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(54) Package for tobacco related articles

(57) A package for tobacco related articles comprising a container and a lid is provided. The lid is pivotably hinged on the container. The package may further comprise at least two tabs. The tabs may be hingedly coupled on the package. At least a first tab and a second tab are arranged to be separate. The tabs are further arranged to have an offset between each other. A first free end of a first tab and a second free end of a second tab sequentially slip over a step in a surface of a wall of a package. When the lid is swiveled from an opened position to closed position, the package produces a noise having at least two sound events.

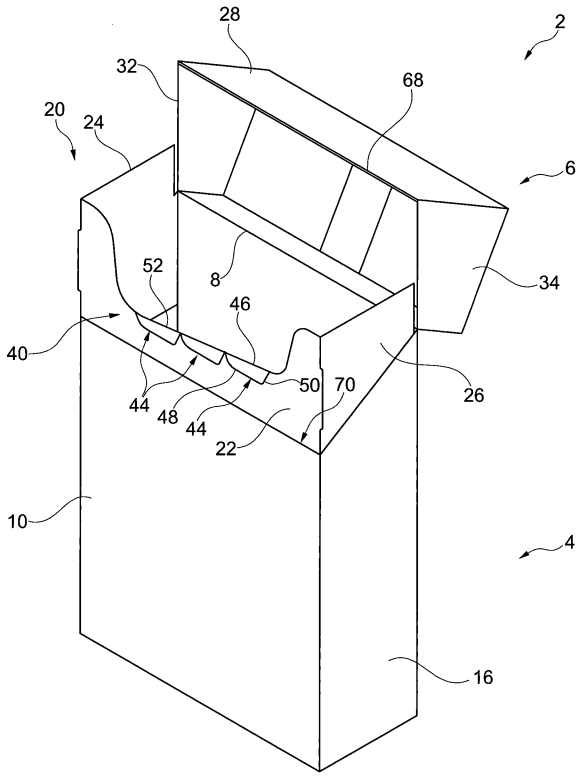

Fig. 1

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Description

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The invention relates to a package for tobacco related articles comprising a container and a lid, which is pivotably hinged on the container, wherein the package further comprises at least two tabs.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Tobacco related articles, in particular smoking articles like cigarettes or cigarillos, are often contained in disposable packages having a substantially cuboid or parallelepiped shape. A widespread type of cigarette package is the hinged-lid package. This type of package comprises a front wall and a rear wall and a pair of smaller longitudinal side walls. The walls of the package project substantially perpendicular from a bottom wall and surround a compartment for accommodating the tobacco related articles.

[0003] A classical top opening hinged-lid package has an access opening, which is arranged opposite to the bottom wall. The tobacco related articles are accessible through the access opening, which may be covered by a lid, which is typically hinged to the rear wall of the package.

[0004] Packages for tobacco related articles may provide additional features. For example, the package may produce an audible sound, when the lid is swiveled from an opened to a closed state. A pack comprising a sound member, which is located at the rear side of the package, is for example known from US 2005/0199517.

[0005] WO 2012/114082 discloses a package for smoking articles comprising a container portion and a lid hingedly connected to the container portion to enclose a space defined by the container portion when the lid is closed. The lid includes an end portion and a wall extending from the end portion that overlaps a wall of the container portion when closed. The package further comprises a flap extending from a face of one of the walls having a free end, and a cut-out formed in the other of said walls. One of the cut-out or the free end of the flap has a first edge and a second edge, the first edge being offset from the second edge such that, when the lid is moved to a closed position, said first edge locates over the free end of the flap or the cut-out before the second edge locates over the free end of the flap or the cut-out. One disadvantage of this package is that there is only one flap or one cut-out so that the stability of the walls of the package and the flexibility of producing discrete noise is limited.

[0006] Furthermore, hinged-lid packages have the tendency to stay not properly closed as soon as an outer wrapping is removed and the lid was initially opened. This effect is known as "yawning" or "smiling" of the package. It may be desirable to secure the lid in closed position and / or to provide a customer with an audible feedback indicating the correct closing of the package.

[0007] GB 2 488 595 discloses a package for smoking articles. The package has a lid hingedly connected to a container, the lid having an end and a wall extending from the end overlapping a first container wall when closed and having a locking part. The container wall has a locking element locating over a part and a recess extending from an upper edge of the wall. The lower edge of the recess is spaced further from the upper edge of the wall than locking element, or extends from an upper edge of the first container wall into a second container wall. Alternatively a tab extends from a lower edge of a closure label on an enclosure for wrapping the cigarettes may locate against the locking element. The locking element may be a flap cut out of the container wall which engages a tab adhered on the inside of the lid. Ears in the sides of the container may also aid in keeping the lid closed. The recess provides easy access to the cigarettes. The problem with this package is that there is no reliable indication that the package is safely closed.

SUMMARY

[0008] It is an object of the invention to provide an improved package for tobacco related articles, which produces an audible sound.

[0009] In one aspect of the invention, a package for tobacco related articles is provided, which comprises a container, a lid and at least two tabs, which are pivotably hinged on the package. The lid is pivotably hinged on the container for opening and closing an access opening, which provides access to the tobacco related articles in the package. The at least two tabs are separate from each other. In other words, there is a distance between the tabs. The separate tabs are hinged in that they are independently pivotable. Furthermore, the tabs are arranged to have an offset. A first free end of the first tab and a second free end of the second tab sequentially slip over a step in a surface of a wall of the package. The tabs sequentially slip over the step because their free ends are arranged to have an offset. The tabs slip over the step when the lid is swiveled from the opened position to the closed position. Upon this movement of the lid, they produce a noise having at least two discrete sound events.

