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(54) **PUMP UNIT FOR PROVIDING A HYDRAULIC PRESSURE FOR ACTUATING AN ACTUATOR IN THE DRIVE TRAIN OF A MOTOR VEHICLE**

(57) The invention relates to a pump unit for providing a hydraulic pressure for actuating an actuator in the drive train of a motor vehicle, in particular a clutch actuator or gearbox actuator, with a pump (2) which has a pump housing (7) with at least one pressure outlet (20), a pressure sensor (5) which can sense the fluid pressure at the pressure outlet (20), and a printed circuit board (90), which is arranged in an electronic housing (8) and has an electronic control system (3), characterized in that an inherently stable conductor element (80) is provided which contains at least two electric conductors (82) which are encased with plastic (84), wherein the conductor element (80) extends from the pressure sensor (5) as far as the printed circuit board (90) and has at least one seal (96, 98, 100).

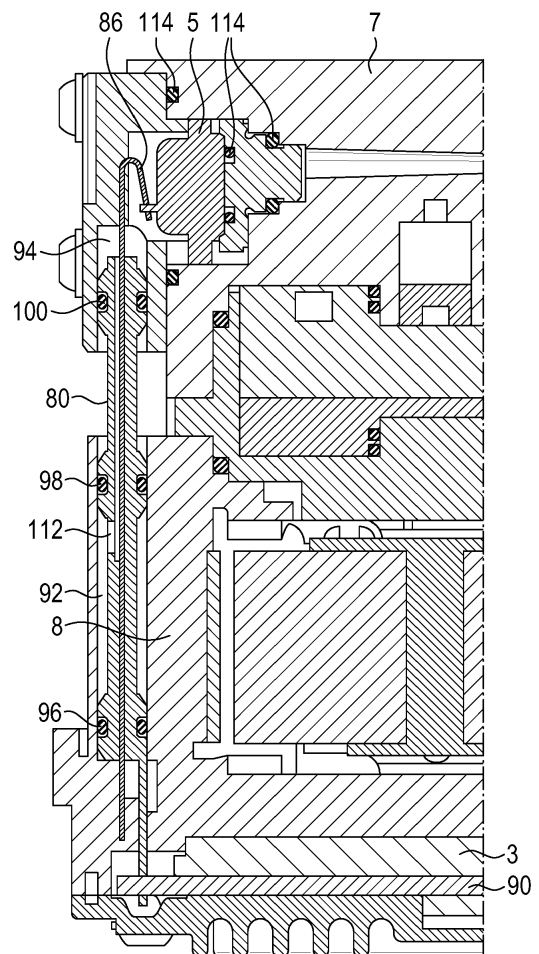


Fig. 15

Description

[0001] The invention relates to a pump unit for providing a hydraulic pressure for actuating an actuator in the drive train of a motor vehicle, in particular a clutch actuator or gearbox actuator, with a pump which has a pump housing with at least one pressure outlet, a pressure sensor which can sense the fluid pressure at the pressure outlet, and a printed circuit board, which is arranged in an electronic housing and has an electronic control system.

[0002] The pump unit serves to provide a hydraulic pressure which is controlled or regulated by activation of the solenoid valve. The hydraulic pressure can be used to switch a clutch between an open and a closed position or, in the case of a gearbox actuator, to switch a certain gear stage.

[0003] In the prior art, the pressure sensor is connected to the electronic control system by means of a cable which extends outside the pump housing from the pressure sensor to the printed circuit board. Such a cable has various disadvantages. Firstly, it is exposed outside the pump unit, and therefore there is the risk of damage. Secondly, the cable has to be reliably sealed as it exits the pressure sensors and enters the electronic control system, and it has to be connected to the corresponding contacts. This gives rise to a high outlay.

[0004] It is the object of the invention to improve the known pump unit to the effect that a lower outlay arises on the installation and on providing seals.

[0005] To achieve this object, in the case of a pump unit of the type mentioned at the beginning, according to the invention, an inherently stable conductor element is provided which contains at least two electric conductors which are encased with plastic, wherein the conductor element extends from the pressure sensor as far as the printed circuit board and has at least one seal. The term "inherently stable" means here that the conductor element, unlike a cable, is rigid in compression to such an extent that it can transmit forces in the longitudinal direction, with which it, for example, can be pushed into a receptacle, can be inserted into a plug or can be connected to a mating contact. The installation is greatly simplified by the inherent stability of the conductor element. Since at least one seal is also integrated in the conductor element, said seal can automatically be pushed to the correct position during the installation.

[0006] According to one refinement of the invention, the electronic housing is arranged on that side of the pump housing which faces away from the pressure sensor, wherein the conductor element extends through a leadthrough in the pump housing. The conductor element is thereby readily protected from the outside against damage.

[0007] The seal preferably provides a seal within the leadthrough, and therefore the printed circuit board and thus the electronic control system are readily protected from the environment.

[0008] A second seal can also be provided on the conductor element, said second seal likewise providing a seal within the leadthrough, wherein the two seals are respectively assigned to the inlet and to the outlet of the leadthrough. The sealing effect is thereby improved.

[0009] The conductor element can also have a further seal which provides a seal at the pressure sensor, and therefore no impurities whatsoever can pass from the environment to the pressure sensor.

[0010] According to a preferred embodiment of the invention, the conductor element has a channel which at least partially extends through the conductor element. Said channel can be used to check the sealing effect of the seal in the same manner for a plurality of regions of the pump unit that should be separated from one another by the seals. By namely a negative pressure being applied to one section and which, because of the channel, also arises in another section of the pump unit, it is possible to check whether air is flowing from the environment into the corresponding sections of the pump unit. If this is the case, at least one of the seals is not effective in the desired manner.

[0011] According to a preferred embodiment of the invention, it is provided that the channel leads outside the seal on the side of the pressure sensor and between the two seals within the leadthrough. All three seals can thereby be checked with a single testing operation. If a negative pressure is applied on the side of the pressure sensor, said negative pressure remains constant only when the seal arranged in the receptacle prevents ambient air from flowing to the pressure sensor and when the seal arranged towards the environment in the leadthrough prevents ambient air from being able to be sucked into the leadthrough, and when the seal arranged towards the printed circuit board prevents air from being able to be sucked out of the electronic control system.

[0012] The channel preferably has a U-shaped cross section, wherein a conductor is arranged within the cross section delimited by the channel. This configuration makes it possible to accommodate a comparatively large channel cross section symmetrically within the conductor element.

[0013] The electric conductors can be composed of spring bronze, and therefore they have a certain spring effect. As a result, one end of the electric conductors can be bent over to form a resilient connection contact which makes contact with suitable prestress with an associated contact, for example on the pressure sensor.

[0014] The electronic housing can be formed integrally with the motor housing of the drive motor of the pump, thus resulting in a compact construction with few components.

