



(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**

(43) Date of publication:
11.05.2016 Bulletin 2016/19

(51) Int Cl.:
A24F 23/02 (2006.01) B65D 33/18 (2006.01)

(21) Application number: **14192182.5**

(22) Date of filing: **07.11.2014**

(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 RS SE SI SK SM TR
Designated Extension States:
BA ME

(71) Applicant: **Reemtsma Cigarettenfabriken GmbH**
22761 Hamburg (DE)

(72) Inventor: **Bühr, Carmen**
22761 Hamburg (DE)

(74) Representative: **Glienke, Jens**
Gulde & Partner
Patent- und Rechtsanwaltskanzlei mbB
Wallstraße 58/59
10179 Berlin (DE)

(54) **Pouch with integrated adhesive tab**

(57) The present invention is directed to a pouch for tobacco comprising a first pocket and an integrated adhesive tab for releasably sealing the first pocket, wherein at least one wall of the pouch is at least partially formed

of a flexible sheet laminate composed of at least a first and a second layer, characterized in that the integrated adhesive tab constitutes an integral part of the first layer of the flexible sheet laminate.

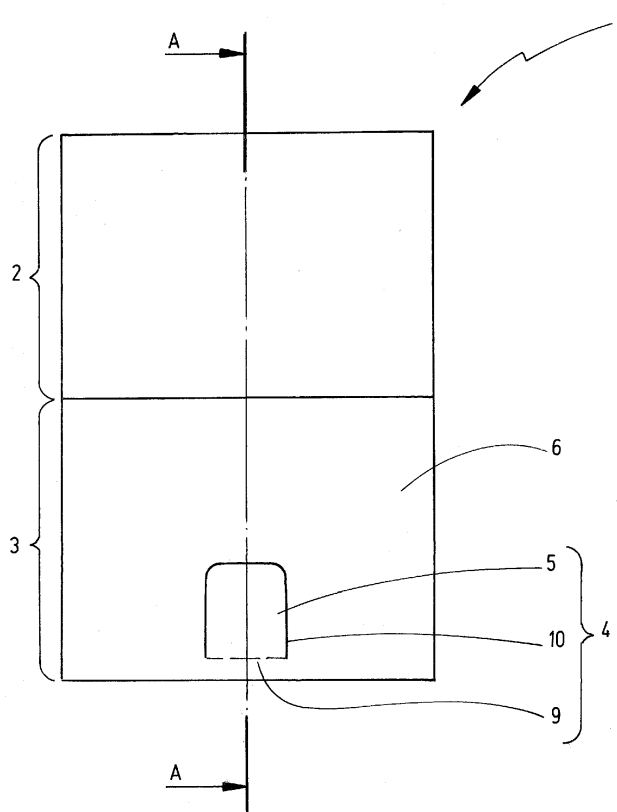


Fig.1

Description

[0001] The present invention is directed to a pouch for tobacco which comprises an integrated adhesive tab for releasably sealing the first pocket as well as to a method of producing the same.

[0002] Consumables like e.g. tobacco are often sold in form of a pouch package. Pouches for tobacco as well as methods of manufacturing the same are well known in the art. Exemplary embodiments of pouches for tobacco are disclosed in NL 1 001 119 C2 and EP 1 215 973 A1.

[0003] A typical example of a classical pouch for tobacco comprises a first pocket and a flap which allows for closing of the first pocket of the pouch by folding the flap over the pocket. Such pouches are filled with tobacco, sealed and wrapped for sale. In order to prevent the content of the pouch from spillage as well as loss of moisture and aroma, the pouches of the prior art comprise means for releasably close or seal the pocket of the pouch.

[0004] In the prior art, pouches are disclosed wherein an adhesive tab is used for releasably sealing the pocket of the pouch. Releasable adhesive tabs are usually subsequently applied to the flap of the pouch and exhibit a releasable adhesive on an inner surface of the adhesive tab in order to allow for releasably sealing the flap against the remainder of the pouch.

[0005] The pouch packages proposed in the prior art use releasable adhesive tabs which are made of additional material which is subsequently applied to the flap after formation of the pouch. However, the use of additional material is cost intensive, subsequently applied material may be lost during use of the pouch and additional application steps lead to more complicated manufacturing processes with increased failure rates.

[0006] An object of the present invention is to provide a pouch comprising a releasable adhesive tab which requires less material, is not lost and does not complicate manufacturing processes.

[0007] The present invention provides a pouch for tobacco comprising a first pocket and an integrated adhesive tab for releasably sealing the first pocket, wherein at least one wall of the pouch is at least partially formed of a flexible sheet laminate composed of at least a first and a second layer, characterized in that the integrated adhesive tab constitutes an integral part of the flexible sheet laminate, wherein the integrated adhesive tab comprises:

- a body formed of a part of the first layer of the flexible sheet laminate;
- releasable adhesive applied to at least part of an inner surface of the body facing a part of the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate corresponding to the part of the first layer forming the body and/or to at least part of an outer surface of the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate corresponding to the

part of the first layer forming the body; and wherein the integrated adhesive tab is at least partially peelable from the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate in order to allow for sealing the integrated adhesive tab against the remainder of the pouch.

[0008] In the pouch of the present invention, the integrated adhesive tab is formed into a part of one of the walls of the pouch which is formed of a flexible sheet laminate, e.g. the integrated adhesive tab is integrated into a flexible sheet laminate which is used to form a flap, front wall and/or back wall of the pouch. The body of the integrated adhesive tab is formed by one of the layers of the flexible sheet laminate. The body comprises an inner surface facing a part of the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate corresponding to the part of the first layer forming the body and an outer surface opposite to the inner surface. The integrated adhesive tab comprises a releasable adhesive applied to at least part of the inner surface of the body of the integrated adhesive tab and/or to the outer surface of the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate corresponding to the body of the integrated adhesive tab. The integrated adhesive tab is at least partially peelable from the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate such that the pouch can be sealed by peeling the integrated adhesive tab from the second layer and sealing the integrated adhesive tab against a part of the remainder of the pouch. The releasable adhesive on the inner surface of the integrated adhesive tab and/or on the outer surface of the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate corresponding to the body of the integrated adhesive tab ensures that the seal formed is releasable and can be formed multiple times at the same or different parts of the remainder of the pouch.

[0009] By doing so, the integrated adhesive tab is integrated into the pouch without the need for additional material and without the need for further application steps. Since the integrated adhesive tab is formed into pre-existing material of the pouch, the integrated adhesive tab does not stick-out from the surface of the pouch and the integrated adhesive tab can be positioned freely within the pouch. It is not necessary that the integrated adhesive tab is located at a position which allows for successful placement of additional material or which is easily accessible for subsequent application. The process of manufacturing the pouch of the invention is less prone to failure compared to the manufacturing process of prior art pouches comprising a separate adhesive tab because further application steps to arrange the extra material for the separate adhesive tab are avoided. Furthermore, since the adhesive tab of the present invention is physically integrated into one of the walls of the pouch, the integrated adhesive tab cannot be lost during use of the pouch. In the pouch of the present invention the integrated adhesive tab can be freely positioned and, thus can be located at a position which is less prone to pollution with content of the pouch like e.g. tobacco remainders.

[0010] The adhesive tab of the pouch of the present invention is integrated into the pouch, i.e. is formed of material which is required already for forming at least a part of one of the walls of the pouch. The integrated adhesive tab constitutes an integral part of the flexible sheet laminate used to form the pouch. Thus, the body of the integrated adhesive tab forms one piece with the remainder of the flexible sheet laminate of the pouch. This means that the integrated adhesive tab is still continuously connected with the remaining part of the first layer of the flexible sheet laminate of the pouch by a remaining physical connection. Thus, the integrated adhesive tab cannot be peeled off intentionally or unintentionally without destroying said remaining physical connection. Preferably, the integrated adhesive tab comprises a body which remains physically connected to the remaining flexible sheet laminate of the pouch such that the body is partially peelable from the second layer and can be hinged away along said physical connection. Thus, the releasable adhesive present on the inner surface of the body and/or on the outer surface of the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate corresponding to the body of the integrated adhesive tab can either be exposed or covered depending on whether the body is in contact with the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate corresponding to the part of the first layer forming the body or hinged away therefrom.

[0011] The pouch of the invention comprises at least one wall which is at least in part formed of a flexible sheet laminate. There are several types of pouches for tobacco known in the art. There are pouches known where the first pocket is formed only of a front and a back wall, like e.g. in a rolled pouch. Alternatively, the first pocket may be formed of a front wall, a back wall and a bottom wall as well as optionally one or more side walls, like e.g. in a block pouch, block-bottom pouch or stand-up pouch. Optionally, the pouch may comprise a flap which can be regarded as part of the front, back or side wall or which may be provided as separate wall of the pouch. The present invention is not limited to a certain type of pouch and in principle works with all known pouch architectures provided that at least a part of one wall of said pouch is formed of a flexible sheet laminate in which the adhesive tab is integrated.