[0010] When the terminal edges of the tabs slip over the step, they strike against the wall of the package and produce an audible "click" or "snap" noise. The package offers an unexpected and surprising functionality. The audible noise may further indicate that the package is properly closed. The tabs may engage the step to hold the lid in its properly closed position. This may avoid the undesired "yawning" or "smiling" effect.

[0011] According to an advantageous embodiment of the invention, the wall of the package comprises at least two windows. The windows are closed on one side. The tabs and the windows may be arranged to correspond to each other, which means that for each tab there is a cor-

responding window. An edge of each window forms a section of the step in the wall of the package. The windows may be formed by cut-outs in the surface of the wall. The windows may be closed in that a further wall is arranged behind the cut-outs. Advantageously, the windows will not reduce the mechanical stability of the wall, because they are half closed.

[0012] In another advantageous embodiment of the invention, the at least two tabs are vertically offset to each other. A "vertical" offset is a distance between the terminal edges of the tabs, wherein this distance is measured in a vertical direction, when the package is in upright position and the lid is located at the top. The vertical offset may be a distance, which is measured along a direction that is substantially perpendicular to the free ends of the tabs.

[0013] The vertical offset between the free ends of the tabs may be due to a different length of the tabs. At least the first tab and the second tab may have a different length. Alternatively, the tabs may have a substantially equal length. In this case, the tabs are arranged along an oblique direction to define the vertical offset between their free ends. In particular, this oblique direction may include an angle with the step. According to both embodiments, the free ends of the tabs will sequentially slip over this step to produce the audible sound, when the lid is closed.

[0014] According to an embodiment of the invention, the container of the package may surround an interior space for accommodating the tobacco related articles. The interior space has an access opening, which is at least partially surrounded by an inner frame. This inner frame at least partially projects into the interior space and surrounds the access opening at least partially. An inner surface of a front wall of the lid abuts an outer surface of a front wall of the inner frame, when the lid is in the closed position.

[0015] A package according to this embodiment of the invention may comprise tabs, which are pivotably hinged on the front wall of the inner frame. In particular, the at least two tabs are pivotably hinged on an upper edge of the front wall of the inner frame. This upper edge may be adjacent to the access opening of the container. It may be a cut-out recess, as commonly known for hinged lid packages. However, in contrast to a classical hinged-lid package, the upper edge of the inner frame projects along an oblique direction, according to this embodiment of the invention. The at least two tabs are pivotably hinged on the upper edge of the inner frame, consequently, the tabs are also arranged along this oblique direction.

[0016] In other words, the at least two tabs can be pivotably hinged on an upper edge of the front wall of the inner frame, wherein this upper edge projects along a direction, which is tilted (oblique) with respect to the step that is arranged in the inner surface of the front wall of the lid.

[0017] Furthermore, the package may comprise a stripe member, which is arranged on the inner surface of the front wall of the lid. The stripe member comprises at least two cut-outs to form at least two windows. A lower edge of each window forms a section of the step, which is provided in the inner surface of the front wall of the lid, according to this embodiment of the invention. The lower edge of the window may be adjacent to a lower edge of the lid. This edge of the lid abuts the front wall of the inner frame, when the package is closed. In particular, all windows may be arranged in that their lower edges have a substantially identical distance to the edge of the lid. In other words, the windows project along a horizontal direction and not in an oblique direction. Similar to the term "vertical", the term "horizontal" refers to a package in upright position having the access opening at the top.

[0018] According to further embodiments of the invention, the tabs and the windows may be arranged vice-versa. For example, the at least two tabs may be pivotably hinged on an inner surface of the front wall of the lid. Consequently, the at least two windows may be arranged on the inner frame. The front wall of the inner frame may comprise at least two cut-outs, which form the windows. Again, a lower edge of each window forms a section of the step. According to this embodiment, a lower edge of a window is adjacent to a junction between the inner frame and a main front wall of the package. The lower edges of the windows may have a substantially identical distance to this junction.

[0019] According to another aspect of the invention, a package for tobacco related articles is provided, which has a container, a lid and at least two tabs. Again, the tabs are separately hinged on the package to be independently pivotable. However, the tabs have a substantially equal length and they may be arranged along a horizontal direction, which is not an oblique direction. The tabs are configured to sequentially slip over a corresponding step, which is provided in a surface of a wall of the package. This step has at least two sections, which are arranged to have an offset. When the lid is swiveled from an opened position to a closed position, a first free end of a first tab and a second free end of a second tab will sequentially slip over a corresponding section of the step. This produces a noise having at least two sound events. The sound events may advantageously be discrete sound events.

[0020] Again, the package may be provided with at least two windows, which are closed on one side, according to another embodiment of the invention. Each window forms a section of the step. To be more precise, one edge of each window forms a section of the step. At least a first window and a second window are arranged along an oblique direction to define the offset between their edges.

[0021] The at least two tabs may be pivotably hinged on either the front wall of the inner frame or on the inner surface of the front wall of the lid. When the tabs are arranged on the inner frame, the package may further comprise a stripe member, which is arranged on the inner surface of the front wall of the lid. This stripe member

may comprise at least two cut-outs, which form the at least two windows. A lower edge of each window forms a section of the step. To allow the terminal edges of the tabs to sequentially slip over the step, a first lower edge of the first window and a second lower edge of the second window are offset to each other. There is a distance between these lower edges of the windows. Furthermore, the lower edges of the windows may have a different distance from a lower edge of the lid. This lower edge abuts the front wall of the inner frame, when the lid is closed.