[0015] The invention will be described below with reference to an embodiment which is illustrated in the attached drawings. In the latter:

- Figure 1 shows a pump unit in a perspective view;

- Figure 2 shows the pump unit from Figure 1 in a perspective exploded view;
- Figure 3 shows the pump unit from Figure 1 in a side view;
- Figure 4 shows the pump unit from Figure 3 in a first sectional view;
- Figure 5 shows the pump unit from Figure 3 in a second sectional view;
- Figure 6 shows a hydraulic circuit diagram of the pump unit;
- Figure 7 shows the circuit diagram from Figure 6, wherein the hydraulic flow is shown for two different operating states;
- Figure 8 shows the circuit diagram from Figure 6, wherein a further operating state is shown;
- Figure 9 shows the circuit diagram from Figure 6, wherein the filters used in the pump unit are added;
- Figure 10 shows a side view of a storage container which is used in the pump unit;
- Figure 11 shows a partial view of an alternative configuration of the storage container;
- Figure 12 shows a schematic illustration of the various volumes within the storage container;
- Figure 13 shows a sectional view of a solenoid valve used in the pump unit;
- Figure 14 shows the solenoid valve from Figure 13, wherein the fluid flows during operation have been drawn in;
- Figure 15 shows a sectional view through the pump unit, wherein a conductor element is shown which is used for transmitting signals between pressure sensors and a printed circuit board;
- Figure 16 shows the conductor element from Figure 15 in a perspective view;
- Figure 17 shows the conductor element from Figure 16 in a longitudinal section;
- Figure 18 shows the conductor element from Figure 16 in a cross section;
- Figure 19 shows a variant embodiment of the conductor element;

- Figure 20 shows a detail of the contact connection of the pressure sensor;
- Figure 21 shows a cross section through the pump of the pump unit.

[0016] The figures illustrate a pump unit which serves to provide a hydraulic pressure (and also a hydraulic fluid flow) which can be converted by an actuator in the drive train of a motor vehicle into an actuating stroke. The actuating stroke can be used to close or open a clutch, for example, or can be used to switch a gear stage of a gearbox or to bring same into the neutral position.

[0017] As essential components (see in particular Figures 1 and 2), the pump unit has a drive motor 1, a pump 2, an electronic control system 3, two solenoid valves 4, two pressure sensors 5, which are accommodated in a common housing, and a storage container 6.

[0018] The central component of the pump unit is a pump housing 7 on which the solenoid valves 4 are mounted and on which the storage container 6 is also mounted. The pressure sensors 5 are also mounted on the pump housing 7.

[0019] On the side opposite the storage container 6, an electronic housing 8 is mounted on the pump housing 7, said electronic housing firstly accommodating the electronic control system 3 and secondly containing the stator of the electric motor 1. A cover 9 is mounted on the electronic housing 8, the cover closing the electronic control system 3 and serving to dissipate the heat lost from the electronic control system 3 to the environment.

[0020] As can be seen in Figures 4 and 5, the solenoid valves 2 are arranged within the storage container 6.

[0021] The electric motor 1 is a brushless electric motor with which the pump 2 is driven.

[0022] The pump 2 is a rotary vane pump (see Figure 21) which has a rotor 10 with a plurality of chambers 12, in each of which a rotary vane element 14 is arranged. The rotary vane elements 14 are cylindrical rollers. The pump is therefore a roller vane pump.

[0023] The cylindrical rollers roll on the inner contour of a stator 16 which defines a volume which is variable in the circumferential direction. Accordingly, during rotation of the rotor 10 by 360°, each rotary vane element passes twice through a sequence of intake region A and pressure region D. Accordingly, the pump has two suction connections and two pressure outlets.

[0024] Owing to the two independent pressure outlets D of the pump 2, the pump unit likewise has two pressure outlets 20 which are independent of each other.

[0025] The pump is constructed symmetrically by all the components which will be explained below being present for each pressure outlet. Thus when, for example, "the" solenoid valve is described below, this applies to the two solenoid valves since one is present for each pressure outlet.

[0026] The basic operation of the pump unit will now be explained with reference to Figures 6 to 8.

[0027] The pump unit has two pressure outlets 20 via which the hydraulic pressure is provided which is produced by the pump unit for actuating the actuator.

[0028] A nonreturn valve 22 is arranged downstream of each pressure outlet D of the pump 2. The nonreturn valves 22 have a valve seat made of rubber.

[0029] The inlet 24 of the solenoid valve 4 is located downstream of the outlet of the nonreturn valve 22. Depending on the desired pressure and the actual pressure measured at the pressure sensor 5, each of the solenoid valves 4 is activated in such a manner that the desired hydraulic pressure is present at the pressure outlet 20 of the pump unit. Excess hydraulic fluid is conducted back directly into the storage container 6 by a return line 26.

[0030] The solenoid valves 4 are designed as proportional valves and, as valve element, have a ball which, together with the valve seat, ensures that the solenoid valve 4 is free from leakage in the closed state.

[0031] The right side of Figure 7 shows the fluid flow in a state in which hydraulic pressure is not intended to be provided at the right pressure outlet 20.

[0032] All of the hydraulic fluid is pumped back from the pressure outlet D of the pump 2 in the solenoid valve 4 via the return line 26 into the storage container 6; the pump therefore operates in a circuit.

[0033] The left side of Figure 7 shows the state in which a regulated hydraulic pressure is provided at the pressure outlet 20 of the pump unit. In this case, the solenoid valve 4 is activated by the electronic control system 3 in such a manner that the actual pressure corresponds to the desired pressure.

[0034] Figure 8 shows the pump unit in a state in which the pump 2 has been stopped. The solenoid valve 4 on the right side is open, and therefore the right pressure outlet 20 is free from pressure.

[0035] By contrast, the left pressure outlet 20 is shut off since the solenoid valve 4 is completely closed. A hydraulic pressure built up downstream of the pressure outlet 20 will therefore be maintained even if the pump 2 is not operated further.

[0036] The filters which are used within the pump unit will now be explained with reference to Figure 9.

[0037] An essential feature of the concept for keeping impurities away from the pump unit is that no suction-side filters are used; all of the filters are arranged on the pressure side. Accordingly, the pump sucks up directly from the storage container 6.

[0038] A first filter 30 is located downstream of the corresponding pressure outlet of the pump 2. Said filter serves to filter out impurities from the hydraulic fluid before said impurities pass to the solenoid valve 4. Since a large portion of the hydraulic fluid is conducted by the pump 2 to the solenoid valve 4 and from there via the return line 26 to the storage container 6, the two filters 30 ensure that impurities are continuously filtered out from the hydraulic fluid because of the inner circulation of the hydraulic fluid.

[0039] A second filter 32 is provided downstream of

the solenoid valve 4, but still upstream of the pressure outlet 20. Said filter prevents impurities from being able to be introduced into the pump unit. Said impurities are in particular original soilings of the lines and of the actuator and abrasion from the actuator, to which the hydraulic fluid is provided by the pump unit.

