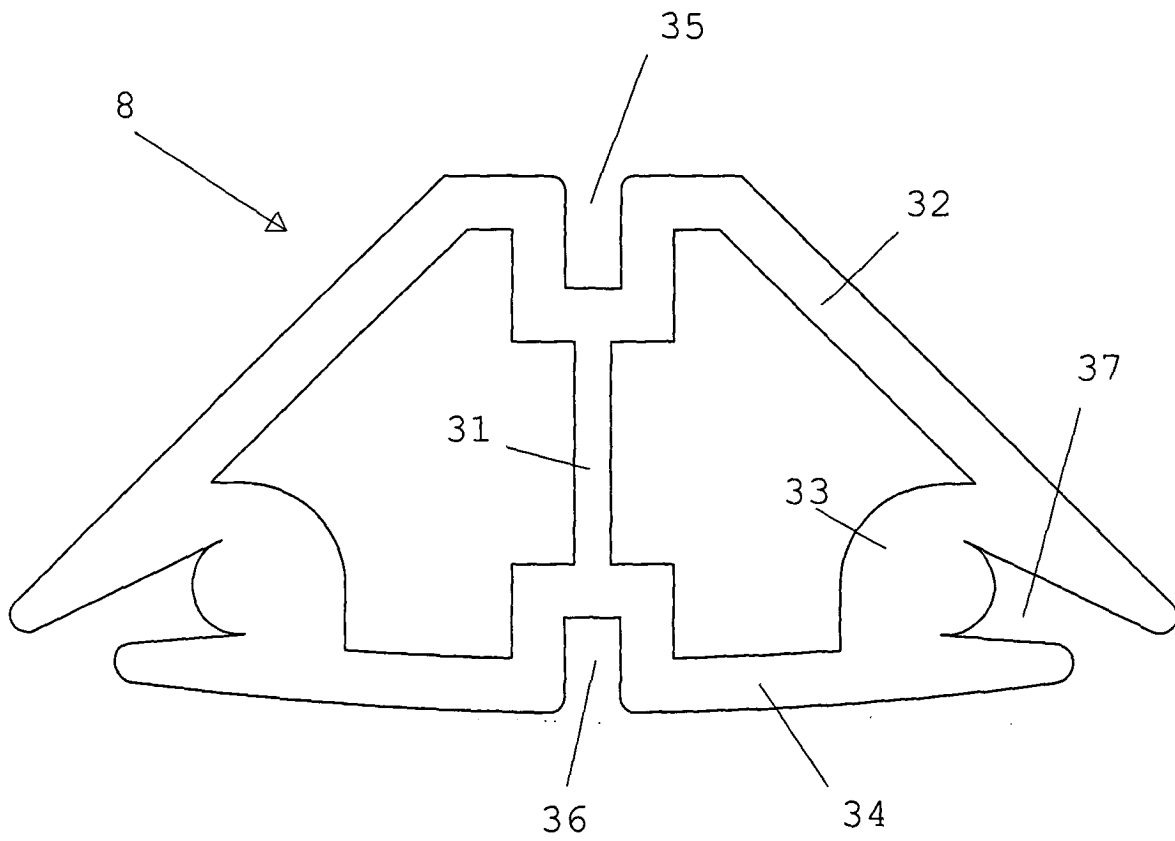


FIG. 3

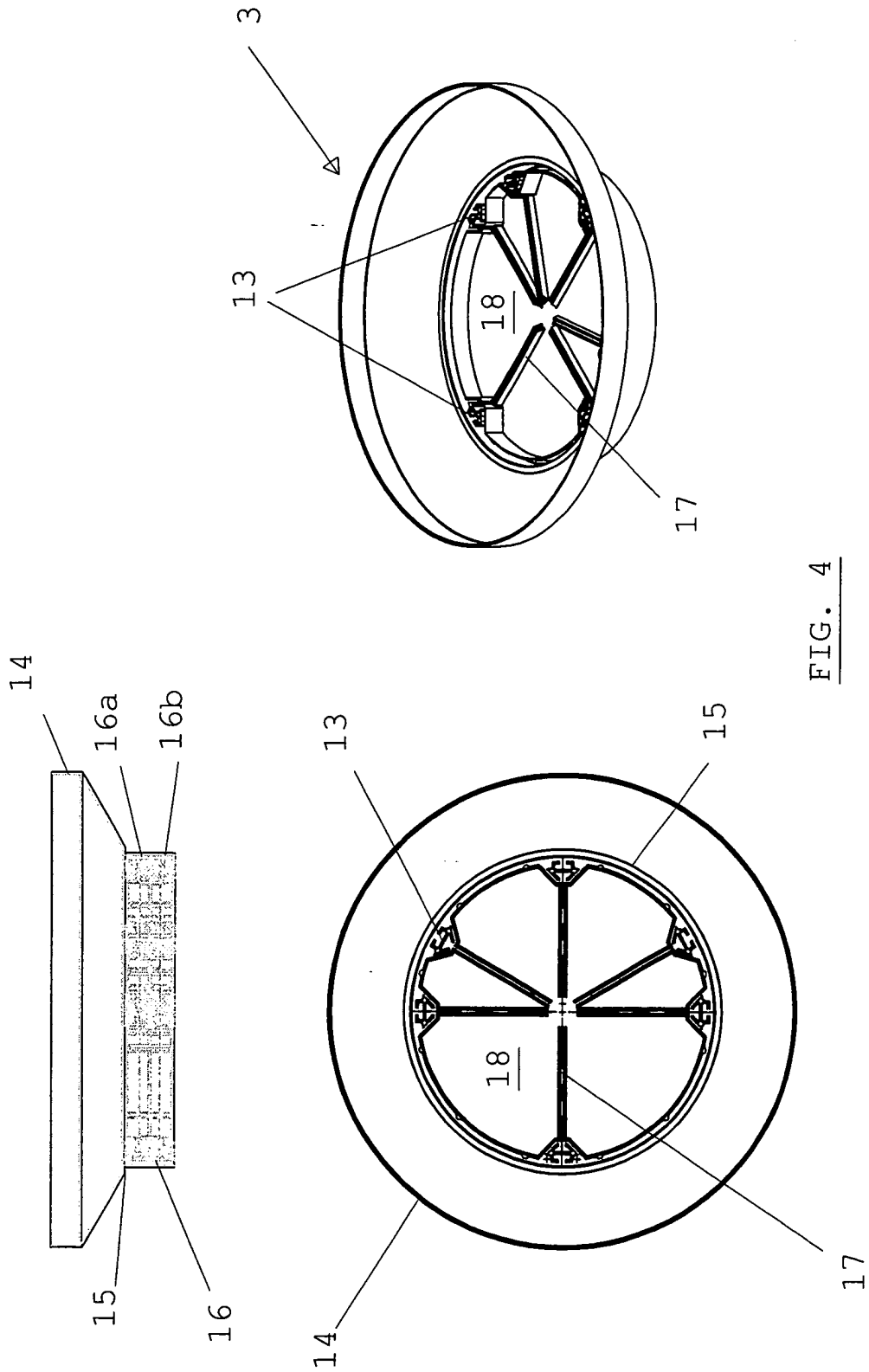


FIG. 4

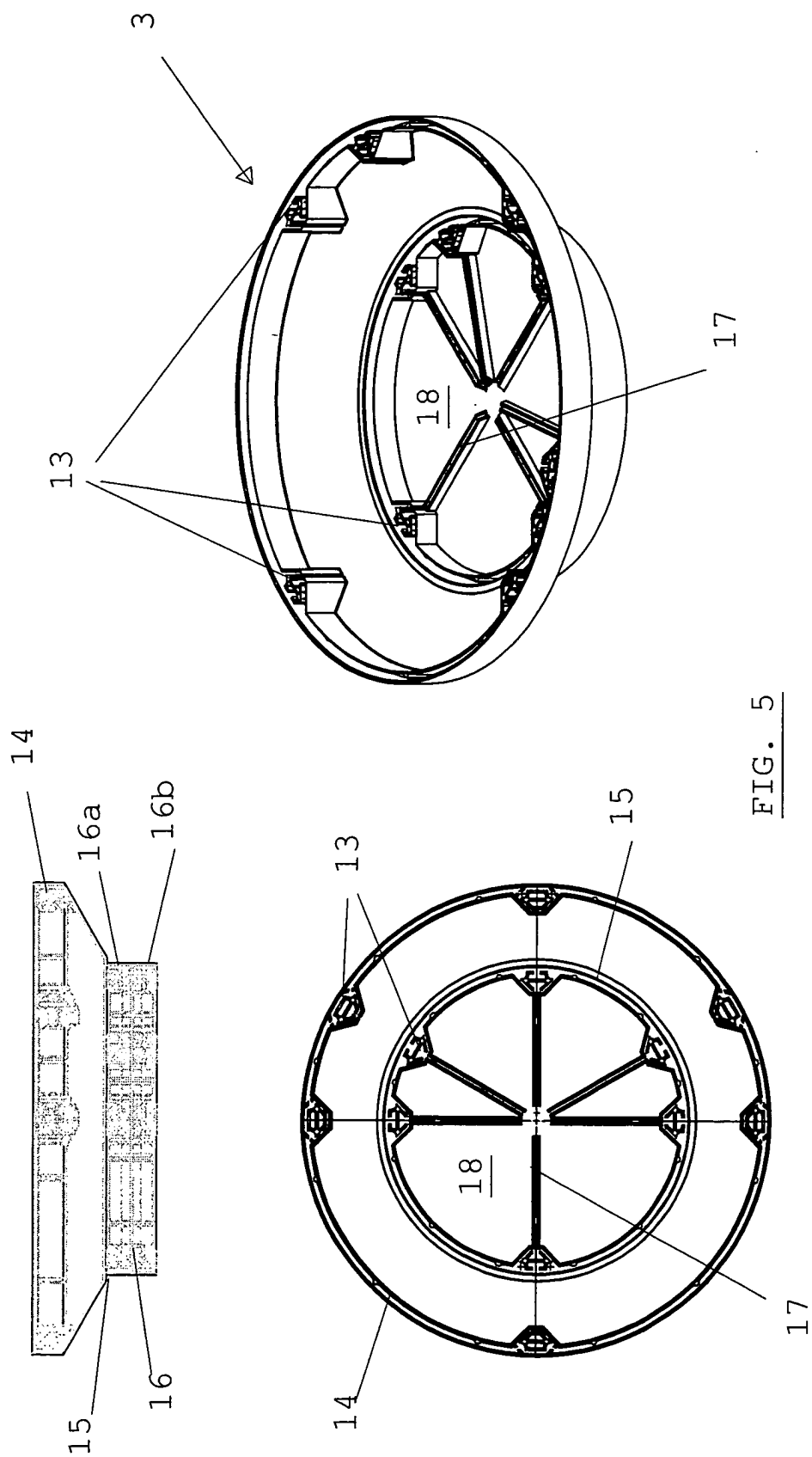


FIG. 5

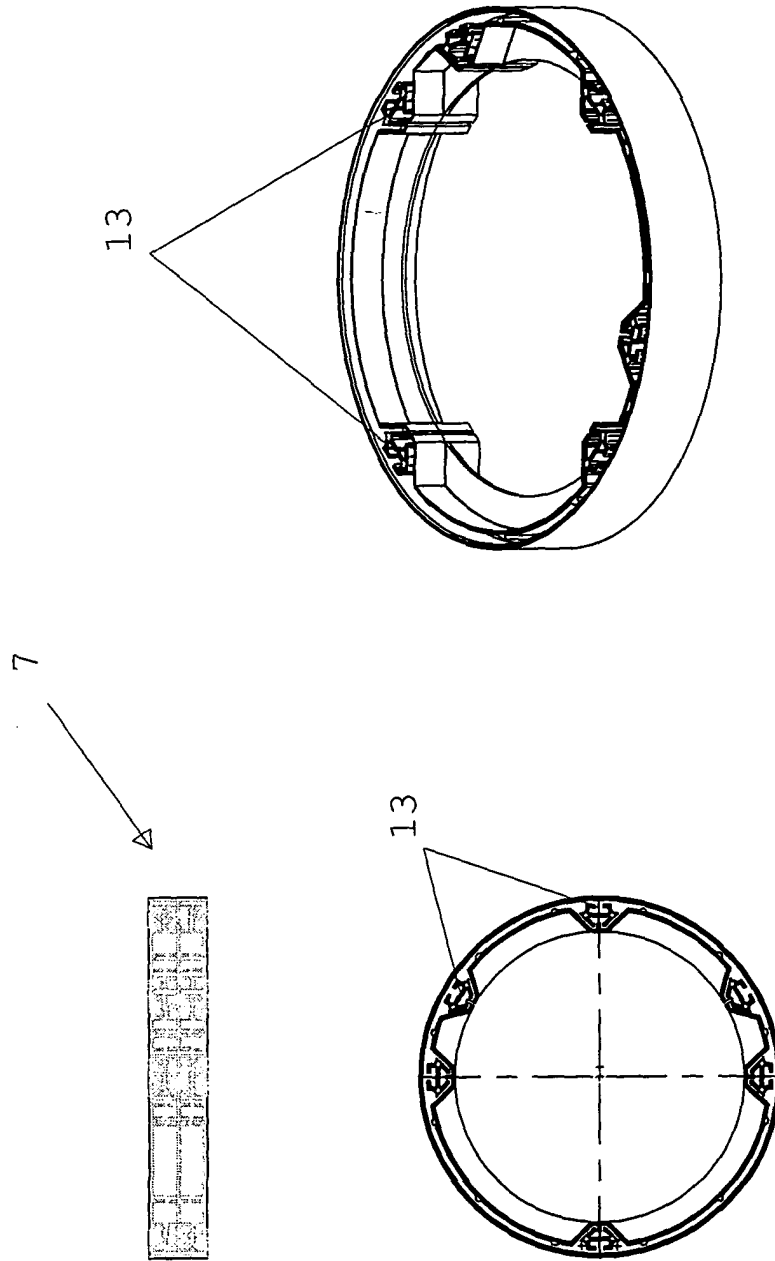


FIG. 6

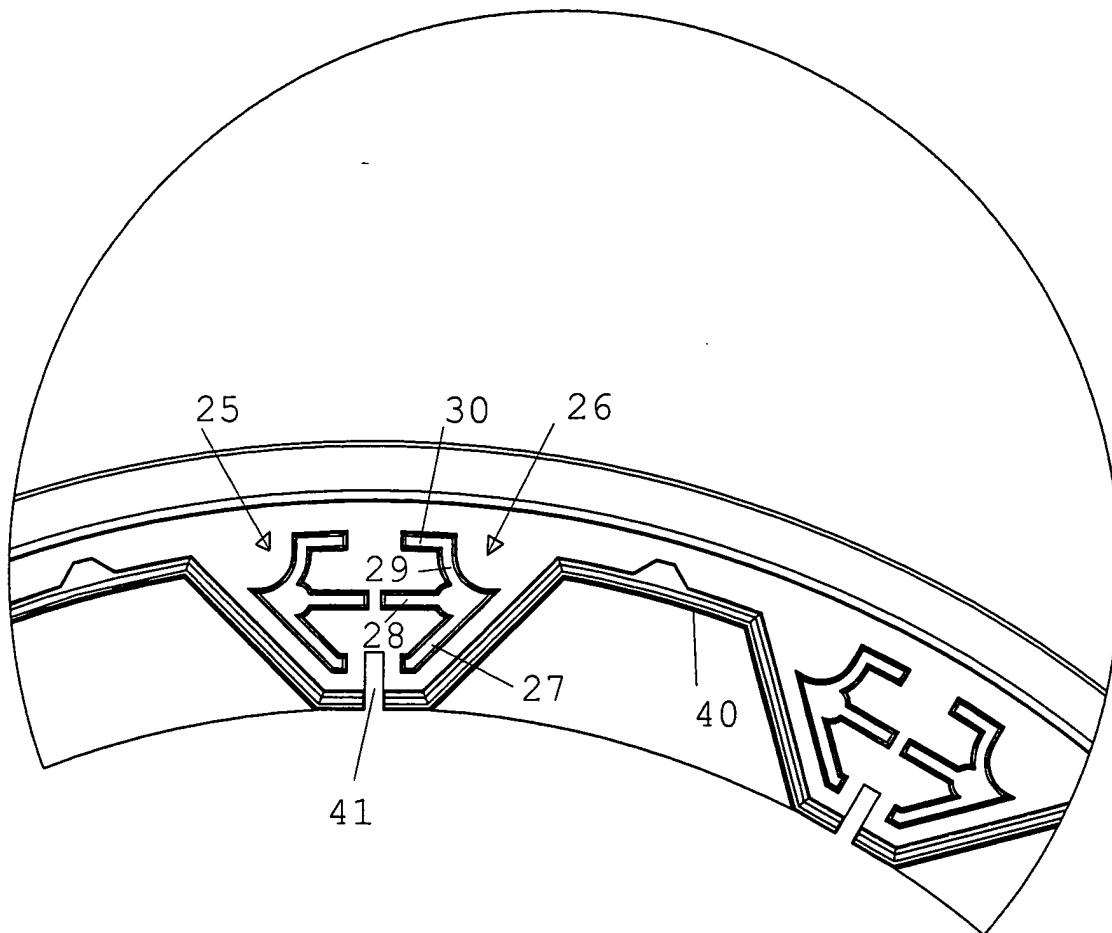


FIG. 7



FIG. 8



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 04 44 7028

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)
A	US 5 291 394 A (CHAPMAN WILLIAM) 1 March 1994 (1994-03-01) * column 4, paragraph 3 - column 5, paragraph 2; figures 4,5 *	1	A47F1/08
A	US 5 191 997 A (SQUITIERI ANTHONY C) 9 March 1993 (1993-03-09) * abstract; figures 6,7 * * column 2, last paragraph *	1,2	
A	US 6 398 071 B1 (FELLERS LISA ANN) 4 June 2002 (2002-06-04) * abstract; figures 1-3 *	1	
A	US 1 999 021 A (MARSH HARRY V) 23 April 1935 (1935-04-23) * the whole document *	1	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
			A47F A47B
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 17 June 2004	Examiner Jones, C
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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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EP 04 44 7028

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17-06-2004

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