[0022] When the at least two tabs are pivotably hinged on the lid, the front wall of the inner frame may comprise at least two cut-outs forming the windows. Again, the windows are closed on one side. A first lower edge of the first window and a second lower edge of the second window are offset to each other. They may have a different distance from a junction between the front wall of the inner frame and the main front wall of the package.

[0023] Among others, there are two main aspects of the invention. According to the first aspect of the invention, the tabs, in particular their terminal edges, are arranged along an oblique direction. The corresponding windows are arranged along a non-oblique and substantially horizontal direction. According to the second aspect of the invention, the windows instead of the tabs are arranged along an oblique direction. According to this latter aspect, the tabs are not arranged along an oblique direction but along a substantially horizontal direction. According to both aspects of the invention, the lids are separate and they are hinged to be independently pivotable. They slip over a step, which is provided by edges of the windows, one after the other to produce independent sound events.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0024] Further aspects and characteristics of the invention ensue from the following description of the preferred embodiments of the invention with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein

FIGs.1 and 2 are simplified perspective views showing an opened package for tobacco related articles, according to an embodiment of the invention,

FIG. 3 is a simplified side view of this package,

FIG. 4 is a simplified front side view of the opened package, according to the embodiment of the invention, and

FIG. 5 is a simplified perspective view showing the package in closed position.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF AN EXAMPLE EMBODIMENT

[0025] FIG. 1 and 2 are simplified perspective views showing a package 2 for tobacco related articles, according to an embodiment of the invention. FIG. 3 shows this package in a simplified side view.

[0026] The package 2 comprises a container 4 and a lid 6. By way of an example only, reference is made to a top opening hinged-lid package 2. Similarly, the following description of the package 2 applies other types of hinged-lid packages, for example to a side opening hingpd-lid package.

[0027] The lid 6 is pivotably hinged on the container 4 along a hinge line 8. The container 4 comprises a main front wall 10 and a main rear wall 12, which are substantially opposite to each other with respect to an interior space of the package 2. The interior space is for accommodating tobacco related articles, for example cigarettes or cigarillos (not shown). Furthermore, the container 4 comprises a first main side wall 14 and a second main side wall 16, which are also arranged to be substantially opposite to each other with respect to the interior space. The main front wall 10, the main rear wall 12, the first main side wall 14 and the second main side wall 16 project from a bottom wall 18, in a substantially perpendicular direction.

[0028] An inner frame 20 may be inserted into the interior space. It surrounds the access opening at least partially. The inner frame 20 comprises a front wall 22, a first lateral side wall 24 and a second lateral side wall 26. The lid 6 also comprises a front wall 28, a rear wall 30, a first side wall 32 and a second side wall 34, which project from a top wall 36. They may be arranged to be substantially perpendicular to the top wall 36.

[0029] The lid 6 may be swiveled around the hinge line 8 to open and close the package. FIGs. 1 to 4 show the package 2 in the opened state. FIG. 5 shows the package in the closed state. When the lid 6 is closed, an inner surface 38 of the front wall 28 of the lid 6 (FIG. 2) abuts an outer surface 40 of the front wall 22 of the inner frame 20. Furthermore, in the closed position, a lower edge 68 of the front wall 28 of the lid 6 abuts a junction 70 between the main front wall 10 of the container 4 and the front wall 22 of the inner frame 20.

[0030] The package 2 is provided with at least two tabs 44. By way of an example, the package 2 according to the embodiment comprises three tabs 44. However, a greater number of tabs 44 may be coupled on the package 2. The tabs 44 are pivotably hinged or coupled on the package 2. Each tab 44 comprises a first edge 46 and a terminal edge 48. The first edge 46 and the terminal edge 48 are opposite to each other. Furthermore, the tabs 44 comprise lateral edges 50, which are also substantially opposite to each other. For clarity reasons, only some of the edges 46, 48, 50 are provided with reference numerals.

[0031] The tabs 44 have a substantially trapezoid

shape. In particular, the first edge 46 of the tab 44 has a first length, which is greater than a second length of the terminal edge 48 of the tab 44. However, other shapes or designs of the tabs 44 may be found.

[0032] The tabs 44 are separate. They are hinged to be independently pivotable. The tabs 44 may be separate in that at least a part or section of neighbouring tabs has a distance between each other. According to the embodiment, the terminal edges 48 of neighbouring tabs 44 are spaced apart from each other. This is mainly achieved by the trapezoid shape of the tabs 44. However, other shapes may be found, which fulfil the requirement that the tabs 44 are separate.

[0033] Furthermore, the tabs 44 are arranged to have an offset. In other words, there is a distance between the terminal edges 48 of the tabs 44. This distance may be a vertical distance. In the front side view of FIG. 4, the package 2 is shown in upright position. A "vertical" direction refers to this position of the package 2. The first edges 46 of the tabs 44 are coupled on the front wall 22 of the inner frame 20. The tabs 44 are arranged along an oblique direction. In particular, the hinges of the tabs 44 project along an oblique direction. The tabs 44 are hinged on an upper or terminal edge 52 of the front wall 22 of the inner frame 20. The hinges of the tabs 44 are arranged along this terminal edge 52, which also project along an oblique direction.

[0034] When the lid 6 is swiveled around the hinge line 8 from the opened to the closed position, the terminal edges 48 of the tabs 44 sequentially slip over a step. According to the embodiment, the step is formed by the lower edges 58 of the windows 54 (FIG. 2). The inner surface 38 of the front wall 28 of the lid 6 comprises three windows 54. A stripe member 56 is arranged on the inner surface 38 of the front wall 28 of the lid 6. This stripe member 56 has three cut-outs for forming the three windows 54. The windows 54 may be closed on one side by the front wall 28 of the lid 6. They are open towards an interior of the lid 6. The stripe member 56 may be a separate member, which is arranged on the inner surface 38 of the front wall 28 of the lid 6. However, the stripe member 56 may be coupled to the front wall 28 of the lid 6 and may be folded along the lower edge 68 during manufacture of the lid 6.