[0040] The filters 30, 32 are configured to be effective throughout the entire service life of the pump unit without having to be cleaned or replaced.

[0041] In the exemplary embodiment described, they have a cross section of the order of magnitude of 65 mm². Their mesh width is of the order of magnitude of 0.1 mm.

[0042] The storage container 6 is provided with a filling filter 34 which is arranged in such a manner that any hydraulic fluid which is filled into the storage container 6 via a filling opening 33 has to flow through the filling filter 34.

[0043] In the described exemplary embodiment, the filling filter 34 has a mesh width of the order of magnitude of 0.3 mm, wherein the material of which said filling filter is composed has a diameter of the order of magnitude of 0.2 mm. The filling filter 34 ensures that no impurities are introduced into the storage container 6 from the outside.

[0044] The storage container 6 is divided into two chambers 40, 42, wherein an intake opening 44 leading to the suction connection A of the pump 2 is arranged in each chamber 40, 42. By dividing the internal volume of the storage container 6 into two separate chambers 40, 42, it is ensured that whenever one of the hydraulic circuits has a leakage, a certain residual volume is still available in the other hydraulic circuit, with which the nondefective hydraulic circuit can continue to be operated for a certain time.

[0045] Thus, for example, a driver, after receiving a warning about the failure of the first hydraulic circuit, can still safely drive the vehicle into a parking bay or into a parking space since, for example in the case of a dual clutch gearbox, a clutch and the gearbox switching stages associated therewith are still ready for operation.

[0046] In order to divide the storage container 6 into the two chambers 40, 42, use can be made of a substantially horizontally extending partition 46 which has a vertically extending end wall 48 (see Figure 10), or a substantially vertically extending partition 50 (see Figure 11).

[0047] Each chamber 40, 42 has a dead volume T which corresponds to the volume below the corresponding intake opening 44. A working volume W is located above the dead volume. Said working volume W is determined by the uppermost edge of the end wall 48 or of the partition 50. A common working volume GW is located above the working volumes W.

[0048] The hydraulic circuits are separated from one another whenever the common working volume GW drops to zero and each hydraulic circuit only still sucks up from its own working volume W.

[0049] As is known from Figures 2, 4 and 5, the solenoid valves 4 are arranged within the storage container

6. A solenoid valve is in each case arranged here in a chamber 40, 42.

[0050] Each of the solenoid valves 4 has a housing 60 (see Figure 13) which surrounds the components of the solenoid valve 4.

[0051] The solenoid valve 4 has a nonreturn valve 62, a valve seat 64, a valve element 66, an armature 68 and a coil 70. The hydraulic fluid flows via an intake 72 (see Figure 14) either to the pressure outlet 20 of the pump unit or via the opening cross section between the valve seat 64 and the valve element 66 to the return line 26.

[0052] A particular feature consists in that the route to the return line 26 leads through the interior of the housing 60. A corresponding return output 67 of the solenoid valve is symbolized in Figure 14 by the vertically downwardly pointing arrow, the return output beginning behind the valve seat and leading into the space within the housing 60.

[0053] By means of this arrangement of the return output of the solenoid valve 4, an encircling, in particular annular, free space 74 which is present between the housing 60 and the coil 70 is flushed through with hydraulic fluid.

[0054] The nonreturn valve 62 which is integrated here in the solenoid valve 4 corresponds to the nonreturn valve 22 shown in Figures 6 to 9.

[0055] A further particular feature consists in that a bearing gap which is present between the armature 68 and a bearing 76 inserted into the coil 70 and the solenoid valve housing is likewise flushed through with hydraulic fluid.

[0056] A further particular feature of the solenoid valve 4 consists in that it is self-cleaning since the path to the return line 26 removes any particles from the open valve seat and the valve element.

[0057] It will now be explained with reference to Figures 15 to 20 how the pressure sensors 5 are connected to the electronic control system 3.

[0058] While, in the embodiment of Figures 1 and 2, a cable is still used for this purpose, in the case of the configuration according to Figures 15 to 20 two inherently stable conductor elements 80 are used. Each conductor element 80 contains three electric conductors which are composed, for example, of spring bronze. The conductors 82 are encased, in particular insert moulded, with plastic, such that the conductor element 80 is formed.

[0059] The conductors 82 are bent over by barely 180° on their side facing the pressure sensor 5 such that spring contacts 86 are formed. The latter serve to lie in a spring-elastic manner against corresponding connection contacts with the pressure sensors and thereby to produce an electrical contact (see Figure 20).

[0060] The pressure sensor 5 is sealed on the side facing away from the conductor element 80 by means of various seals 114.

[0061] At the opposite end, the electric conductors 82 are designed as contact pins 88 which can be inserted into a plug on a printed circuit board 90 on which the

electronic control system 3 is constructed.

[0062] The conductor element 80 extends from the printed circuit board 90 through a leadthrough 92 in the electronic housing 8 and into a receptacle 94 in the pump housing 7. The conductor element 80 is sealed both in relation to the leadthrough 92 and in relation to the receptacle 94. For this purpose, two seals 96, 98 are provided which provide a seal within the leadthrough 92, and a seal 100 is provided which provides a seal in relation to the receptacle 94.

[0063] The seals 96, 98, 100 are O rings which are accommodated in corresponding receiving grooves 102, 104, 106 which are provided on the conductor element 80.

[0064] In the variant embodiment shown in Figure 19, a total of four receptacles for seals are used.

[0065] The conductor element 80 is provided with a channel 110 which extends along the longitudinal direction of the conductor element 80, specifically leading from the side which is arranged in the receptacle 94, i.e. the side assigned to the pressure sensors 5, and into a recess 112 between the seals 96 and 98, i.e. within the leadthrough 92.

[0066] The channel 110 serves to check with little outlay whether the two conductor elements 80 are correctly mounted, in particular whether the seals 96, 98, 100 are providing a seal in the desired manner.

[0067] The test takes place by a negative pressure being applied in the region of the pressure sensors. After a short settling time, it can be measured whether the applied negative pressure remains constant or whether the pressure rises.

[0068] If the pressure remains constant, this means that all of the seals are providing a seal in the desired manner. If the negative pressure becomes lower, this means that at least one of the seals is not correctly providing a seal. This can either be the seal 96, and therefore air is sucked out of the region of the printed circuit board 90 into the leadthrough 92 and via the recess 112 into the channel 110. It can also mean that the seal 98 is not providing a seal, and therefore ambient air is sucked out of the region between the leadthrough 92 and the receptacle 94 towards the recess 112. Finally, it can mean that the seal 100 is not providing a seal, and therefore ambient air is sucked through the receptacle 94 towards the region of the pressure sensors 5.

