



(11) **EP 2 014 448 A8**

(12) **CORRECTED EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**

(15) Correction information:
Corrected version no 1 (W1 A2)
Corrections, see
Bibliography INID code(s) 71, 72

(51) Int Cl.:
B29C 70/34 (2006.01)

(48) Corrigendum issued on:
17.06.2009 Bulletin 2009/25

(43) Date of publication:
14.01.2009 Bulletin 2009/03

(21) Application number: **08011313.7**

(22) Date of filing: **21.06.2008**

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR
HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MT NL NO PL PT
RO SE SI SK TR
Designated Extension States:
AL BA MK RS

(30) Priority: **27.06.2007 US 769082**

(71) Applicant: **The Boeing company**
Chicago, IL 60606-2016 (US)

(72) Inventors:
• **Nelson, Paul E.**
University Place, Washington 98466-3216 (US)
• **McCowin, Peter D.**
Enumclaw, Washington 98022-8744 (US)
• **Lund, Worm**
Bellevue, Washington 98006 (US)

(74) Representative: **Lindner, Michael et al**
Witte, Weller & Partner
Patentanwälte
Postfach 10 54 62
70047 Stuttgart (DE)

(54) **Method and apparatus for contouring composite pre-preg articles**

(57) A forming tool and method for its use with flat pre-preg composite laminate assembly which incorporates a mandrel (10) segmented into multiple forming blocks, the forming blocks sized to receive a draped composite laminate assembly (14) with all portions of the composite laminate assembly spaced from a shaping surface on each block. A spline plate (12) engages the shaping surface of the forming blocks to provide a neutral axis for maintaining the entire composite laminate as-

sembly in tension during forming. In the exemplary embodiments, the draped composite laminate assembly (14) is formed to the forming blocks from the flat composite laminate assembly and maintained in contact with the forming blocks using a vacuum bag. The mandrel forming blocks are then displaced to a desired curvature on the spline plate.

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