[0035] The terminal edges 48 of the tabs 44 sequentially slip over the lower edges 58 of a corresponding window 54 so as to engage a corresponding window 54. Firstly, the terminal edge 48 of the left tab 44 slips over the lower edge 58 of the left window 54. This continues with the centre tab 44 and the centre window 54. Finally, the terminal edge 48 of the right tab 44 slips over the lower edge 58 of the right window 54. When the tabs 44 engage the windows 58 and the terminal edge 48 of the tab 44 slips over the lower edge 58 of the windows 54, a respective one of the tabs 44 produces an audible sound. These sound events are discrete, each tab produces a separate "click" noise. The three sound events may indicate that the lid 6 is in fully closed position.

[0036] In FIG. 4, there is a simplified front side view of the package 2, according to the embodiment. The hinge line 8 between the lid 6 and the container 4 may project along a first direction A, which is a horizontal direction. The tabs 44 are hinged on the front wall 22 of the inner frame 20 along an oblique direction. In other words, their first edges 46 project along a second direction B, which is the oblique direction. In FIG. 4, the first direction A is shown in a dashed / dotted line. The second direction B is shown in a dotted line. The first direction A and the second direction B include an angle α. The angle α may be an acute angle having a value between 5° and 15°. In particular, the angle α may be approximately equal to 10°. The angle α is greater than 0°. This provides that the tabs 44 are hinged along an oblique direction.

[0037] The hinge line 8, which defines the first direction A, and the hinges of the tabs 44, which define the second direction B, are located in different planes (FIG. 2, 3). Consequently, the angle α may be considered in a front side view towards the main front wall 10 of the package 2, as it is illustrated in FIG. 4. In other words, the angle α may be considered between a projection of the first direction A and a projection of the second direction B into a common projection plane. This projection plane may be substantially parallel to the main front wall 10 of the package 2.

[0038] The tabs 44 project along an oblique direction. Their terminal edges 48 are offset to each other, which means, there is a distance C between the terminal edges 48 of neighbouring tabs 44. For example, a distance C between the terminal edge 48 of the centre tab and the terminal edge 48 of the right tab is shown in FIG. 4. In other words, the terminal edges 48 of the tabs 44 may have different distances D1 from the junction 70 between the front wall 22 of the inner frame 20 and the main front wall 10 of the container 4.

[0039] The first edges 46 of the tabs 44 project along the oblique direction B. However, their terminal edges 48 may project along a non-oblique direction, which is substantially parallel to the first direction A. Similarly, the lower edges 58 of the windows 54 may project along this first direction A.

[0040] A distance D2 between the lower edges 58 of the windows 54 and the lower edge 68 of the front wall 28 of the lid 6 is substantially equal for all windows 54. Furthermore, the tabs 44 may have a similar or equal maximum length L. The maximum length L of the tabs 44 may be considered between the terminal edge 48 and the first edge 46.

[0041] In FIG. 5, there is a simplified perspective view showing the package 2 according to the embodiment of FIGs. 1 to 4, however, the package 2 is closed.

[0042] According to another embodiment of the invention, which is not shown in the drawings, the windows 54 may be arranged along the oblique direction B. This means that the windows 54 are arranged along a line that is tilted with respect to a mere horizontal direction. The tabs 44 may then be arranged along the horizontal

direction A. With respect to the production of the noise, a similar effect can be achieved compared to the situation when the tabs 44 are arranged along an oblique line and windows 54 are arranged along the horizontal line. The terminal edges 48 of the tabs 44 will slip over the lower edges 58 of the windows 54 one after the other to produce independent (discrete) "click" noises.

[0043] According to still another embodiment of the invention, which is also not shown in the drawings, the tabs 44 may be arranged on the inner surface 38 of the front wall 28 of the lid 6. In this embodiment, a front wall 22 of the inner frame 20 may be provided with windows 54, which are closed on one side. Similar to the embodiment in FIGs. 1 to 5, the tabs 44 may engage the windows 54, when the lid 6 is swiveled from the opened to the closed position.

[0044] The two embodiments may be further combined, which means that the windows 54 in the front wall 22 of the inner frame 20 are arranged along the oblique direction B and the tabs 44 are arranged along the horizontal direction A.

[0045] Although the invention has been described hereinabove with reference to specific embodiments, it is not limited to these embodiments and no doubt further alternatives will occur to the skilled person that lie within the scope of the invention as claimed.

Claims

1. A package for tobacco related articles, comprising a container and a lid, which is pivotably hinged on the container, the package further comprising at least two tabs, which are pivotably hinged on the package, wherein the at least two tabs are separately hinged to be independently pivotable and wherein the tabs are arranged to have an offset, such that a first free end of a first tab and a second free end of a second tab sequentially slip over a step in a surface of a wall of the package, when the lid is swiveled from an opened position to a closed position, to produce a noise having at least two sound events.

2. The package according to claim 1, being further configured such that the at least two sound events are descrete sound events.

3. The package according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the wall of the package comprises at least two windows, which are closed on one side, wherein an edge of each window forms a section of the step in the wall of the package.

4. The package according to anyone of the preceding claims, wherein at least the first free end of the first tab and the second free end of the second tab are vertically offset to each other.

5. The package according to claim 4, wherein at least the first tab and the second tab have a different length to define the vertical offset between their free ends.

6. The package according to claim 4, wherein at least the first tab and the second tab have a substantially equal length, and wherein the tabs are arranged along an oblique direction to define the vertical offset between their free ends.