Claims

1. Pump unit for providing a hydraulic pressure for actuating an actuator in the drive train of a motor vehicle, in particular a clutch actuator or gearbox actuator, with a pump (2) which has a pump housing (7) with at least one pressure outlet (20), a pressure sensor (5) which can sense the fluid pressure at the pressure outlet (20), and a printed circuit board (90), which is arranged in an electronic housing (8) and

has an electronic control system (3), **characterized in that** an inherently stable conductor element (80) is provided which contains at least two electric conductors (82) which are encased with plastic (84), wherein the conductor element (80) extends from the pressure sensor (5) as far as the printed circuit board (90) and has at least one seal (96, 98, 100). 5

2. Pump unit according to Claim 1, **characterized in that** the electronic housing (8) is arranged on that side of the pump housing (7) which faces away from the pressure sensor (5), and the conductor element (80) extends through a leadthrough (92) in the pump housing (7). 10

3. Pump unit according to Claim 2, **characterized in that** the seal (96) provides a seal within the leadthrough (92). 15

4. Pump unit according to Claim 3, **characterized in that** a second seal (98) is provided on the conductor element (80), said second seal likewise providing a seal within the leadthrough (92), wherein the two seals (96, 98) are respectively assigned to the inlet and to the outlet of the leadthrough (92). 20 25

5. Pump unit according to one of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the conductor element (80) has a further seal (100) which provides a seal at the pressure sensor (5). 30

6. Pump unit according to one of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the conductor element has a channel (110) which at least partially extends through the conductor element (80). 35

7. Pump unit according to Claim 6 in combination with Claims 4 and 5, **characterized in that** the channel (110) leads outside the seal (100) on the side of the pressure sensor (5) and between the two seals (96, 98) within the leadthrough (92). 40

8. Pump unit according to either of Claims 6 and 7, **characterized in that** the channel (110) has a U-shaped cross section, wherein a conductor (82) is arranged within the cross section delimited by the channel (110). 45

9. Pump unit according to one of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the electric conductors (82) are composed of spring bronze. 50

10. Pump unit according to one of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the electronic housing (8) is formed integrally with a housing of the drive motor (1) of the pump (2). 55