[0012] Irrespective of the type of pouch, the pouch of the invention can be manufactured from one single piece of flexible sheet material (also called a blank), e.g. of flexible sheet laminate, or from more than one piece of flexible sheet material.

[0013] The pouch of the invention can be formed of a front wall and a back wall and optionally a flap. The pouch of the invention may further comprise a bottom wall and optionally one or more side walls to form the first pocket of the pouch. Preferably, the pouch of the invention comprises a front wall and a back wall opposed to each other and optionally a bottom wall, one or more side walls and/or a flap, wherein at least a part of one of the front wall, the back wall, the bottom wall, the side wall and the

flap is formed of the flexible sheet laminate.

[0014] The pouch of the invention may comprise a flap, a first pocket defined by opposing front and back walls and an integrated adhesive tab for releasably sealing the first pocket, wherein at least part of one of the flap, the front wall and the back wall is formed of a flexible sheet laminate composed of at least a first and a second layer, characterized in that the integrated adhesive tab constitutes an integral part of the flexible sheet laminate, wherein the integrated adhesive tab comprises:

- a body formed of a part of the first layer of the flexible sheet laminate;
- releasable adhesive applied to at least part of an inner surface of the body facing a part of the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate corresponding to the part of the first layer forming the body and/or to at least part of an outer surface of the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate corresponding to the body of the integrated adhesive tab; and wherein the integrated adhesive tab is at least partially peelable from the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate in order to allow for sealing the integrated adhesive tab against the remainder of the pouch.

[0015] The pouch of the invention preferably comprises a flap and a first pocket formed by a front wall and a back wall which are opposed to each other. Usually, the side edges of the front and back walls are sealed together, leaving a mouth region through which the interior of the first pocket of the pouch is accessible. The flap is arranged at the mouth region and allows for closing of the first pocket of the pouch by folding the flap over the pocket at or near the mouth. Usually, the flap has a length sufficient to cover the mouth of the first pocket. Preferably, the flap has a length which exceeds the length of the first pocket so that the flap can be efficiently wrapped around the first pocket in order to close the pouch.

[0016] The pouch may further comprise a reclosable seal provided at the mouth of the first pocket which makes it possible for the consumer to reseal the first pocket after accessing the content of the first pocket thereby further preventing loss of contents by spillage from the pocket. The reclosable seal also further reduces ingress of air into the first pocket and loss of moisture from the contents of the first pocket ensuring that the content remains moist and does not dry out. Thus, tobacco within the first pocket is kept fresh (by the preservation of aroma and moisture) over a prolonged period of time after the time of first use. Such a reclosable seal may be formed e.g. by use of a pressure sensitive adhesive, by a zip-based seal or the like.

[0017] The flap and the back wall of the pouch of the invention can be formed from a single piece of flexible sheet material, e.g. of a flexible sheet laminate. The front wall of the pouch can then be built from a second piece

of flexible sheet material, e.g. of a flexible sheet laminate. In such a case, the first pocket of the pouch can be formed by adhesively bonding a second smaller piece of flexible sheet material, e.g. of flexible sheet laminate, along three of its edges to the first sheet. At least one of the two pieces of flexible sheet material is made of flexible sheet laminate composed of at least a first and a second layer.

[0018] Alternatively, however, the pouch of the present invention is formed from a single piece of flexible sheet laminate by folding the front wall part over the back wall part and adhesively bonding the overlapping side edges of the front and back wall to form the first pocket of the pouch. The portion of the single piece of flexible sheet laminate extending beyond the mouth of the first pocket forms the flap which can then be used to fold over the first pocket.

[0019] Preferably, the flap, front and back wall of the pouch are all formed of a flexible sheet laminate and even more preferably, flap, front and back wall of the pouch are all formed of one single piece of flexible sheet laminate. If flap, front wall and back wall of the pouch of the invention are made from one single piece of flexible sheet laminate, e.g. in form of a blank, it is easily possible to arrange the integrated adhesive tab of the invention at any desired position and to provide a pre-prepared blank already comprising the integrated adhesive tab. Since the integrated adhesive tab does not stick-out from the surface of the flexible sheet laminate, such a pre-prepared blank can be identical in size and dimension compared to a classical blank without an integrated adhesive tab of the invention and, thus, such a pre-prepared blank can be processed further into the pouch of the invention by using conventional manufacturing means and processes. Folding as well as welding steps and weld position can remain unaltered compared to classical pouch manufacturing without the integrated adhesive tab of the invention. Thus, no further adaptation of downstream processing is needed in contrast to conventional pouches except that subsequent application of an adhesive tab can be omitted.

[0020] Alternatively, the front wall and the back wall of the pouch of the invention can be formed of separate pieces of flexible sheet material with the proviso that at least one of them is at least in part formed of a flexible sheet laminate. It is possible that only one, either the back wall or the front wall, is formed of a flexible sheet laminate wherein the other is formed of a different flexible sheet material which is not a flexible sheet laminate. This allows saving of material and costs as well as weight because the amount of flexible sheet laminate needed is reduced.

[0021] For the pouch of the present invention it is sufficient if only one wall of the pouch like e.g. one of the flap, the front wall and the back wall of the pouch, or a part thereof is formed of a flexible sheet laminate. The remaining parts of the pouch can be formed of a less complex and less expensive flexible sheet material. Thus, it is not necessary that the whole of a wall is con-

sisting of a flexible sheet laminate. In order to be formed of a flexible sheet laminate in the sense of the present invention, it is sufficient if at least that part of a wall of the pouch of the invention consists of a flexible sheet laminate in which the adhesive tab is integrated. In other words, the composition of a given wall of the pouch may be discontinuous in that a part of said wall consists of a flexible sheet laminate whereas the remainder of said wall consists of another flexible sheet material, provided the integrated adhesive tab is provided in the area of said wall which consists of a flexible sheet laminate.

[0022] The pouch of the invention comprises an integrated adhesive tab formed within the flexible sheet laminate, wherein the integrated adhesive tab comprises at least a body formed of a part of the first layer of the flexible sheet laminate and a releasable adhesive applied to at least part of an inner surface of the body facing a part of the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate corresponding to the part of the first layer forming the body and/or to at least part of an outer surface of the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate corresponding to the body of the integrated adhesive tab. The integrated adhesive tab is at least partially peelable from the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate in order to allow for sealing the integrated adhesive tab against the remainder of the pouch. The releasable adhesive may be present on the whole inner surface of the body and/or on the whole of the outer surface of the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate corresponding to the body of the integrated adhesive tab. The advantage of such an embodiment is that the entire surface is available for establishing a seal between the integrated adhesive tab and the remainder of the pouch and that the size of the tab can be kept at a minimum. Alternatively, the inner surface of the body of the integrated adhesive tab comprises a part which is void of releasable adhesive in order to allow for efficient peeling of the integrated adhesive tab. Preferably, an edge part of the inner surface of the body is void of adhesive. Thus, the consumer can easily peel off the integrated adhesive tab from any surface simply by grasping the tab on the edge part which is void of adhesive and by drawing off the tab from said surface. In the prior art suitable releasable adhesives are known. Among others, a pressure sensitive adhesive (PSA) can be used as releasable adhesive. A PSA will seal or adhere two surfaces, but allows their separation and later re-adherence.

[0023] The contours of the body of the integrated adhesive tab are not limited to any particular shape provided it is ensured that the body is at least partially peelable and is suitable to be effectively sealed against an outer surface of the remainder of the pouch. The contours of the body are preferably defined by a cut which extends through the first layer but not through the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate. Such cuts can be easily introduced by technology well known in the art. The cuts may be performed by physical cutting means or techniques like e.g. blade- or knife based cutting, liquid- or

sandjet cutting or laser based cutting. Definition of the contours of the body of the integrated adhesive tab in form of a cut can be easily realized, the depth of the cut can be controlled very precisely as well as any other dimension of the cut. Also positioning of the body in form of a cut is straight forward and not limited.

[0024] In order to protect the pouch of the invention against damage e.g. due to unexpectedly high forces applied to the first opening, the ends of the cut used to define the contours of the body of the integrated adhesive tab may be formed to prevent further tearing through a layer of the flexible sheet laminate. Preferably, the ends are designed in the form of a hook or a branched slit. By doing so, the risk of undesired pull-out of the integrated adhesive tab is reduced and the life-time of the pouch is extended.

[0025] In order to avoid further post-manufacturing steps, it is advantageous if in the area where the integrated adhesive tab is formed, the first and the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate are not permanently laminated together. By doing so, it is ensured that the integrated adhesive tab is ready to be coated with adhesive upon definition of the contours of the body by a cut. Preferably, the flexible sheet laminate does already comprise a releasable adhesive between the first and the second layer in the area where the integrated adhesive tab is to be formed.