7. The package according to claim 6, wherein the at least two tabs are pivotably hinged on the front wall of the inner frame.

8. The package according to claim 7, wherein the at least two tabs are pivotably hinged on an upper edge of the front wall of the inner frame, wherein this upper edge projects along an oblique direction, which is tilted with respect to the step, which is arranged in the inner surface of the front wall of the lid.

9. The package according to claim 8, wherein a stripe member is arranged on the inner surface of the front wall of the lid, the stripe member comprising at least two cut outs, which form at least two windows, wherein a lower edge of each window forms a section of the step in the inner surface of the front wall of the lid.

10. The package according to claim 6, wherein the at least two tabs are pivotably hinged on an inner surface of the front wall of the lid.

11. The package according to claim 10, wherein the front wall of the inner frame comprises at least two cut outs for forming at least two windows, wherein a lower edge of each window forms a section of the step in the front wall of the inner frame.

12. A package for tobacco related articles, comprising a container and a lid, which is pivotably hinged on the container, the package further comprising at least two tabs, which are pivotably hinged on the package, wherein the at least two tabs are separately hinged to be independently pivotable, and wherein a surface of a wall of the package is provided with a step having at least two sections, which are arranged to have an offset, such that a first free end of a first tab and a second free end of a second tab sequentially slip over a corresponding section of the step, when the lid is swiveled from an opened position to a closed position, to produce a noise having at least two sound events.

13. The package according to claim 12, being further configured such that the at least two sound events are descrete sound events.

14. The package according to claim 11, wherein the wall

of the package comprises at least two windows, which are closed on one side, wherein an edge of each window forms a section of the step and at least a first window and a second window are arranged along an oblique direction to define the offset between their edges forming the offset sections of the step.

15. The package according to anyone of claims 12 to 14, wherein at least the first tab and the second tab have a substantially equal length.

16. The package according to claim 15, wherein the at least two tabs are pivotably hinged on the front wall of the inner frame.

17. The package according to claim 16, wherein a stripe member is arranged on the inner surface of the front wall of the lid, the stripe member comprising at least two cut outs, which form the at least two windows, wherein a lower edge of each window forms a section of the step in the inner surface of the front wall of the lid, and wherein a first lower edge of the first window and a second lower edge of the second window have a different distance from a lower edge of the lid, which abuts the front wall of the inner frame, when the lid is in the closed position.

18. The package according to claim 15, wherein the at least two tabs are pivotably hinged on an inner surface of the front wall of the lid.