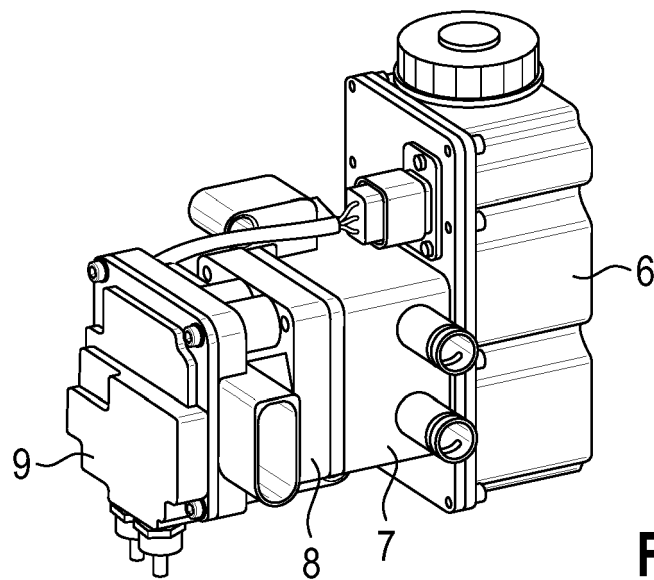


Fig. 1

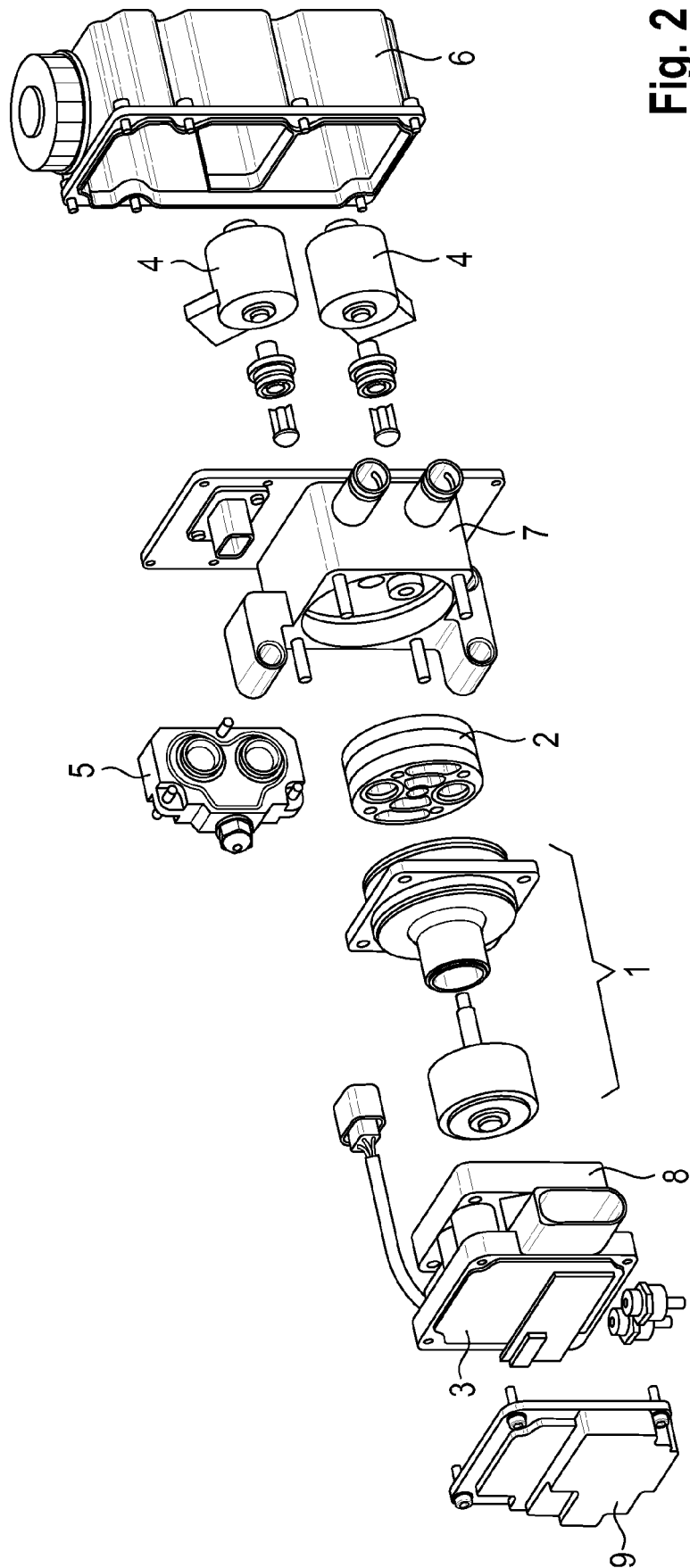


Fig. 2

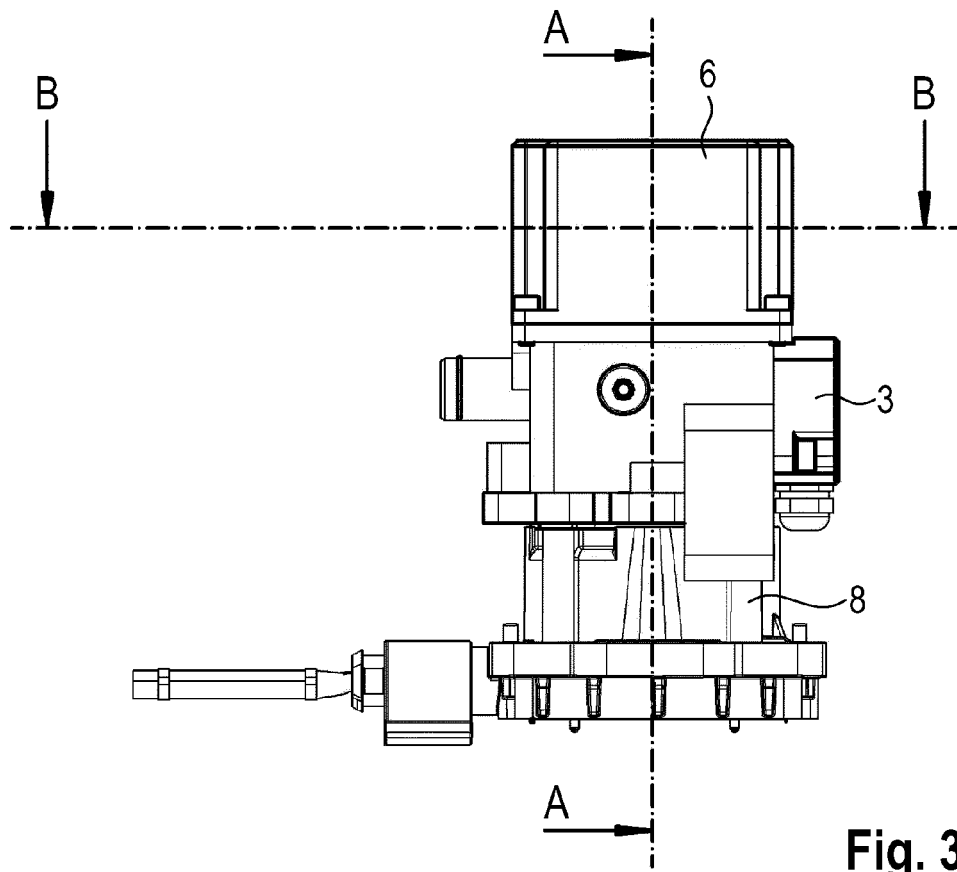


Fig. 3

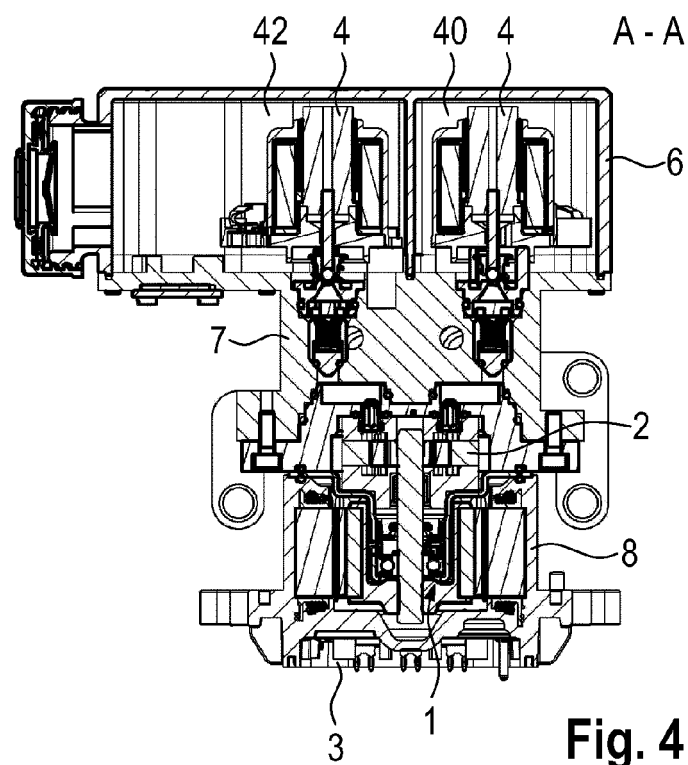
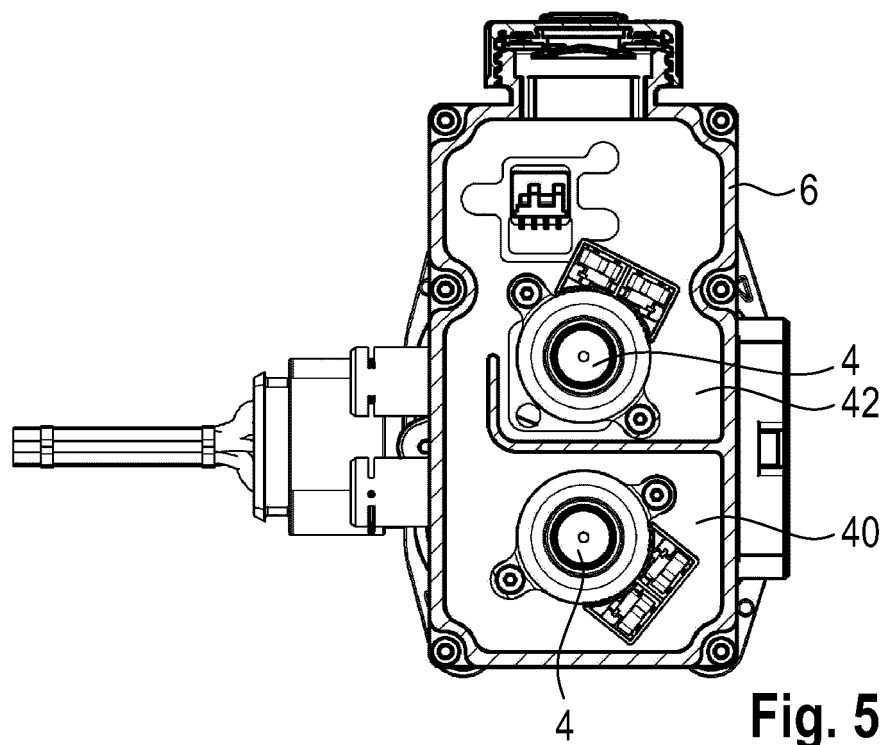


