(19) Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets

(11) EP 2 371 243 A1

(12) EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43) Date of publication:
05.10.2011 Bulletin 2011/40

(51) Int Cl.:
A47C 31/11 *(2006.01)*

(21) Application number: **10177491.7**

(22) Date of filing: **17.09.2010**

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

(30) Priority: **02.04.2010 IT BG20100012 U**

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(54) Sofa slipcover

(57) A sofa slipcover 10 comprising a covering element of a seat or of a back of a sofa, said covering element substantially consisting of a quadrangular flap of fabric with elastic means fastened at the edges thereof, the length at rest of said elastic means being less than the length of the perimeter of said quadrangular flap of fabric.

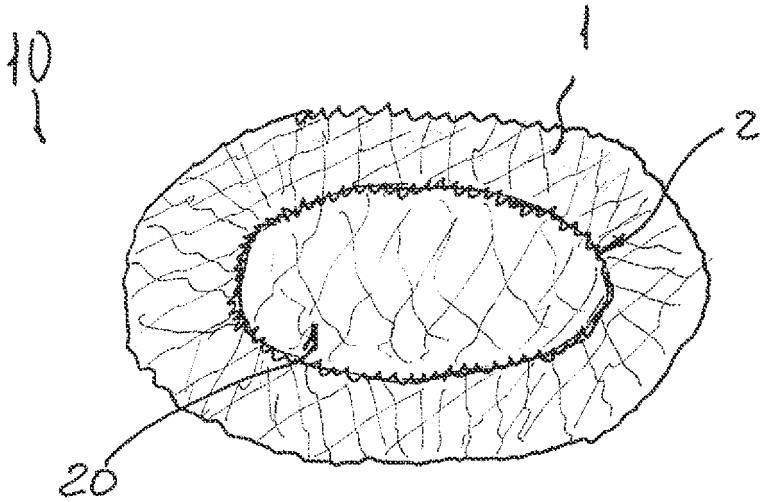

FIG. 1

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a sofa slipcover. In particular, the present invention relates to a sofa slipcover destined to cover a seat or a back of a sofa.

[0002] Sofa slipcovers, generally consisting of one or more flaps of fabric, are today widely used both to protect the sofa below, and to vary the appearance thereof according to tastes or aesthetic considerations.

[0003] Normally, sofa slipcovers destined to cover the entire sofa consist of portions of fabric shaped and stitched in a manner such as to adapt to the shape of the sofa, covering it fully.

[0004] In this case, complete covering of the sofa or armchair is normally obtained. In other words, with sofa slipcovers of this type not only the seats and the surface for supporting the back are covered, but the entire structure, thus including the arms and the side and rear portions.

[0005] To produce sofa slipcovers of this type operations are necessary to cut and sew the flaps of fabric in a manner such as to obtain a sofa slipcover that has the shape and dimensions required according to the type of sofa they are destined to cover. The production costs are therefore increased both by the times necessary for the cutting and sewing operations, and by the inevitable waste of fabric deriving therefrom.

[0006] Moreover, it is necessary to provide a range of sofa slipcovers of different shape and dimensions (as well as of different colour and pattern for aesthetic and commercial reasons) to adequately cover market demands.

[0007] Alternatively, covering of the sofa may only be partial and produced using cloths, generally rectangular, placed over the seat and/or back.

[0008] In this latter case, although forming a relatively simple solution, there are some problems, deriving from the fact that sofas do not always have a rectilinear structure. For example, in the case of corner sofas, the corner portion of the sofa can have a geometry (at a right angle, rounded or with particular angles) such as not to permit effective covering of said corner portion. In fact, using rectangular cloths these do not adapt to the geometry of the corner portion with consequent inadequate covering and/or aesthetic problems, such as creases and/or crumpling of the cloth.

[0009] Moreover, at times it may be useful to cover only a portion of the sofa, for example the seat and/or back, and none of the prior art sofa slipcovers is able to satisfy this need in an adequate manner, both from the point of view of costs and that of aesthetic result.