[0026] As already outlined above, the integrated adhesive tab is not limited in location or position within the pouch of the invention. Preferably, the integrated adhesive tab is arranged on the pouch such that the first pocket is closable by sealing the integrated adhesive tab against a surface of the pouch. Preferably, the integrated adhesive tab is sealed against a surface of the pouch by bringing the inner surface of the body of the integrated adhesive tab comprising the releasable adhesive in contact with an outer or inner surface of the remainder of the pouch.

[0027] The integrated adhesive tab may be arranged on an inner side of the flap of the pouch such that the flap can be easily sealed against an outside surface of the remainder of the pouch when the pouch is closed by folding the flap. If the integrated adhesive tab is arranged in this manner, the pouch always allows for proper closing by the flap irrespective of the amount of content present in the first pocket of the pouch.

[0028] Alternatively, the integrated adhesive tab may be located on the outside of the pouch of the invention such that the integrated adhesive tab is accessible from the outside when the pouch is to be closed by the flap.

[0029] The pouch of the invention is formed of a flexible sheet material with the proviso that at least a part of one of the walls of the pouch, e.g. one of the flap, the front wall and the back wall of the pouch, is made from flexible sheet laminate which represents a particular form of a flexible sheet material.

[0030] The flexible sheet material comprises or consists of:

- a polymer, preferably a plastic polymer like e.g. a polyolefine, polyethylene, polyester or methylized polyester;
- a metal, a metal alloy, a metal foil and/or a metallized laminate;
- a paper;
- or a combination thereof.

[0031] The flexible sheet material may comprise or consist of a polymer having thermoplastic properties such as a polyolefin, e.g. polyethylene or the like. The flexible sheet material can be present as a single layer or in form of a material comprising more than one layer, e.g. in form of a laminate. Thus, the flexible sheet laminate of the pouch of the present invention represents a particular embodiment of a flexible sheet material.

[0032] The flexible sheet laminate comprises at least a first layer and a second layer. A layer may be understood to mean an amount of a flexible sheet material which can be processed to be separated from another layer. One layer can be formed of multiple sublayers. Each layer is made of a flexible sheet material as mentioned above, wherein first and second layer may be made of the same or different flexible sheet materials.

[0033] The present invention is not limited to a particular architecture or composition of layers and sublayers of the flexible sheet laminate provided the flexible sheet laminate comprises at least a first and a second layer.

[0034] Each of the first and second layers of the flexible sheet laminate may independently be formed of one single layer or of multiple sublayers. For example, the first layer can be formed of a single layer, e.g. of a single polyethylene (PE) layer, whereas the second layer is formed of two sublayers, e.g. a methylized polyester (MPET) sublayer and a PE sublayer. In another example, the first layer is composed of two sublayers and the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate is composed of three layers.

[0035] It is not necessary that a given flexible sheet laminate is constant in its architecture over the whole area of the flexible sheet laminate. The composition of the flexible sheet laminate may be different in different areas of the laminate, e.g. the first layer may be formed of two sublayers in one area of the laminate wherein in another area of the flexible sheet laminate the first layer is formed of three sublayers.

[0036] The first and second layers are laminated together. Preferably, the first and second layer of the flexible sheet laminate are laminated directly together essentially over the entire contact surface between the two layers with the proviso that the first and second layer are not permanently laminated together at the area where the integrated adhesive tab is formed or is to be formed. Lamination of the first and second layer can be performed by any known lamination method which is compatible with the flexible sheet materials used for the layers. The first and second layers of the flexible sheet laminate can be laminated together by use of an adhesive or by thermal

and/or pressure mediated lamination.

[0037] In the pouch of the invention, the body of the integrated adhesive tab, the first layer and/or the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate can be transparent. If the body of the integrated adhesive tab and/or the first layer of the flexible sheet laminate is transparent, the design of the pouch remains unaffected irrespective whether the integrated adhesive tab is peeled off or not. This opens a lot of design options for the pouch of the invention. One, both or all layers of the flexible sheet laminate forming the integrated adhesive tab may be transparent or printed.

[0038] The pouch of the invention may also comprise more than one integrated adhesive tab formed within a flexible sheet laminate. If the pouch of the invention comprises more than one integrated adhesive tab, the plurality of integrated adhesive tabs are preferably arranged on the pouch such that depending on the actual content of the first pocket, the first pocket is closable by at least one of the integrated adhesive tabs. When the first pocket is completely filled with tobacco, the pocket is tightly closable by wrapping a flap around the pocket and by sealing the flap against a first integrated adhesive tab. After consumption of a certain amount of tobacco, the pocket is tightly closable by wrapping the flap around the pocket and by sealing the flap against a second integrated adhesive tab and so on.

[0039] The pouch of the invention may comprise more than one compartment or pocket, wherein at least one of these compartments or pockets is closable by an integrated adhesive tab. In the pouch of the invention more than one compartment or pocket may be closed by a single integrated tab. Alternatively, each of the compartments or pockets is separately closable by an individual integrated adhesive tab. Thus, the pouch of the invention may comprise more than one compartment or pocket and each compartment or pocket is closable by a separate flap comprising an integrated adhesive tab.

[0040] Basically, the pouch of the invention can be manufactured by methods already known in the art for the manufacture of classical pouch packages. However, in order to arrive at the pouch of the invention, it is necessary to comprise the steps of providing a flexible sheet laminate comprising at least a first and a second layer for the production of at least a part of one of the walls of the pouch, like e.g. the flap, the front wall or the back wall of the pouch, and of forming the integrated adhesive tab by introducing a cut through a first layer of the flexible sheet laminate but not through a second layer of the flexible sheet laminate.

[0041] In a first preferred method of forming a pouch of the present invention, the method comprises the following steps:

- providing a single piece of flexible sheet laminate composed of at least a first and a second layer, wherein the first and second layer are not permanently laminated together at an area where an inte-

grated adhesive tab is to be formed;

- forming the integrated adhesive tab by cutting through the first layer but not through the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate to form the contours of the body of the integrated adhesive tab, wherein cutting is performed such that the body remains physically connected to the remaining flexible sheet laminate and the body can be hinged against said physical connection;
- optionally, introducing further integrated adhesive tabs;
- folding the single piece of flexible sheet laminate such that the front wall and the back wall of the pouch are located opposite to each other; and
- sealing side portions of the front and back wall of the pouch to form a first pocket;

wherein the releasable adhesive is added to at least a part of the inner surface of the body and/or to at least part of an outer surface of the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate corresponding to the part of the first layer forming the body before or after the first pocket is formed.

[0042] In a second preferred method of forming a pouch of the present invention, the method comprises the following steps:

- providing a piece of flexible sheet laminate composed of at least a first and a second layer, wherein the first and second layer are not permanently laminated together at an area where an integrated adhesive tab is to be formed;
- forming the integrated adhesive tab by cutting through the first layer but not through the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate to form the contours of the body of the integrated adhesive tab, wherein cutting is performed such that the body remains physically connected to the remaining flexible sheet laminate and the body can be hinged against said physical connection;
- optionally, introducing further integrated adhesive tabs;
- arranging the piece of flexible sheet laminate with another piece of flexible sheet material such that the front wall and the back wall of the pouch are located opposite to each other; and
- sealing side portions of the front and back wall of the pouch to form a first pocket;

wherein the releasable adhesive is added to at least a part of the inner surface of the body and/or to at least

part of an outer surface of the second layer of the flexible sheet laminate corresponding to the part of the first layer forming the body before or after the first pocket is formed.

[0043] In the first or second preferred method of the invention, the cuts defining the contours of the body of the integrated adhesive tab can be introduced into the flexible sheet laminate by physical cutting means or techniques. Appropriate cutting means and techniques are available to the person skilled in the art. Preferred cutting means or techniques comprise blade- or knife based cutting, liquid- or sandjet based cutting or laser based cutting.

[0044] The nature of the invention is further exemplified by way of the following figures and examples.

FIGURES:

[0045]

- Fig. 1 shows a front view of a first embodiment of the pouch of the invention in an open configuration and a cross-sectional line A-A.
- Fig. 2 shows the first embodiment of the pouch of the invention of Fig. 1 in a cross-sectional view along line A-A of (A) the pouch of the invention in an open configuration and (B) the pouch of the invention in a closed configuration sealed by the integrated adhesive tab.
- Fig. 3 shows a second embodiment of the pouch of the invention in a cross-sectional view, wherein in (A) the pouch of the invention is given in an open configuration and in (B) the pouch of the invention is depicted in a closed configuration sealed by the integrated adhesive tab.
- Fig. 4 shows a third embodiment of the pouch of the invention in a cross-sectional view.
- Fig. 5 shows a fourth embodiment of the pouch of the invention in a cross-sectional view.
- Fig. 6 shows in (A) to (D) various different embodiments of the integrated adhesive tab of the pouch of the invention.