Fig. 4



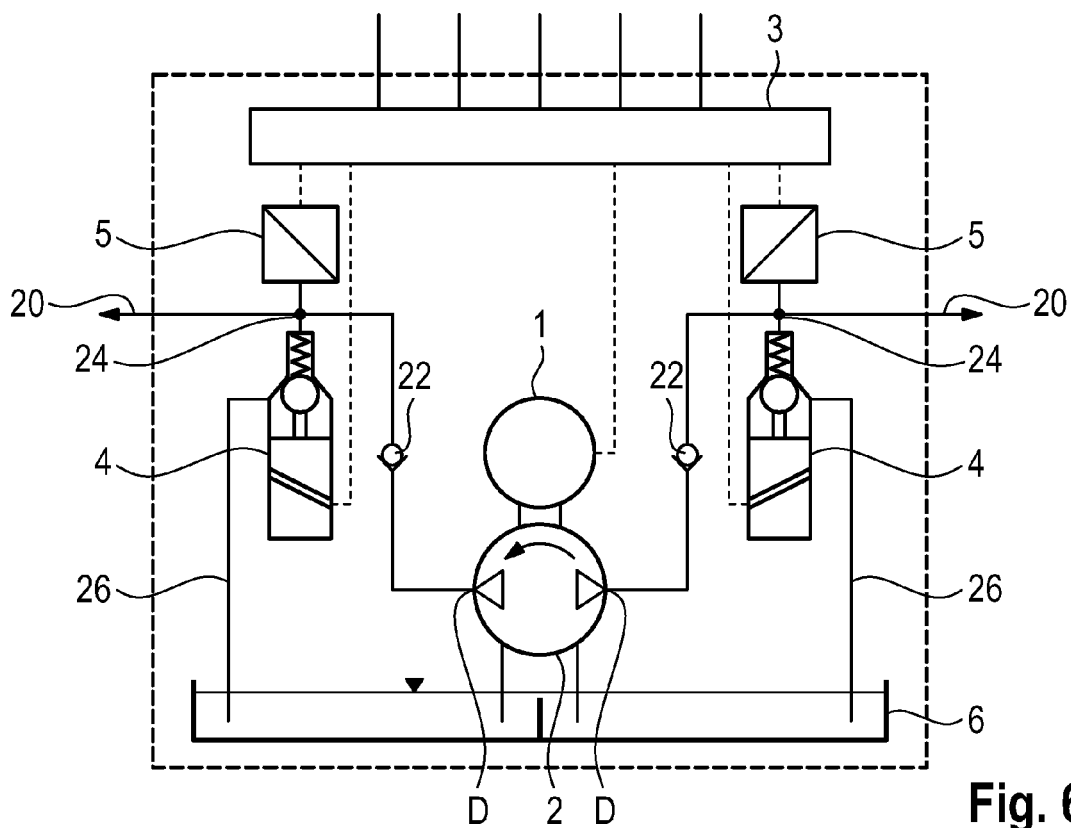
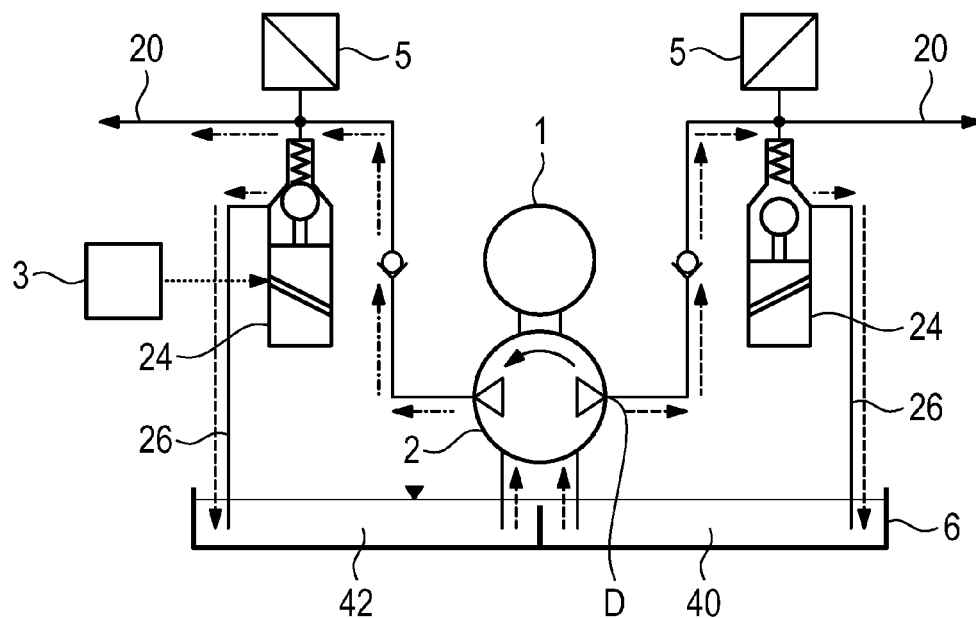