[0010] As can be seen from the above, prior art sofa slipcovers have a series of problems that have been attempted to be solved, but not in a fully satisfactory manner.

[0011] On the basis of these considerations, the main aim of the present invention is that of providing a sofa slipcover which makes it possible to solve the problems described.

[0012] Within this aim, an object of the present invention is to provide a sofa slipcover that allows effective covering of a seat or back of a sofa, regardless of the shape and dimensions thereof.

[0013] Another object of the present invention is to provide a sofa slipcover that requires a minimum number of processing operations, reducing production times and costs.

[0014] Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a sofa slipcover that minimizes fabric waste from processing.

[0015] Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a sofa slipcover which is highly reliable and relatively easy to produce at competitive costs.

[0016] This aim, and these and other objects which will be more apparent hereinafter, are achieved through a sofa slipcover which, according to the present invention, is characterized in that it comprises a covering element of a seat or of a back of a sofa, said covering element substantially consisting of a quadrangular flap of fabric with means fastened at the edges thereof, the length at rest of said elastic means being less than the length of the perimeter of said quadrangular flap of fabric.

[0017] It has in fact been seen that a sofa slipcover produced in this manner allows the seat or the back of a sofa to be covered in a simple and effective manner. Therefore, it is not necessary to cover the entire sofa, and it is possible to cover only the parts subject to greater wear, i.e. the seats and backs, of a sofa.

[0018] Due to the presence of elastic means, in fact, the flap of fabric assumes a sack-like shape which allows it to adapt easily to the structure to be covered.

[0019] Moreover, as shall be more apparent hereinafter, the use of particular elasticated fabrics, in particular bi-elastic fabrics with an embossed appearance, allows the sofa slipcover to be adapted to different sizes and dimensions.

[0020] Another important characteristic, above all in terms of processing times and costs, is given by the fact that the sofa slipcover according to the present invention can be produced with a minimum number of processing operations and substantially with production waste. It is in fact sufficient to provide a flap of fabric of suitable dimensions for the requirements and to fasten the elastic means to the perimeter thereof to obtain the sofa slipcover.

[0021] For the objects of the present invention, the term sofa must be intended in its most general meaning, therefore also including armchairs, regardless of the shape and dimensions it can have, and therefore regardless of the number of seats or of the fact that it is linear, with or without chaise, or corner.

[0022] Moreover, for the objects of the present invention, the terms "seat" or "back" of a sofa refer both to removable seats or backs (i.e. consisting of one or more cushions that can be removed) and to fixed seats or backs.

[0023] Further characteristics and advantages of the invention will be more apparent from the description of preferred, but not exclusive, embodiments of a sofa slipcover according to the present invention, shown by way of example in the accompanying drawings, wherein:

- Fig. 1 shows a general embodiment of a sofa slipcover according to the present invention;
- Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a portion of sofa, for example the cushion of a seat of an armchair), destined to be covered by a sofa slipcover according to the present invention;
- Fig. 3 is a perspective view of the sofa slipcover of Fig. 1 installed on the cushion of Fig. 2;
- Fig.4 is a perspective view of a first particular embodiment of a sofa slipcover according to the present invention;
- Fig. 5 is a perspective view of a second particular embodiment of a sofa slipcover according to the present invention.

[0024] With reference to the accompanying figures, the sofa slipcover 10 according to the present invention, in its most general embodiment, is characterized in that it comprises a covering element of a portion of seat 11 or of back 12 of a sofa, said covering element substantially consisting of a quadrangular flap of fabric 1 at the edges of which elastic means 2 are fastened. One of the peculiar characteristics of the sofa slipcover 10 according to the present invention is given by the fact that the length at rest of said elastic means 2 is less than the length of the perimeter of said quadrangular flap of fabric 1.

[0025] For the objects of the present invention, the term length at rest is intended as the length of said elastic means 2 when not under tension.