EXAMPLES:

[0046] In Figures 1, 2A and 2B a pouch 1 according to the present invention is shown. The line A-A indicates a cross-section through the pouch 1 of Fig. 1. Figures 2A and B show the pouch 1 of Fig. 1 in a cross-sectional view along the line A-A either in open configuration in Fig. 2A or in closed configuration in Fig. 2B wherein the pouch 1 is sealed by the integrated adhesive tab 4 of the invention.

[0047] The pouch 1 is formed of one single piece of

flexible sheet laminate 6 composed of a first layer 61 and a second layer 62. The pouch 1 comprises a flap 2 and a first pocket 3. The first pocket 3 is built from a back wall 31 and a front wall 32 of the pouch 1. The first pocket 3 is formed by folding back the flexible sheet laminate 6 on itself and sealing the side edges of the overlapping region to build a pocket with a back wall 31, a front wall 32 and a mouth towards the extending part of the flexible sheet laminate 6. Said extending part of the flexible sheet laminate 6 represents the flap 2 of the pouch 1. The flap 2 is shown in an open configuration; however, the flap 2 will be folded over mouth of the first pocket 3 when the pouch 1 is in a closed configuration.

[0048] On the front wall 32 of the first pocket 3, there is located an integrated adhesive tab 4 comprising a body 5 with a body contour 10 and a physical connection 9. The integrated adhesive tab 4 of the pouch 1 is formed of a body 5 built by a part of a first layer 61 of the flexible sheet laminate 6. The body 5 exhibits a body contour 10 which defines the shape of the body 5. The body 5 of the integrated adhesive tab 4 is formed by cutting through the first layer 61 but not through the second layer 62 of the flexible sheet laminate 6 to form the contours 10 of the body 5, wherein cutting is performed such that the body 5 remains physically connected to the remaining flexible sheet laminate 6 and the body 5 can be hinged against said uncut physical connection 9. On at least a part of the inner surface of the body 5 a releasable adhesive 7 is present. The integrated adhesive tab 4 is partially peelable from the second layer 62 of the flexible sheet laminate 6 in order to allow for sealing the integrated tab 4 against the remainder of the pouch 1.

[0049] Both, the first and the second layer 61, 62 of the flexible sheet laminate 6 are formed of a polymer which has thermoplastic properties or another suitable material. First layer 61 and second layer 62 are permanently laminated together by heat and/or pressure, except for the area where the integrated adhesive tab 4 is formed.

[0050] As depicted in Fig. 2B, the pouch 1 can be transformed into a closed configuration by the integrated adhesive tab 4. The first pocket 3 is releasably sealed by the integrated adhesive tab 4. In order to releasably seal the first pocket 3 with the integrated adhesive tab 4, the flap 2 is wrapped around the remainder of the pouch so that the mouth region of the first pocket 3 is covered by a part of the flap 2. The tip of the flap 2 is fixed by sealing with the integrated adhesive tab 4.

[0051] In Fig. 3 a second embodiment of the pouch of the invention is shown in (A) in open configuration and in (B) in closed configuration.

[0052] In Fig. 3A a pouch 1 is illustrated which differs from the pouch depicted in Figs 1 and 2 in that the integrated adhesive tab 4 is arranged on the flap 2. As demonstrated in Fig. 3B, in this embodiment the pouch 1 can be closed by wrapping the flap 2 around the remainder of the pouch 1 to cover the mouth region of the first pocket 3 and to seal the flap 2 to the remainder of the pouch 1

by peeling the integrated adhesive tab 4 of the flap 2 and sealing the integrated adhesive tab 4 against an outer surface of the pouch 1.

[0053] In Fig. 4 a third embodiment of the pouch 1 of the invention is shown. In this third embodiment, the pouch 1 is formed from two pieces of flexible sheet material. In the pouch 1 of Fig. 4 the back wall 31 and the flap 2 are not formed of a flexible sheet laminate 6 but from a flexible sheet material 8 made from a material which is different from the flexible sheet laminate 6. This arrangement allows limiting the need for flexible sheet laminate 6 to only that part of the pouch 1, where the integrated adhesive tab 4 is located in.

[0054] In Fig. 5 a fourth embodiment of the pouch 1 of the invention is shown. In this fourth embodiment, the pouch 1 differs from the pouch 1 of Figs 1 and 2 in that the pouch 1 comprises more than one integrated adhesive tab. The pouch 1 of Fig. 5 comprises a first integrated adhesive tab 4a comprising a body 5a and releasable adhesive 7a applied to an inner surface of the body 5a and a second integrated adhesive tab 4b comprising a body 5b and releasable adhesive 7b applied to an inner surface of the body 5b. The two integrated adhesive tabs 4a and 4b are arranged within the pouch 1 such that the pouch 1 can be closed by sealing the flap 2 either with the first integrated adhesive tab 4a or with the second integrated adhesive tab 4b depending on the amount of content present in the first pocket of the pouch 1.

[0055] In Fig. 6 different embodiments of the integrated adhesive tab 4 are shown.

[0056] In Fig. 6A an integrated adhesive tab 4 is shown with a body 5 defined by a body contour 10 and being connected to the remaining flexible sheet laminate by the physical connection 9. The end portions of the cut defining the contours 10 are formed in a hook.

[0057] In Fig. 6B an integrated adhesive tab 4 is shown with a body 5 defined by a body contour 10 and being connected to the remaining flexible sheet laminate by the physical connection 9. The end portions of the cut defining the contours 10 are formed in a branched slit.

[0058] The shape of the body 5 of the integrated adhesive tab 4 is not limited to a particular shape. For reason of simplicity, in the embodiments depicted in the Figures above the body 5 is given a rectangular shape. However, in these embodiments the body 5 is not limited to any particular shape. Thus, apart from a rectangular shape, the body 5 may have another shape like e.g. a tongue-like shape, a triangular shape or a semicircular shape as well as any combinations thereof.

[0059] In Fig. 6C an integrated adhesive tab 4 is shown with a body 5 exhibiting a triangular shape defined by the contours 10.

[0060] In Fig. 6D an integrated adhesive tab 4 is shown with a body 5 exhibiting a semicircular shape defined by the contours 10.

Claims

1. Pouch (1) for tobacco comprising a first pocket (3) and an integrated adhesive tab (4) for releasably sealing the first pocket (3), wherein at least one wall of the pouch (1) is at least partially formed of a flexible sheet laminate (6) composed of at least a first (61) and a second (62) layer, **characterized in that** the integrated adhesive tab (4) constitutes an integral part of the flexible sheet laminate (6), wherein the integrated adhesive tab (4) comprises:

- a body (5) formed of a part of the first layer (61) of the flexible sheet laminate (6);
 - releasable adhesive (7) applied to at least part of an inner surface of the body (5) facing a part of the second layer (62) of the flexible sheet laminate (6) corresponding to the part of the first layer (61) forming the body (5) and/or to at least part of an outer surface of the second layer (62) of the flexible sheet laminate (6) corresponding to the part of the first layer (61) forming the body (5); and
- wherein the integrated adhesive tab (4) is at least partially peelable from the second layer (62) of the flexible sheet laminate (6) in order to allow for sealing the integrated adhesive tab (4) against the remainder of the pouch (1).

2. Pouch (1) of claim 1, wherein the body (5) is physically connected to the remaining flexible sheet laminate (6) such that the body (5) is partially peelable from the second layer (62) and is hingeable against said physical connection (9).

3. Pouch (1) of claim 1 or 2, wherein the pouch (1) comprises a front wall (32) and a back wall (31) opposed to each other and optionally a bottom wall, one or more side walls and/or a flap (2), wherein at least a part of one of the front wall (32), the back wall (31), the bottom wall, the side wall and the flap (2) is formed of the flexible sheet laminate (6).