Fig. 6



-----> Flow, no pressure
 - - - - -> Flow, pressure
> Electrical Current

Fig. 7

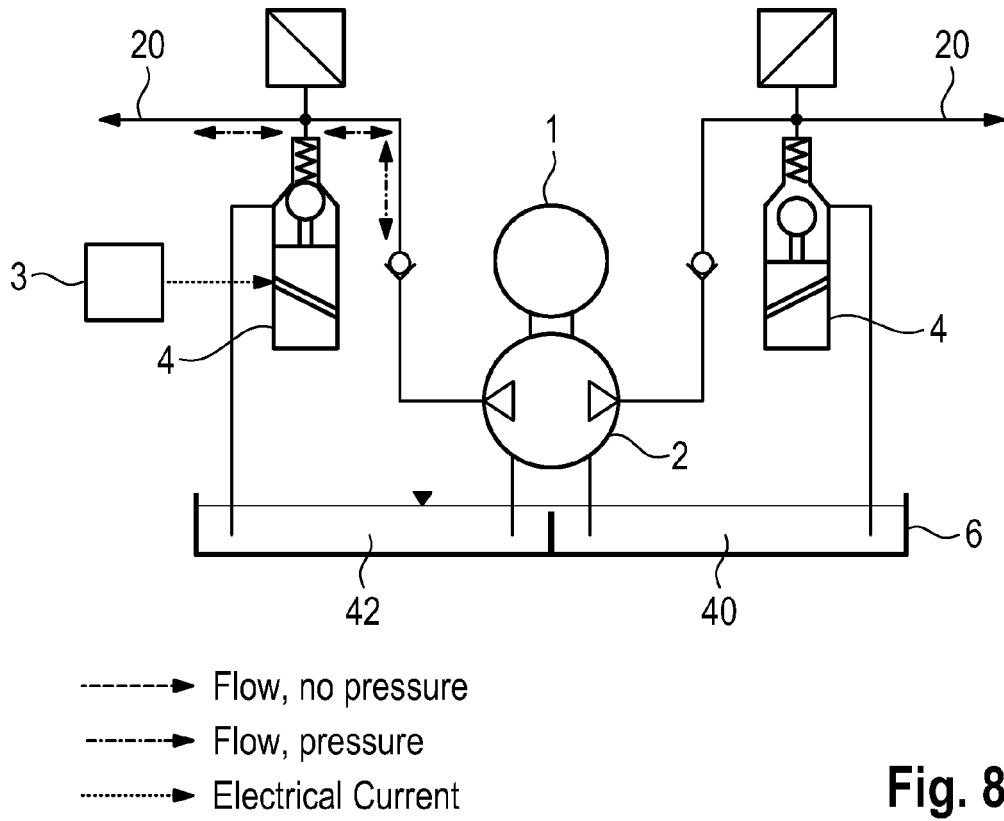


Fig. 8

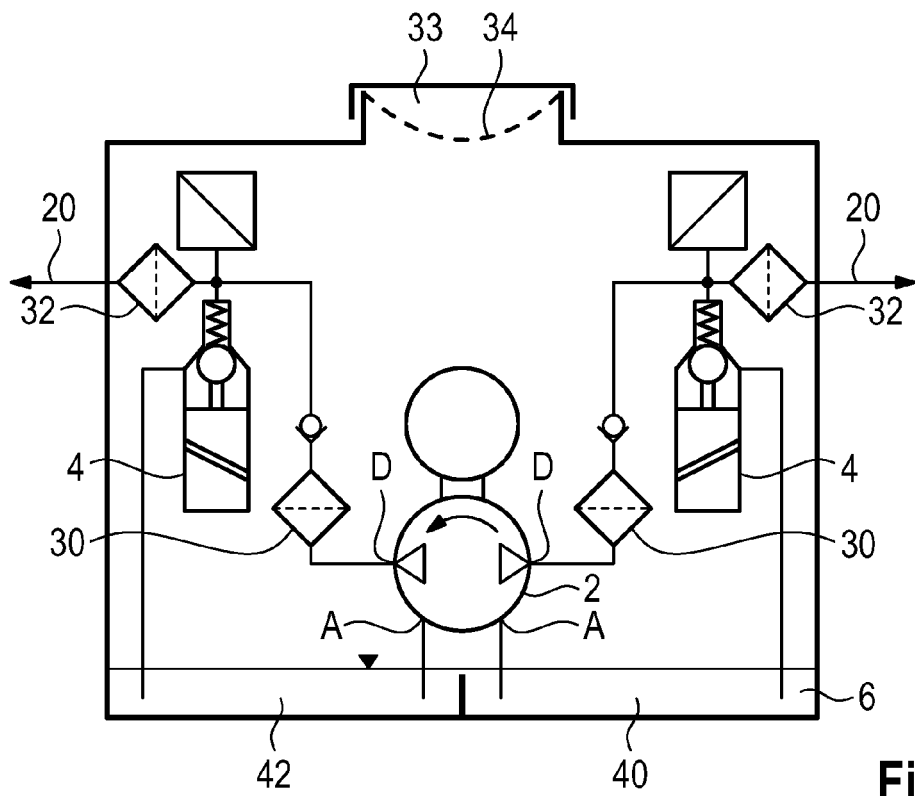


Fig. 9

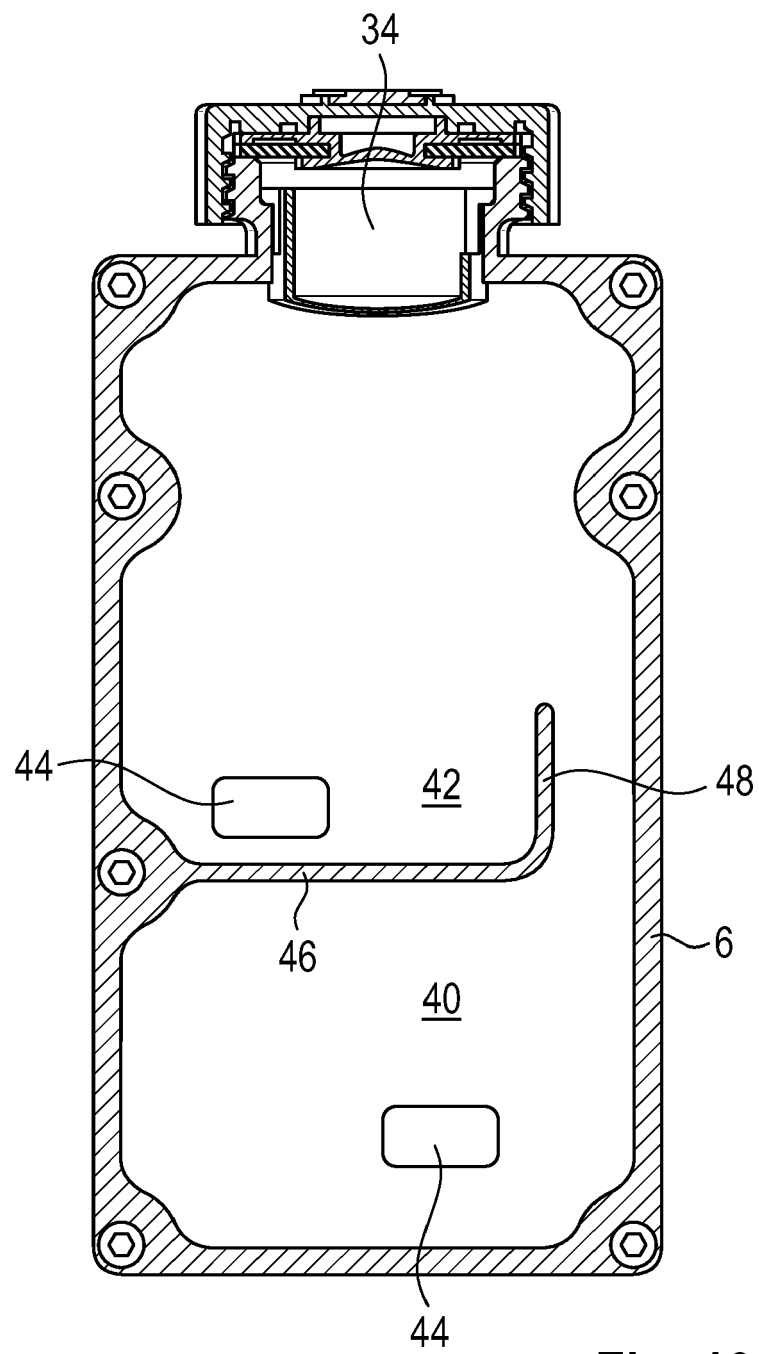