[0026] In other words, as is apparent in Fig. 1, as a result of fastening of said elastic means 2 to the edges of the quadrangular flap of fabric 1, said quadrangular flap of fabric 1 assumes a substantially sack-like shape, as the reduced length of said elastic means 2 with respect to the perimeter of the quadrangular flap of fabric 1 obliges said flap 1 to assume said shape.

[0027] In particular, the sack-like shape of the quadrangular flap of fabric 1 defines an inner space 20 destined to be occupied by a seat or by a back of a sofa. With reference to the accompanying Figs. 2 and 3, in the most simple case, the sofa slipcover 10 according to the present invention can, due to its sack-like shape and to the presence of the elastic means 2, be inserted over a cushion 110, for example of the seat of an armchair, obtaining the result shown in Fig. 3. In this latter figure, the cushion 110 is shown overturned, i.e. showing the part destined to be placed on the supporting structure of the sofa or armchair.

[0028] The sofa slipcover 10 according to the present invention is particularly useful when it is destined to cover sofas with a plurality of seats. In these cases, as shown in the accompanying Figs. 4 and 5, the sofa slipcover 10 can conveniently cover the entire portion of back 12 or of seat 11 of said sofa.

[0029] In particular, as shown in Fig. 4, the sofa slipcover 10 can be used to cover the entire portion of back 12 of a sofa. Alternatively, as shown in Fig. 5, the sofa slipcover 10 can be used to cover the entire portion of seat 11 of a sofa. It is naturally possible, using two sofa slipcovers according to the present invention, to cover both the seat 11 and the backrest 12, leaving uncovered the arms and the external part of the structure, which are less subject to wear.

[0030] In the examples of the aforesaid Figs. 4 and 5, the seat 11 consists of two removable cushions 111 and 112, while the back 12 is fixed. As can be seen in Fig. 5, both cushions 111 l and 112 of the seat are contained in the same sofa slipcover 10, while in Fig. 4 the entire fixed back 12 is covered by the sofa slipcover 10. Naturally, three or more cushions could also be covered with the same sofa slipcover.

[0031] In practice, the sofa slipcover 10 according to the present invention can be used regardless of the type of seat or back (fixed or with removable cushions) and regardless of the number of seats (or cushions) defined on said seat 11 and back 11. Moreover, the sofa slipcover 10 according to the present invention can also be used both on sofas with linear structure and on sofa with non-linear structures, such as sofas with chaise or corner sofas.

[0032] Advantageously, the sofa slipcover according to the present finding can be produced with a flap of fabric that is of elasticated type.

[0033] In this manner, the sofa slipcover can be adapted perfectly to the shape and dimensions of the portion of sofa it is destined to cover, avoiding the formation of folds and creases typical of conventionally used strips of fabric.

[0034] Moreover, using an elasticated fabric with high elasticity, for example a fabric extensible to between 120% and 200% of its dimension at rest, it is possible to adapt it easily to a larger number of possible uses with respect to conventional sofa slipcovers. Although conforming to certain standards, the measurements of backs (height, length and thickness) and of seats (depth, length and thickness) can vary from sofa to sofa, even if said sofas have the same number of seats.

[0035] The use of an elasticated fabric allows any dimensional variations to be compensated, making the sofa slipcover according to the present invention perfectly adaptable to a larger number of models of sofa with respect to sofa slipcovers of conventional type. This makes it possible to reduce the range of measurements that must be provided to satisfy market requirements to a relative limited number of examples, reducing the production, storage and marketing costs of the product.

[0036] According to a particularly preferred embodiment of the sofa slipcover 10 according to the present invention, said quadrangular flap of fabric 1 is produced with a bi-elastic fabric with an embossed appearance.

[0037] In this manner it is possible to combine the effects of elasticity of the flap of fabric 1 previously described with a particularly pleasing appearance.

[0038] Typically, said bi-elastic fabric with embossed appearance comprises a mesh of elastic threads consisting of a first series of elastic threads sewn in a state of tension in warp direction and of a second series of elastic threads arranged in weft direction and fastened to said fabric at the level of said threads arranged in warp direction, the length of a section of weft thread between its fastening points to the fabric in a condition with tension released being less than the length of the corresponding section of fabric.