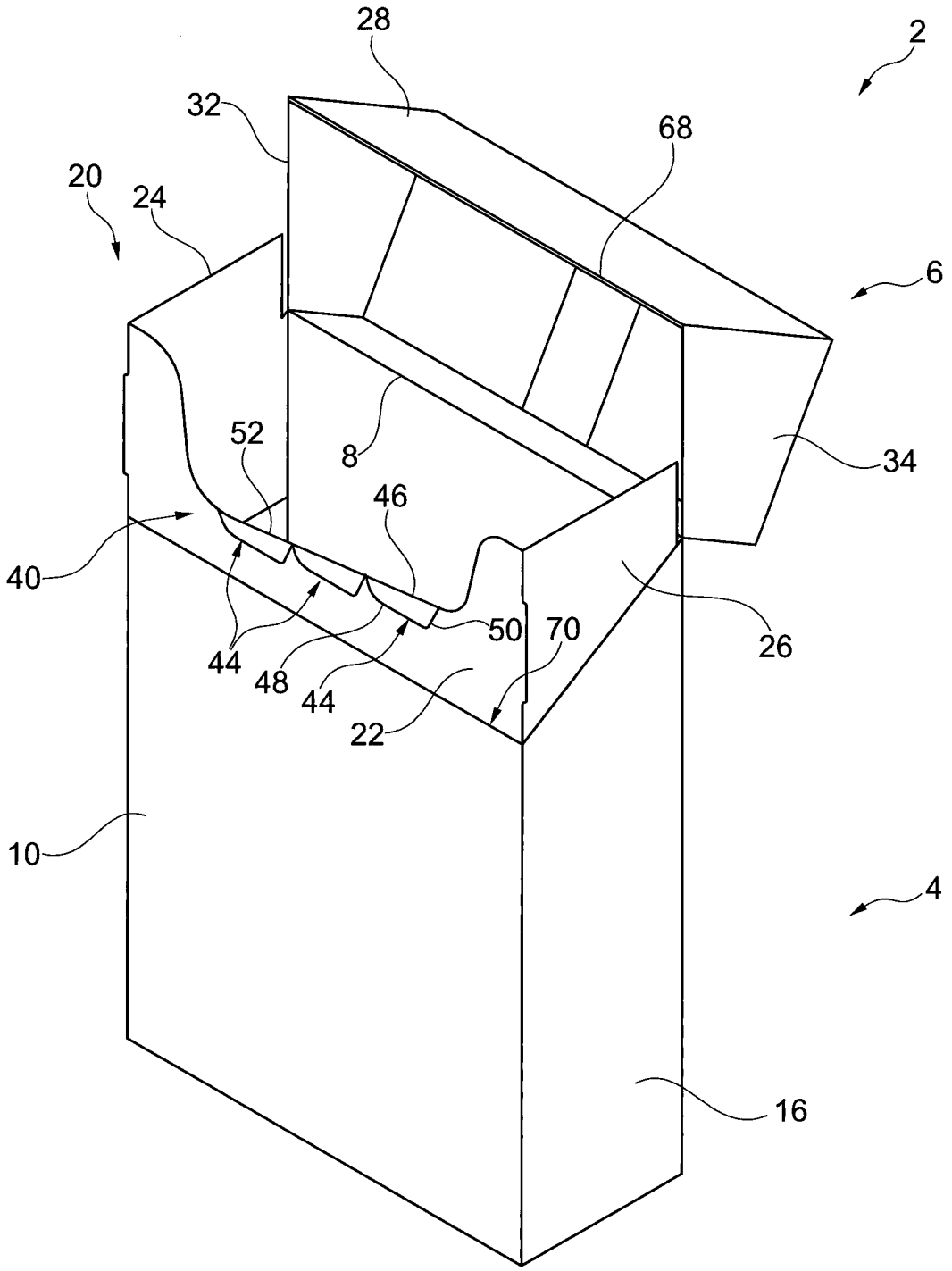

Fig. 1

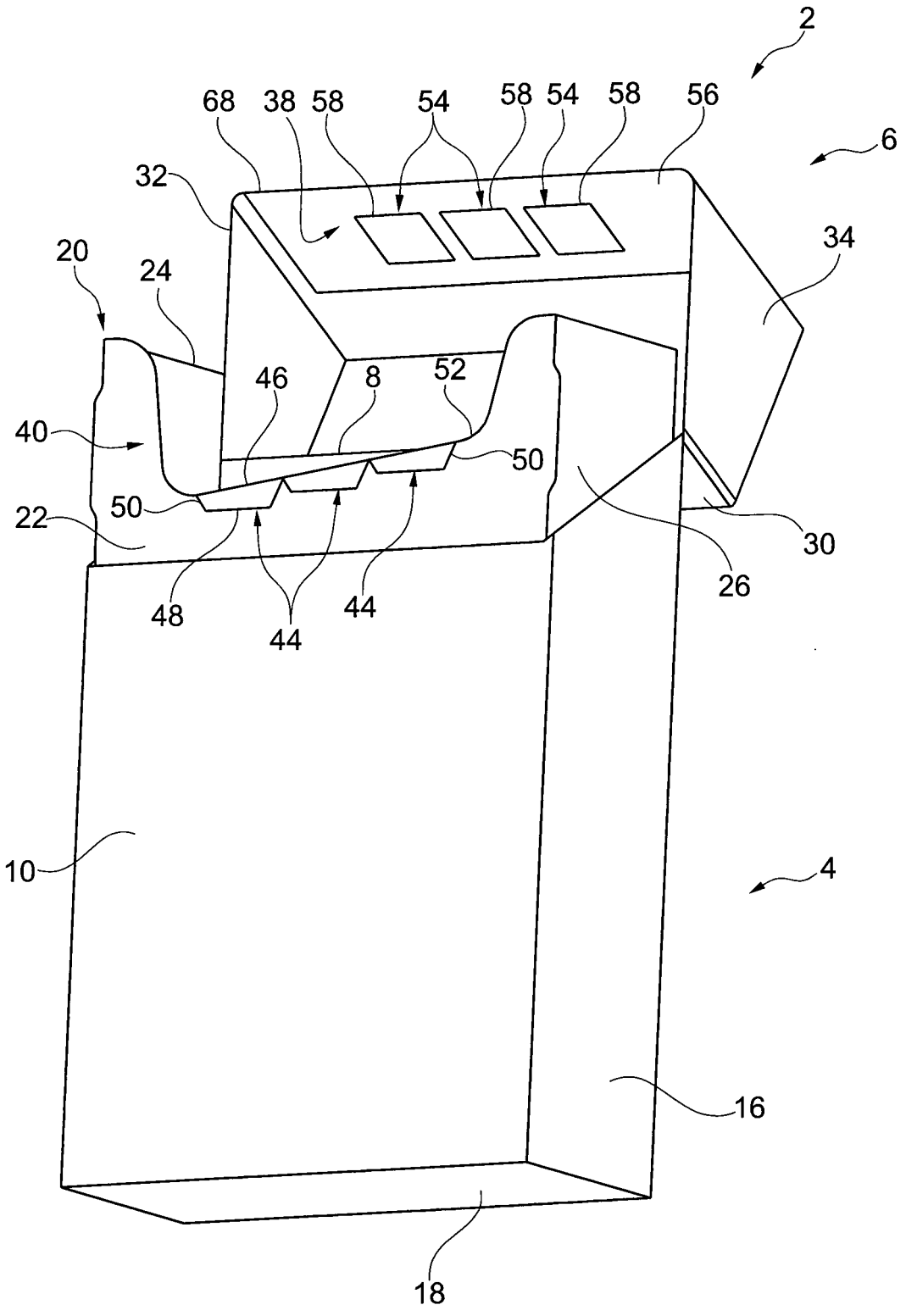
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Fig. 2