4. Pouch (1) of one of the preceding claims, comprising a flap (2), a first pocket (3) defined by opposing front (32) and back (31) walls and an integrated adhesive tab (4) for releasably sealing the first pocket (3), wherein at least part of one of the flap (2), the front wall (32) and the back wall (31) is formed of a flexible sheet laminate (6) composed of at least a first (61) and a second (62) layer, **characterized in that** the integrated adhesive tab (4) constitutes an integral part of the flexible sheet laminate (6), wherein the integrated adhesive tab (4) comprises:

- a body (5) formed of a part of the first layer (61) of the flexible sheet laminate (6);
- releasable adhesive (7) applied to at least part

- of an inner surface of the body (5) facing a part of the second layer (62) of the flexible sheet laminate (6) corresponding to the part of the first layer (61) forming the body (5) and/or to at least part of an outer surface of the second layer (62) of the flexible sheet laminate (6) corresponding to the part of the first layer (61) forming the body (5); and wherein the integrated adhesive tab (4) is at least partially peelable from the second layer (62) of the flexible sheet laminate (6) in order to allow for sealing the integrated adhesive tab (4) against the remainder of the pouch (1).
5. Pouch (1) of one of the preceding claims, wherein the flap (2), front (32) and back (31) wall of the pouch (1) are formed of the flexible sheet laminate (6), preferably all walls of the pouch are formed of the flexible sheet laminate.
 6. Pouch (1) of one of the preceding claims, wherein contours (10) of the body (5) are defined by a cut which extends through the first layer (61) but not through the second layer (62) of the flexible sheet laminate (6).
 7. Pouch (1) of claim 6, wherein the cut defining the contours (10) of the body (5) comprises ends formed to prevent further tearing of the first layer (61) of the flexible sheet laminate (6); preferably the ends are arranged in the form of a hook or branched slit.
 8. Pouch (1) of one of the preceding claims, wherein, in the area where the integrated adhesive tab (4) is formed, the first layer (61) and the second layer (62) of the flexible sheet laminate (6) are not permanently laminated together.
 9. Pouch (1) of one of the preceding claims, wherein the integrated adhesive tab (4) is arranged on the pouch (1) such that the first pocket (3) is closable by sealing the integrated adhesive tab (4) against an outside surface of the pouch (1).
 10. Pouch (1) of one of the preceding claims, wherein the pouch (1) comprises more than one integrated adhesive tab (4) formed within the flexible sheet laminate (6).
 11. Pouch of claim 10, wherein the plurality of integrated adhesive tabs (4) are arranged on the pouch (1) such that, depending on the actual content of the first pocket (3), the first pocket (3) is closable by at least one of the integrated adhesive tabs (4).
 12. Pouch (1) of one of the preceding claims, wherein the first (61) and/or the second (62) layer of the flexible sheet laminate (6) independently from each other comprises or consists of a polymer, a metal, a metal alloy, a metal foil, a metallized laminate, a paper or a combination thereof.
 13. Pouch (1) of one of the preceding claims, wherein the first layer (61) of the flexible sheet laminate (6) and/or the body (5) is transparent.
 14. Pouch (1) of one of the preceding claims, wherein the inner surface of the body (5) comprises a part which is void of releasable adhesive (7) in order to allow for peeling of the integrated adhesive tab (4).
 15. Pouch (1) of one of claims 4 to 14, wherein the flap (2), the front wall (32) and the back wall (31) of the pouch (1) are all part of a single piece of flexible sheet laminate (6), wherein the front wall (32) is folded against the back wall (31) of the pouch (1) to build the first pocket (3).
 16. Pouch (1) of one of claims 4 to 14, wherein the front wall (32) and the back wall (31) of the pouch (1) are formed of separate pieces of flexible sheet material.
 17. Method of forming a pouch (1) of claim 15 comprising the steps of:
 - providing a single piece of flexible sheet laminate (1) composed of at least a first (61) and a second (62) layer, wherein the first and second layer (61, 62) are not permanently laminated together at an area where an integrated adhesive tab (4) is to be formed;
 - forming the integrated adhesive tab (4) by cutting through the first layer (61) but not through the second layer (62) of the flexible sheet laminate (6) to form the contours (10) of the body (5) of the integrated adhesive tab (4), wherein cutting is performed such that the body (5) remains physically connected to the remaining flexible sheet laminate (6) and the body (5) can be hinged against said physical connection (9);
 - optionally, introducing further integrated adhesive tabs (4);
 - folding the single piece of flexible sheet laminate (6) such that the front wall (32) and the back wall (31) of the pouch (1) are located opposite to each other; and
 - sealing side portions of the front and back wall (31, 32) of the pouch (1) to form a first pocket (3); wherein the releasable adhesive (7) is added to at least a part of the inner surface of the body (5) and/or to at least part of an outer surface of the second layer (62) of the flexible sheet laminate (6) corresponding to the part of the first layer (61) forming the body (5) before or after the first pocket (3) is formed.

18. Method of forming a pouch of claim 16 comprising the steps of:

- providing a piece of flexible sheet laminate (6) composed of at least a first and a second layer (61, 62), wherein the first and second layer (61, 62) are not permanently laminated together at an area where an integrated adhesive tab (4) is to be formed; 5
- forming the integrated adhesive tab (4) by cutting through the first layer (61) but not through the second layer (62) of the flexible sheet laminate (6) to form the contours (10) of the body (5) of the integrated adhesive tab (4), wherein cutting is performed such that the body (5) remains physically connected to the remaining flexible sheet laminate (6) and the body (5) can be hinged against said physical connection (9); 10
- optionally, introducing further integrated adhesive tabs (4); 15
- arranging the piece of flexible sheet laminate (6) with another piece of flexible sheet material such that the front wall (32) and the back wall (31) of the pouch (1) are located opposite to each other; and 20
- sealing side portions of the front and back wall (31, 32) of the pouch (1) to form a first pocket (3); wherein the releasable adhesive (7) is added to at least a part of the inner surface of the body (5) and/or to at least part of an outer surface of the second layer (62) of the flexible sheet laminate (6) corresponding to the part of the first layer (61) forming the body (5) before or after the first pocket (3) is formed. 25

19. Method of claim 17 or claim 18, wherein cutting is performed by physical cutting means like e.g. blade- or knife based cutting, liquid- or sandjet based cutting or laser based cutting. 30