[0039] Advantageously, said mesh of threads of said bi-elastic fabric with embossed appearance consists of cells whose side measured in warp direction has dimensions between 0.5 and 10 centimetres. More preferably, said side has dimensions between 1 and 6 centimetres. A particularly homogeneous embossing is achieved when the dimension of said side is in the interval between 1.5 and 3 centimetres.

[0040] According to a particularly preferred embodiment of the sofa slipcover 10 according to the present invention, in said bi-elastic fabric with embossed appearance the fastening points of each thread in weft direction are produced at the level of two adjacent warp threads.

[0041] The elastic threads used to produce the fabric can be of different structure and material. In a preferred embodiment, these consist of an elastomeric core coated externally with a spirally wound nylon or polyethylene to provide greater mechanical strength. The use of elastomers made of latex or of a material selected from polyester or polyether proved to be particularly advantageous. However, the use of any other functionally equivalent material falls within the objects of the present invention.

[0042] From the point of view of production, the sofa slipcover 10 according to the present invention can advantageously be obtained starting from a quadrangular flap of fabric 1 with an essentially rectangular plan.

[0043] Along the edges of said flap 1 there are fastened, for example by stitching, the elastic means 2 (for example consisting of an elastic tape or cord), directly obtaining the sack-like structure of said flap 1.

[0044] Therefore, operations to cut and sew together a plurality of flaps of fabric, typical of sofa slipcovers of conventional type, are no longer necessary, with consequent saving in terms of processing times and costs. Moreover, there is practically no processing waste.

[0045] The sofa slipcover according to the invention fully achieves the aforesaid aims and the objects. In particular, it is easily adaptable to a large number of situations and can be obtained with an extremely small number of processing steps.

[0046] On the basis of the description provided, other characteristics, modifications or improvements are possible and evident to a person skilled in the art. These characteristics, modifications and improvements should therefore be considered a part of the present invention. In practice, the materials used and the contingent dimensions and forms can be any, according to requirements and to the state of the art.

Claims

1. A sofa slipcover (10) **characterized in that** it comprises a covering element of a seat (11) or of a back (12) of a sofa, said covering element substantially consisting of a quadrangular flap of fabric (1) with elastic means (2) fastened at the edges thereof, the length at rest of said elastic means (2) being less than the length of the perimeter of said quadrangular flap of fabric (1).

2. The sofa slipcover (10) according to claim 1, **characterized in that** as a result of fastening of said elastic means (2) said quadrangular flap of fabric (1) assumes a substantially sack-like shape.

3. The sofa slipcover (10) according to claim 1 or 2, **characterized in that** said quadrangular flap of fabric (1) is produced with an elasticated fabric.

4. The sofa slipcover (10) according to claim 3, **characterized in that** said elasticated fabric of said flap (1) is extensible to between 120% and 200% of its dimension at rest.

5. The sofa slipcover (10) according to claim 3 or 4, **characterized in that** said elasticated fabric is a bi-elastic fabric with an embossed appearance.

6. The sofa slipcover (10) according to claim 5, **characterized in that** said bi-elastic fabric with embossed appearance comprises a mesh of elastic threads consisting of a first series of elastic threads sewn in a state of tension in warp direction and of a second series of elastic threads arranged in weft direction and fastened to said fabric at the level of said threads arranged in warp direction, the length of a section of weft thread between its fastening points to the fabric in a condition with tension released being less than the length of the corresponding section of fabric.

7. The sofa slipcover (10) according to claim 6, **characterized in that** said mesh of threads of said bi-elastic fabric with embossed appearance consists of cells whose side measured in warp direction has dimensions between 0.5 and 10 centimetres.

8. The sofa slipcover (10) according to claim 6 or 7, **characterized in that** in said bi-elastic fabric with embossed appearance the fastening points of each thread in weft direction are produced at the level of

two adjacent warp threads.

9. The sofa slipcover (10) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** quadrangular flap of fabric (1) has an essentially rectangular plan.

