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(72) Inventor: **Rijken, Marcel**
2021HM, Haarlem (NL)

(74) Representative: **Land, Addick Adrianus Gosling et
al**
Arnold & Siedsma
Sweelinckplein 1
2517 GK The Hague (NL)

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(71) Applicant: **Koninklijke Bammens B.V.**
3604 BA Maarssen (NL)

(54) **Device for closing a ground level opening and method for lifting an underground waste container into and out of a ground level opening**

(57) Device (10) for closing an opening in the ground surface from which an underground waste container (8) has been removed, wherein the device (10) comprises:
- one or more pivotally arranged, upward foldable floor parts (11,12);
- a spring construction arranged in each floor part (11,12) for urging the pivotable floor part (11,12) from the folded-down position to the upward folded position; and

- a locking mechanism (13-16) for respectively locking and unlocking the floor part (11,12) in the position covering the opening, wherein the locking mechanism (13-16) is set into operation once the spring construction has moved along a predetermined path, and the locking mechanism (13-16) can be unlocked by the weight of the underground container (8), or the force exerted by the container (8).

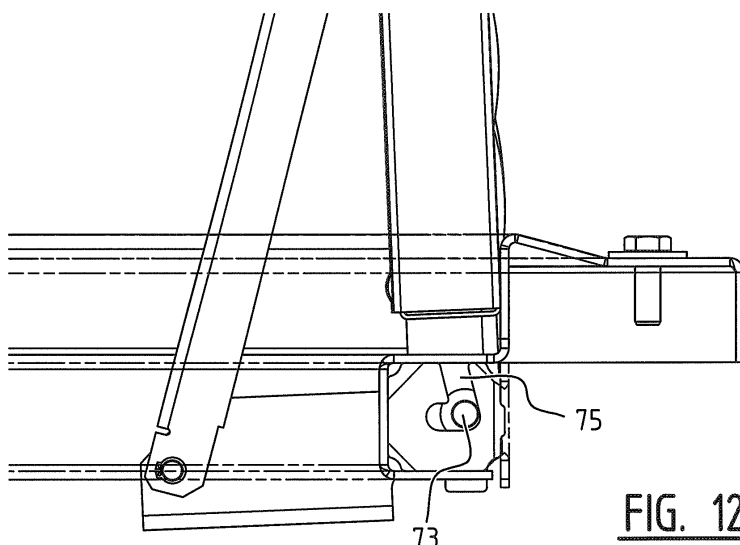


FIG. 12



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 10 19 5746

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	NL 1 032 120 C2 (VCONSYST PARTICIPATIES B.V.) 8 January 2008 (2008-01-08)	1,7,8	INV. B65F1/14
A	* page 4, line 29 - page 6, line 7 * * figures 1,2 *	2-6	

X	FR 2 857 948 A1 (P. BOUCHER) 28 January 2005 (2005-01-28)	1,7,8	
A	* page 8, line 3 - page 9, line 4 * * figures 3-9 *	2-6	

X,P	EP 2 186 753 A1 (PAUL WOLFF GMBH) 19 May 2010 (2010-05-19) * paragraph [0055] - paragraph [0083] * * figures 1-3 *	1,2,7,8	

			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			B65F
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search The Hague		Date of completion of the search 28 March 2011	Examiner Smolders, Rob
<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)



Application Number

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CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing claims for which payment was due.

☐ Only part of the claims have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those claims for which no payment was due 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 those claims for which no payment was due.

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:

1-8

☐ The present supplementary 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 (Rule 164 (1) EPC).



**LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION
SHEET B**

Application Number

EP 10 19 5746

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: 1-8

Device for closing an opening in the ground surface from which an underground waste container has been removed, and method for lifting a waste container into and out of a ground level opening, wherein one or more pivotally arranged, upward foldable floor parts are urged from the folded-down position to the upward folded position by a spring construction arranged in each floor part.

2. claims: 9, 11, 12

Method for replacing a floor part of a device for closing an opening in the ground surface from which an underground waste container has been removed.

3. claim: 10

Method for carrying out inspection and/or maintenance of an opening in a ground surface provided with a device for closing an opening in the ground surface from which an underground waste container has been removed.

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

EP 10 19 5746

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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28-03-2011

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
NL 1032120	C2	08-01-2008	NONE	
FR 2857948	A1	28-01-2005	NONE	
EP 2186753	A1	19-05-2010	DE 202008015182 U1	08-04-2010
			EP 2279969 A2	02-02-2011