35

40

45

50

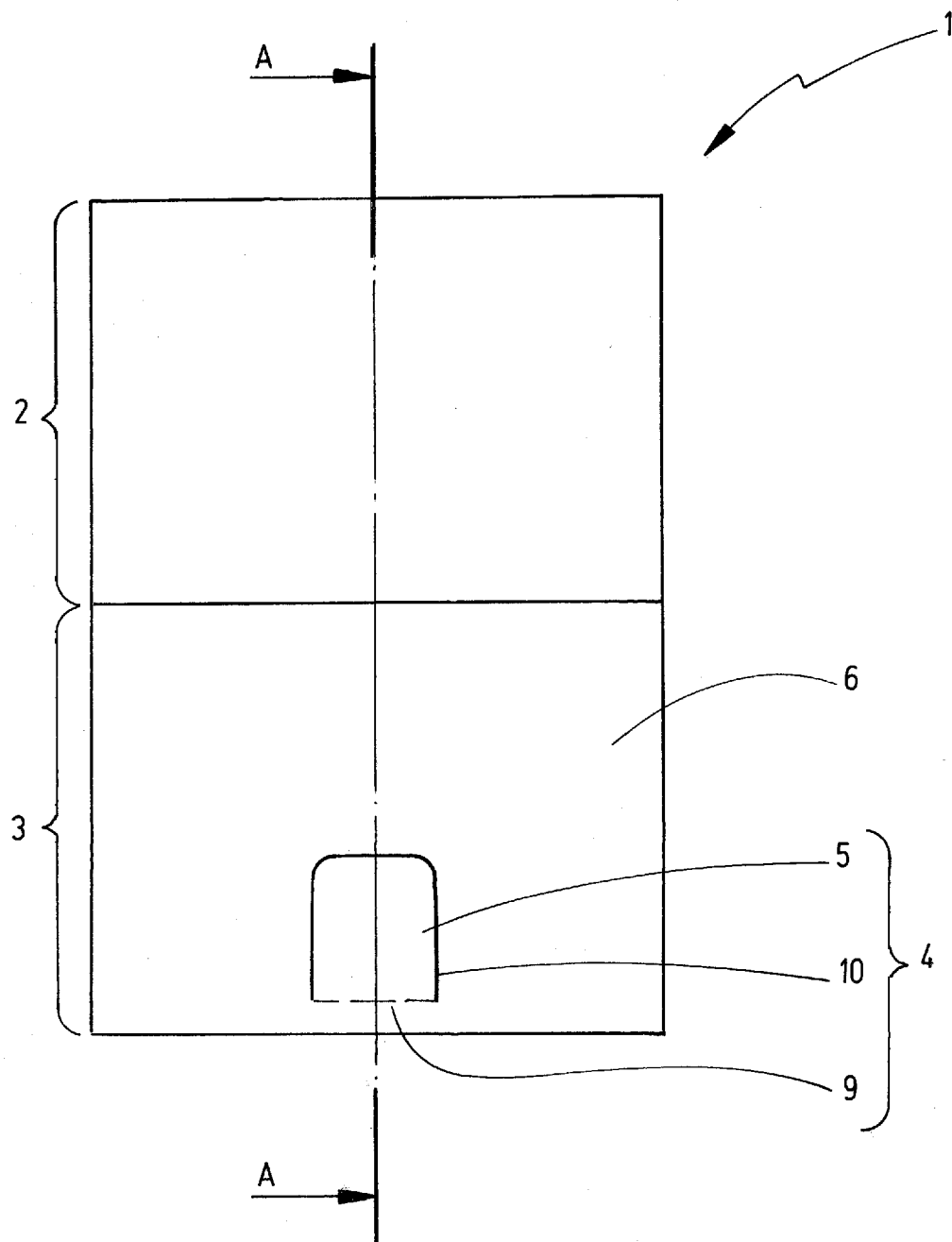


Fig.1

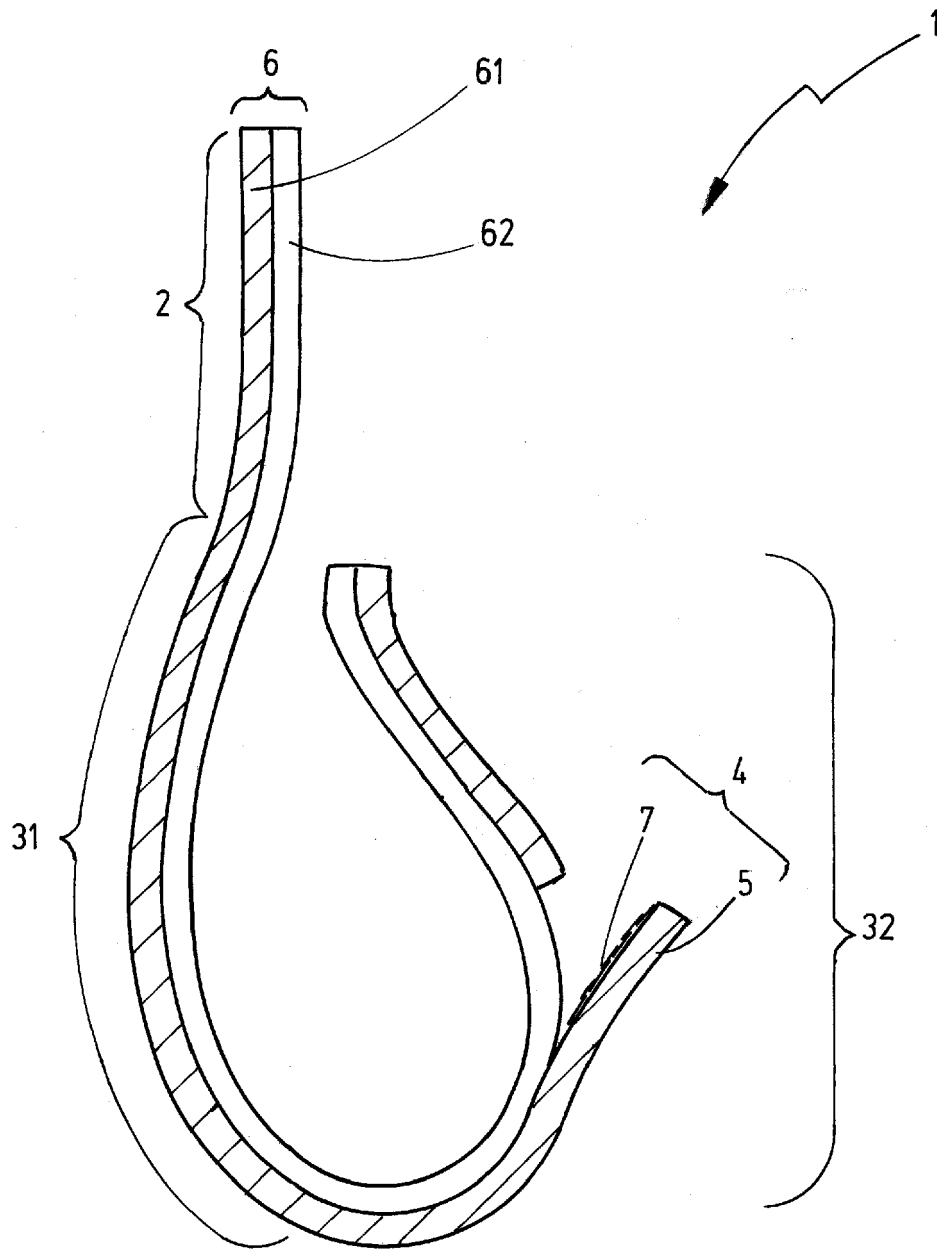


Fig.2A

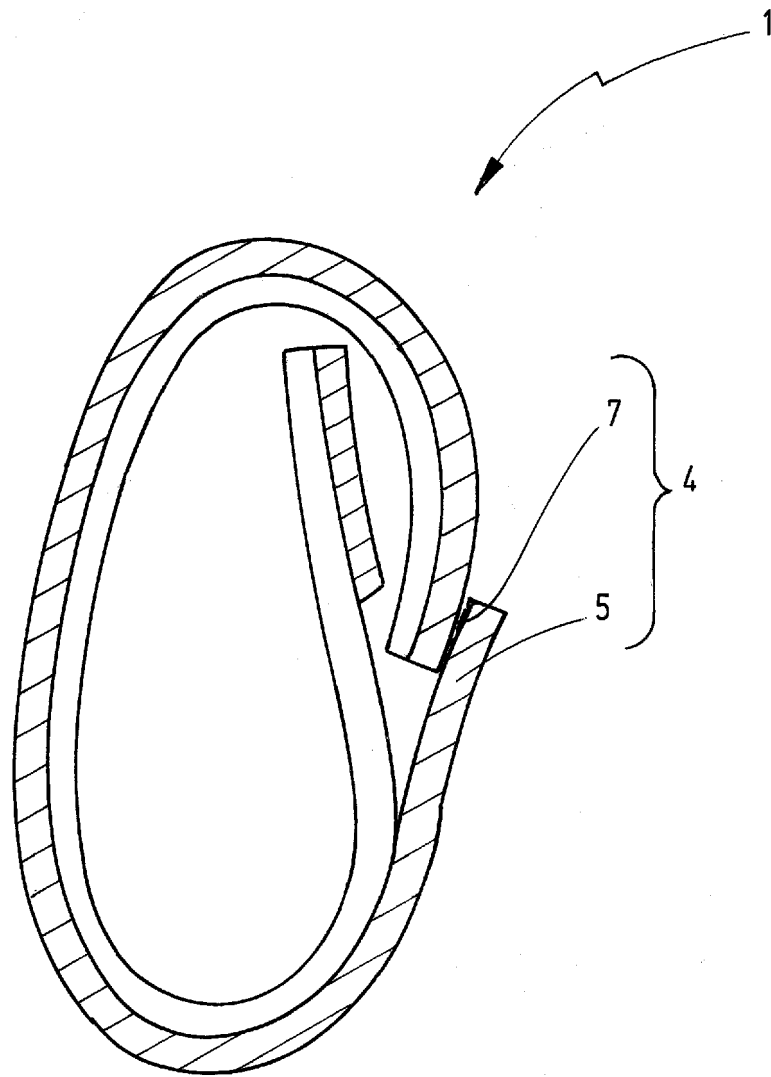


Fig.2B

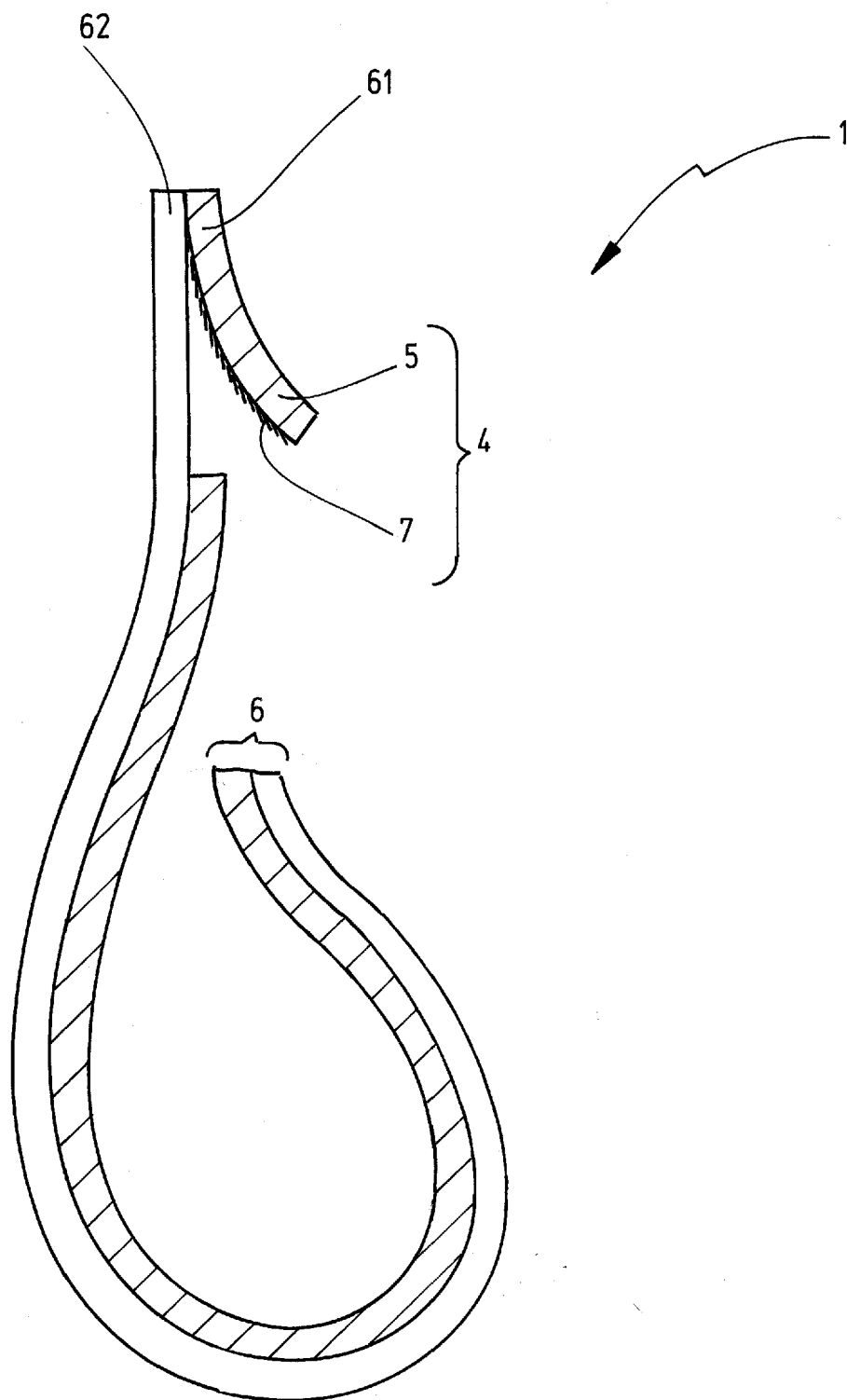


Fig.3A

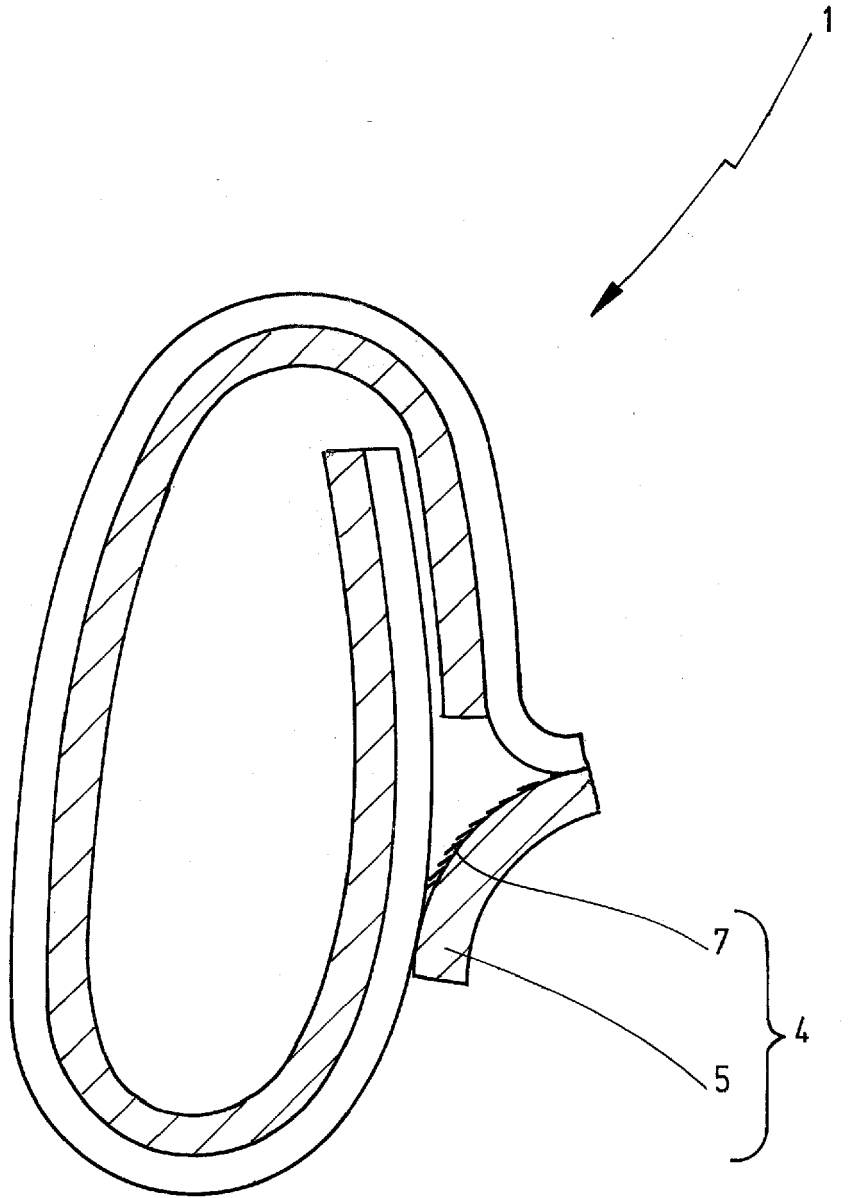


Fig.3B

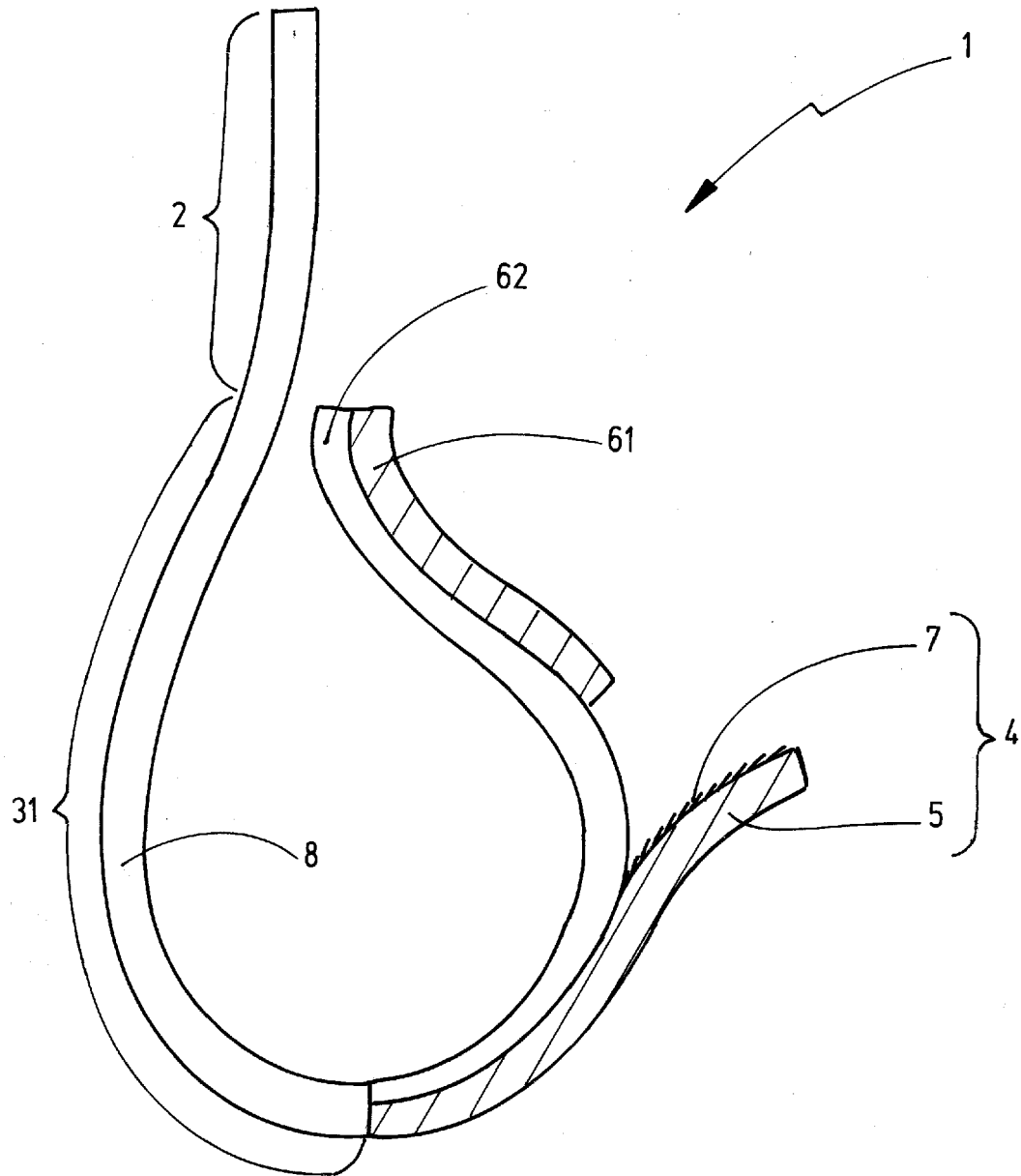


Fig.4

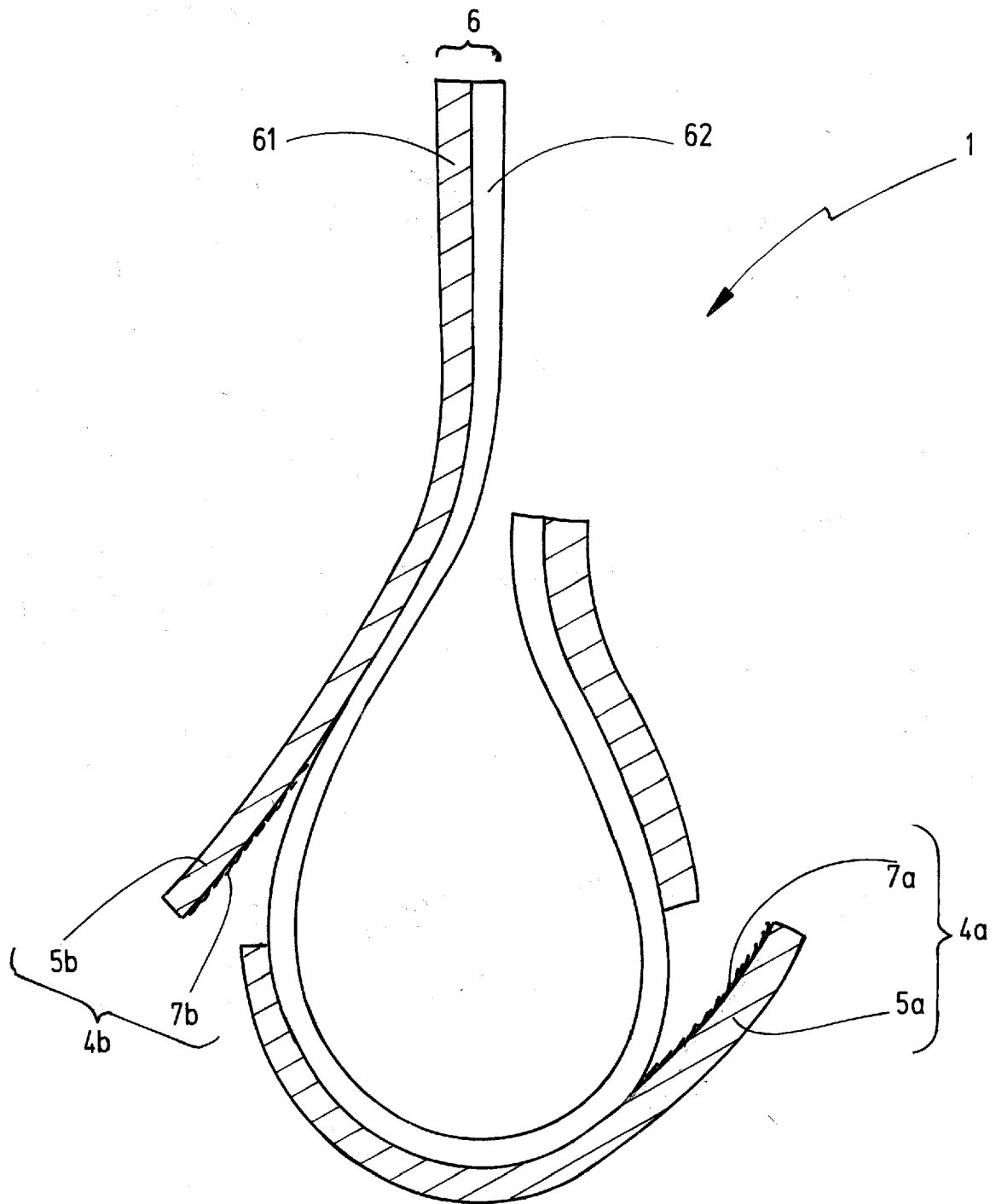


Fig.5

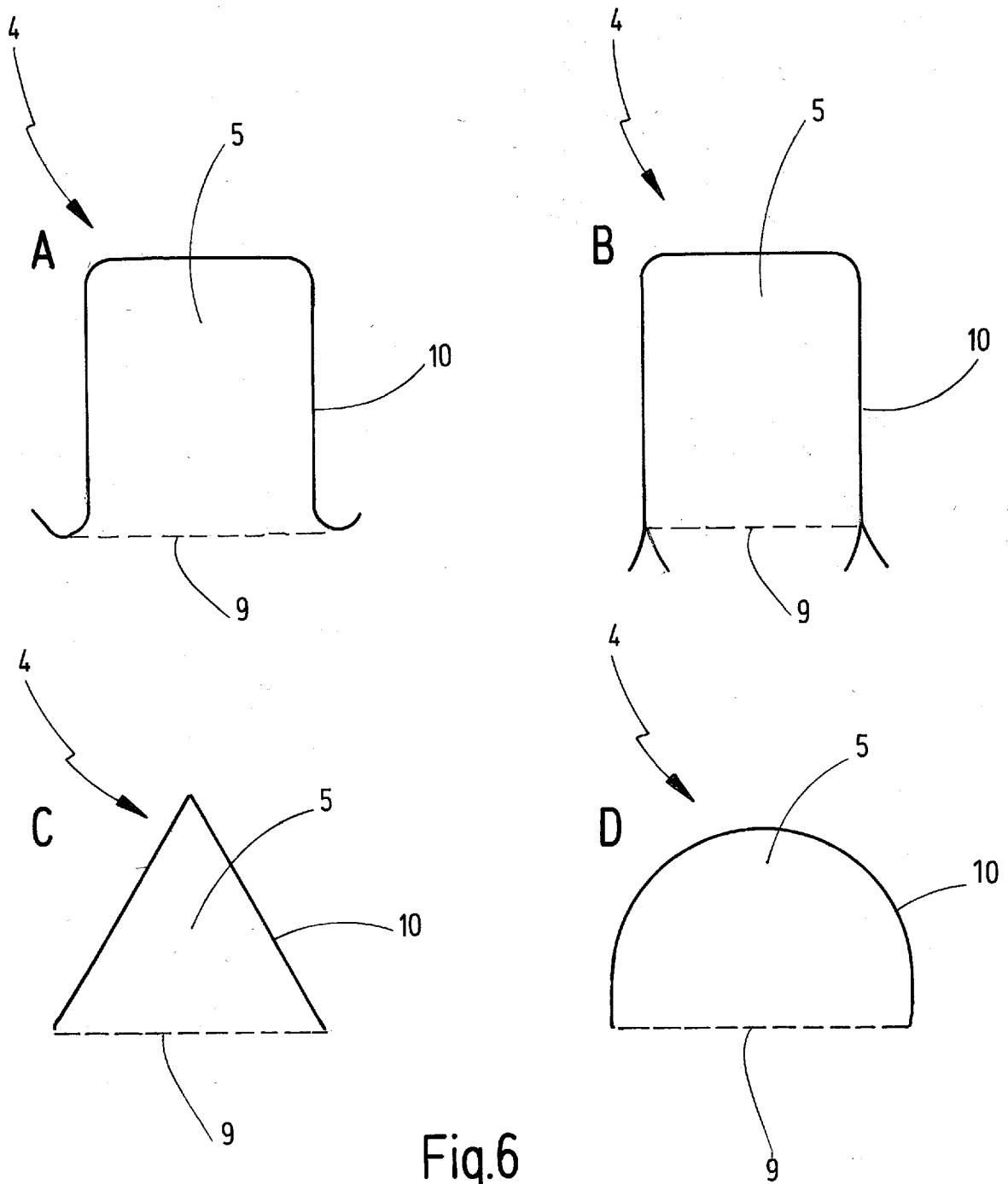


Fig.6



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 14 19 2182

5

10

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
A	GB 2 191 938 A (FÖCKE & CO FÖCKE & CO [DE]) 31 December 1987 (1987-12-31) * the whole document *	1-19	INV. A24F23/02 B65D33/18