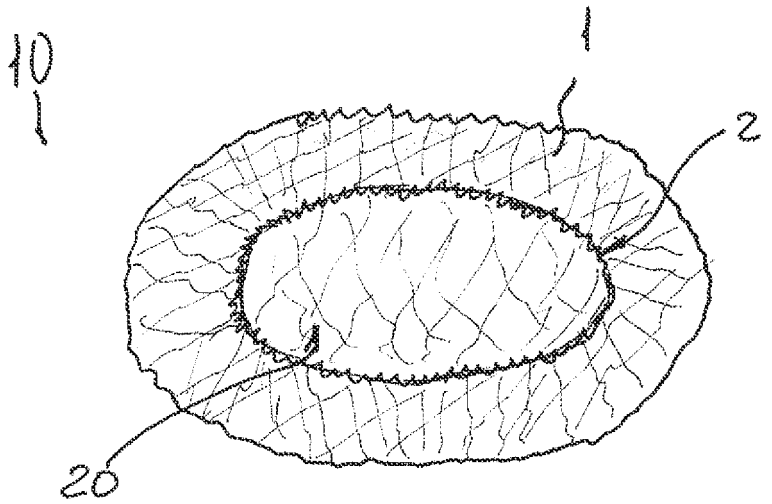

FIG. 1

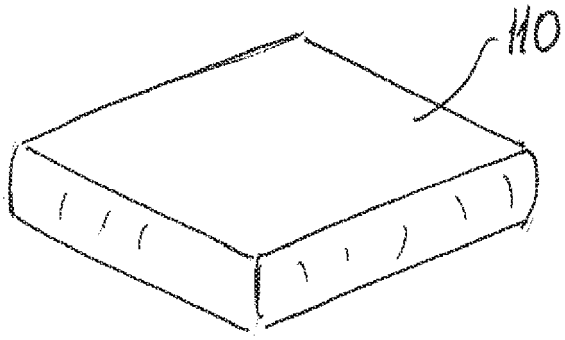

FIG. 2

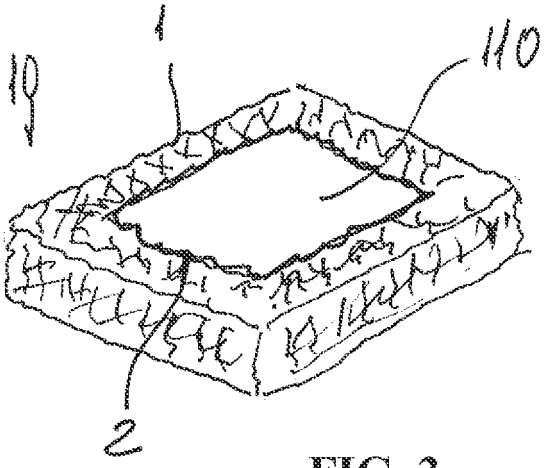

FIG. 3

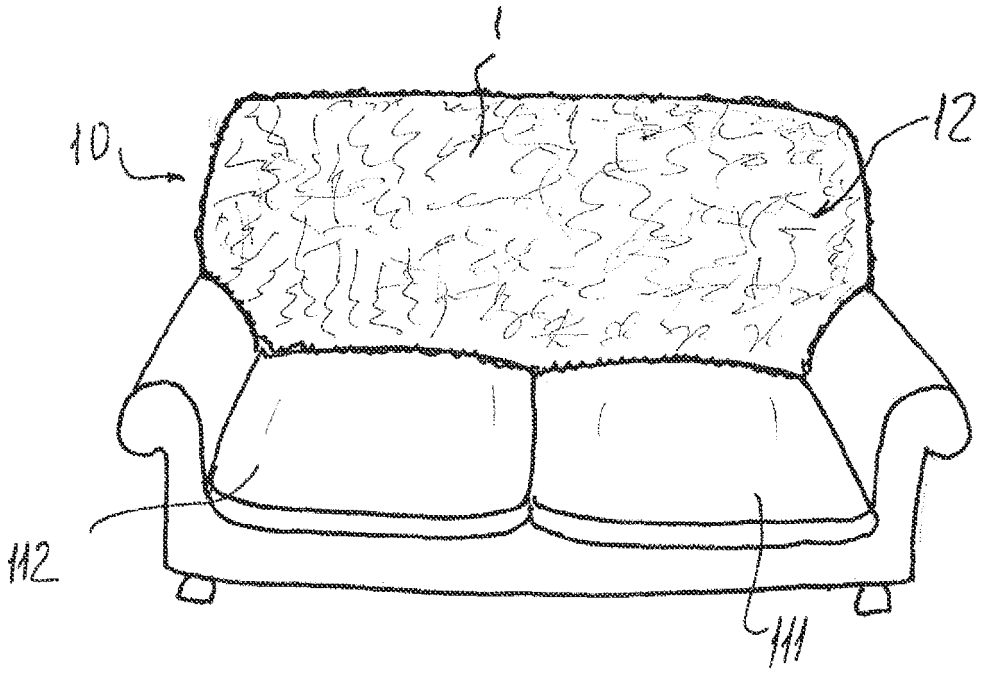

FIG. 4

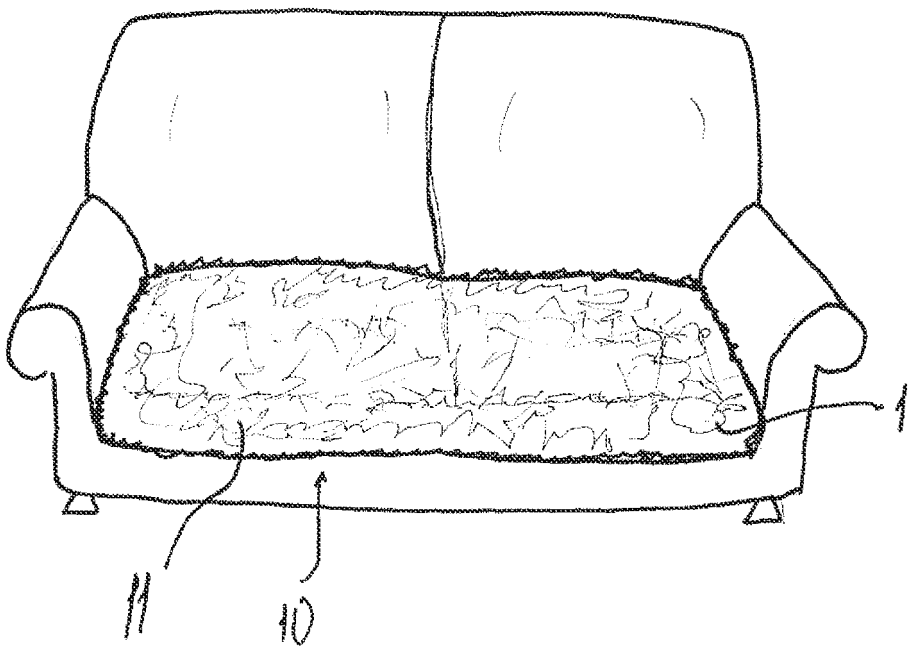

FIG. 5

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 10 17 7491

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 2009/126109 A1 (LEE MYOUNG JUN [US]) 21 May 2009 (2009-05-21) * paragraph [0029] - paragraph [0037] * -----	1-5,9	INV. A47C31/11
X	DE 298 15 057 U1 (GERHARD RETTER AUTOINNENAUSSTA [DE]) 8 October 1998 (1998-10-08) * page 5 - page 6 * * figures * -----	1-5,9	
X	US 5 046 207 A (CHAMBERLAIN W JAMES [US]) 10 September 1991 (1991-09-10) * paragraph [0002] * * figures 1-3 * -----	1-5,9	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC) A47C

The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
Munich	22 November 2010	MacCormick, Duncan

CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS

X : particularly relevant if taken alone
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EPO FORM 1503 03.82 (P04C01)

ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO. EP 10 17 7491

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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