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(54) **Retroreflective distributor**

(57) A distributor device 10 includes a container 44, which is arranged in use to contain retroreflective articles. The articles are supplied to the container via a supply line 34 and, in use, are arranged to exit the container through an outlet and down a distributing chute 36 on to a target material. A restrictor 18, which is arranged in the region of the outlet, is operable to determine the extent at which the outlet is restricted and therefore the egress of the articles from the container. The distributor device further comprises an agitator 78, which, in use, assists the articles from moving past the restrictor and also from locking together in the container or supply line. In use, relative movement of the distributor and target material, which includes a pre-laid encapsulant surface, assists in the distribution of a retroreflective deposit that has a different retroreflective character from light emanating from a common source.

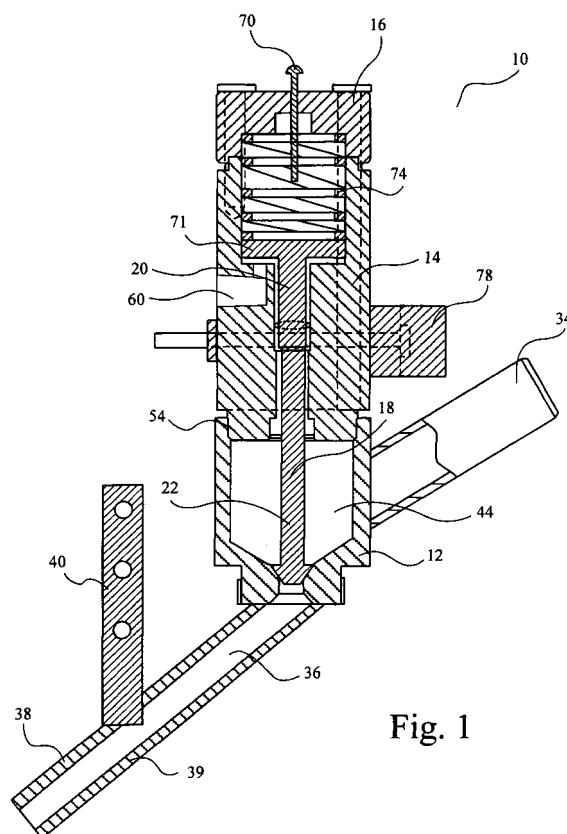


Fig. 1



European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 06 25 2142

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Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
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Y	* column 2, line 23 - column 4, line 35; figure 2 *	15	
X	GB 1 444 926 A (EIGENMANN LUDWIG) 4 August 1976 (1976-08-04)	1,3-7,13	
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	* column 2, line 28 - column 4, line 71; figure 3 * * column 5, lines 28-30 *		
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			E01C
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
The Hague		6 June 2007	Gallego, Adoración
<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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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. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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