A	NL 7 208 598 A (ALUMINIUM INDUSTRIE VAASSEN N.V.) 27 December 1973 (1973-12-27) * the whole document *	1-19	
A	DE 89 03 199 U1 (ROVENA-VERPACKUNGSMASCHINEN GMBH) 3 May 1989 (1989-05-03) * the whole document *	1-19	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			A24F B65D
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 4 May 2015	Examiner Cardan, Cosmin
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS 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 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			

 1
EPO FORM 1503 03/82 (P04C01)

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

EP 14 19 2182

5

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
The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

04-05-2015

10

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
GB 2191938	A	31-12-1987	BR 8703256 A	15-03-1988
			DE 3621813 A1	07-01-1988
			GB 2191938 A	31-12-1987
			JP S6324879 A	02-02-1988
			NL 8701505 A	18-01-1988
			US 4785933 A	22-11-1988

NL 7208598	A	27-12-1973	NONE	

DE 8903199	U1	03-05-1989	NONE	

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

This list of references cited by the applicant is for the reader's convenience only. It does not form part of the European patent document. Even though great care has been taken in compiling the references, errors or omissions cannot be excluded and the EPO disclaims all liability in this regard.

Patent documents cited in the description

- NL 1001119 C2 [0002]
- EP 1215973 A1 [0002]