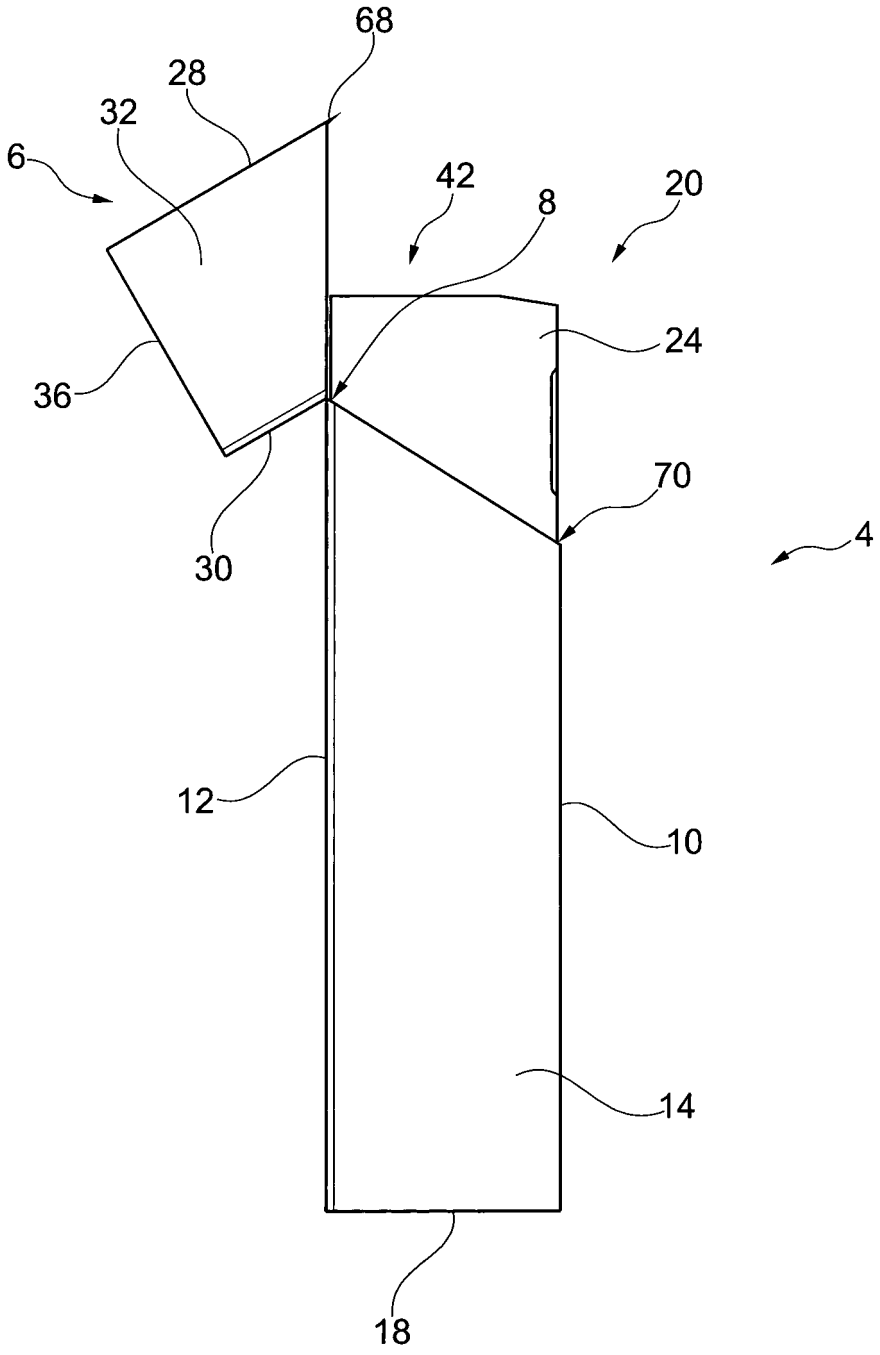

Fig. 3

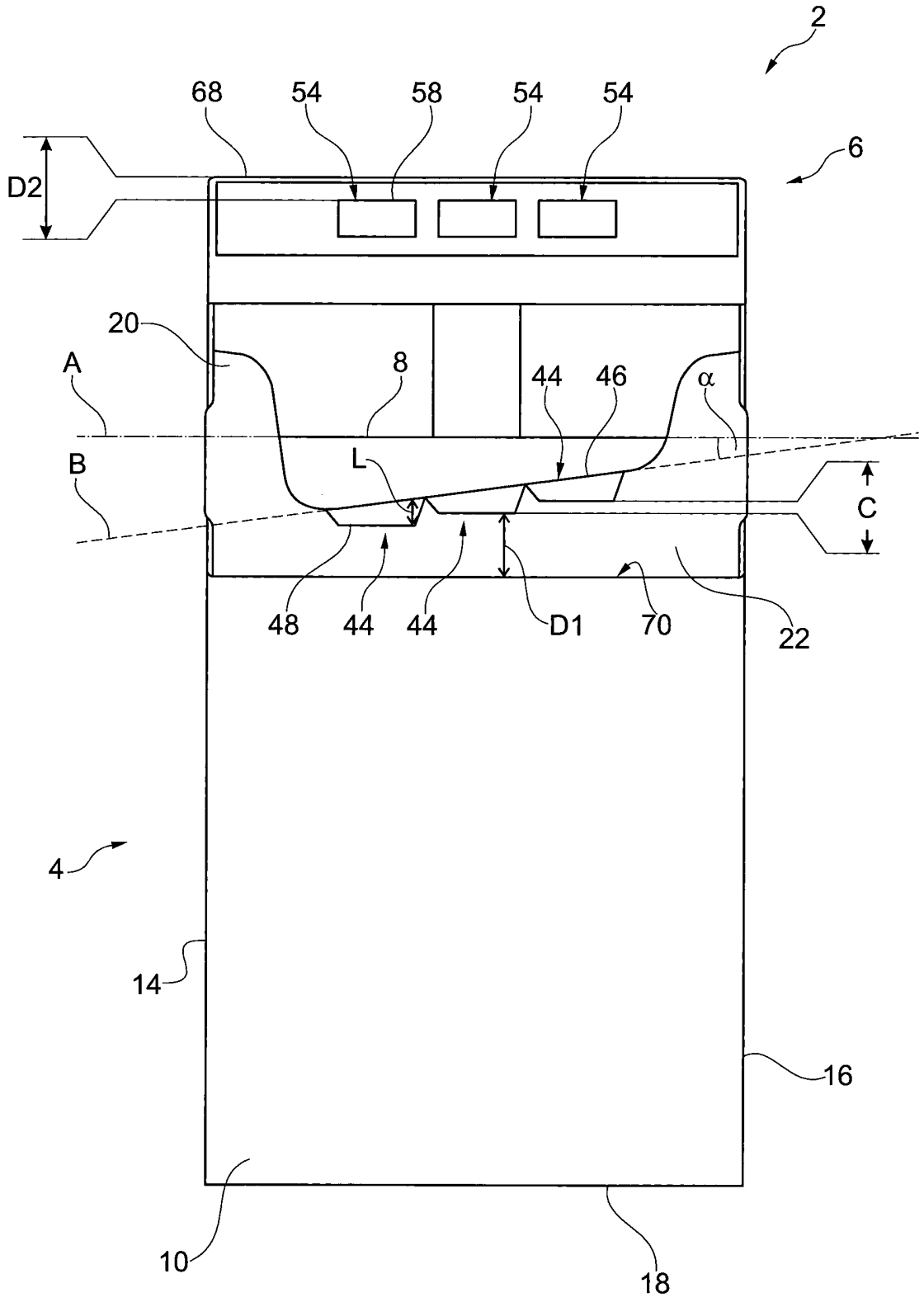

Fig. 4

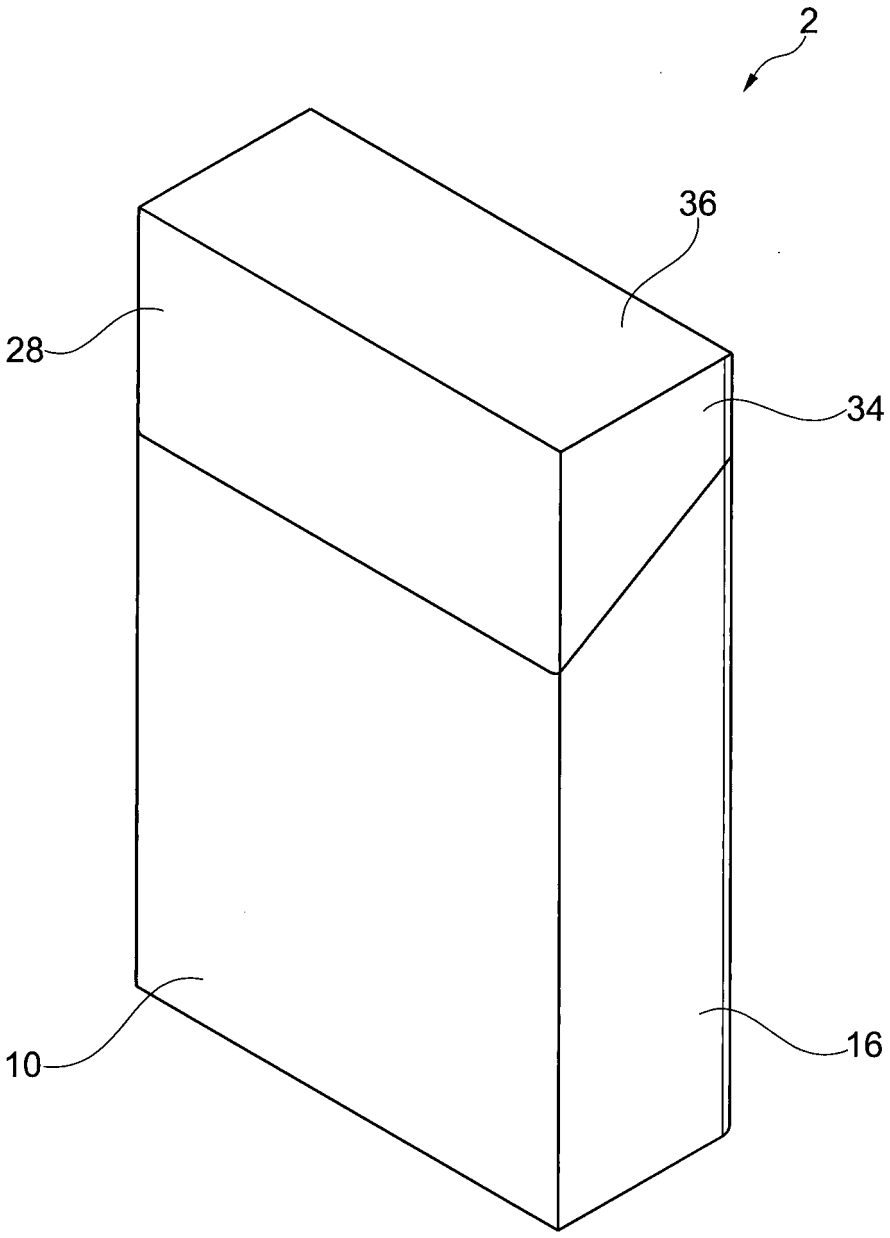

Fig. 5

Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 13 15 4839

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,D	WO 2012/114082 A1 (BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO CO [GB]; YOUNG RICHARD [GB]) 30 August 2012 (2012-08-30)	1-7, 10-18	INV. B65D5/66 B65D5/42
Y	* page 16, line 1 - page 19, line 30; figures 8-9 *	3	B65D85/10
Y	US 2008/230410 A1 (STEVEN JONES WESLEY [US] ET AL) 25 September 2008 (2008-09-25)	3	
A	* paragraph [0014] - paragraph [0018]; figures 1-2 *	12	

TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)

B65D

The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
Munich	21 June 2013	Derrien, Yannick

CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS

X : particularly relevant if taken alone
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REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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