Fig. 10

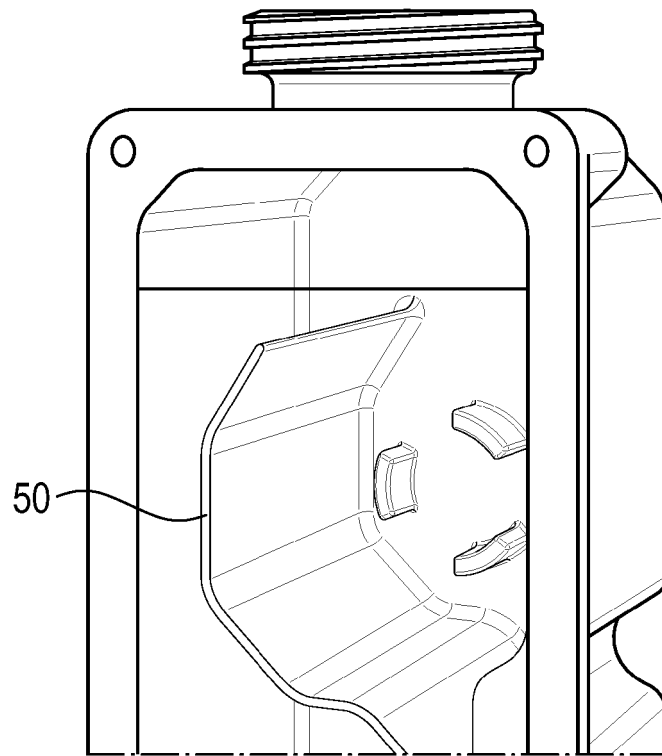


Fig. 11

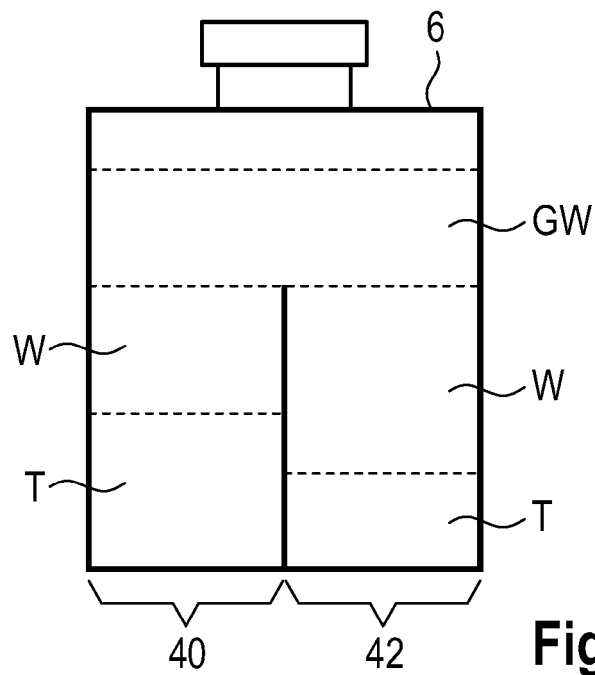


Fig. 12

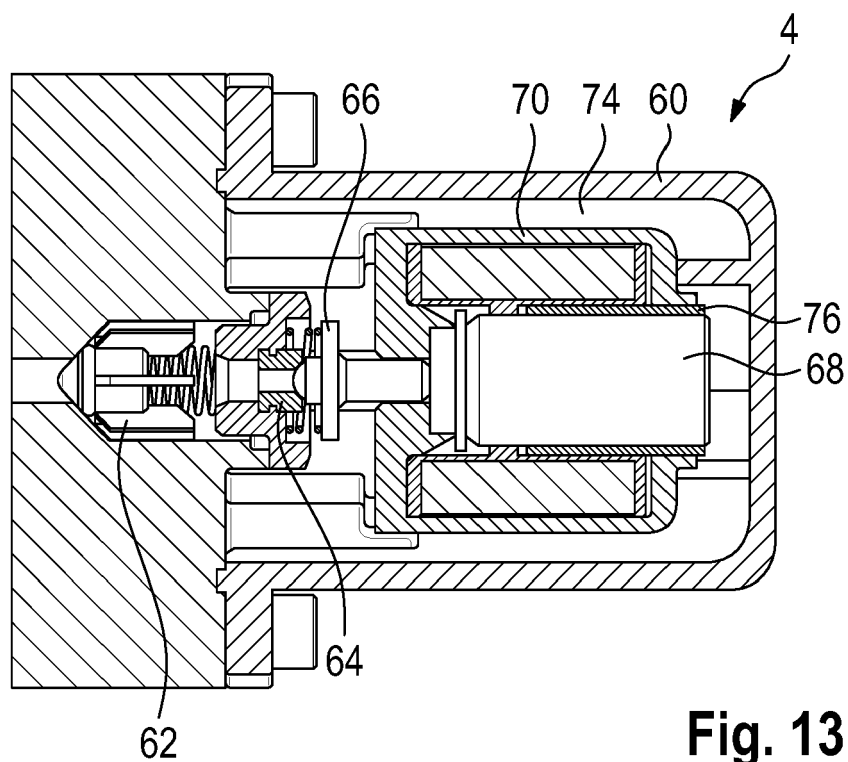


Fig. 13

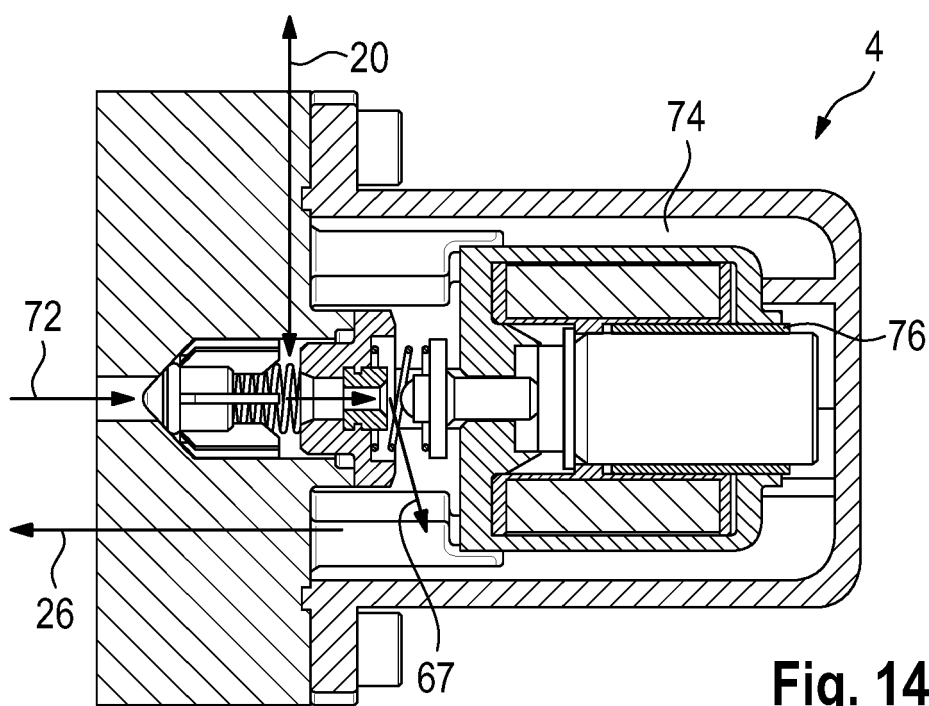


Fig. 14

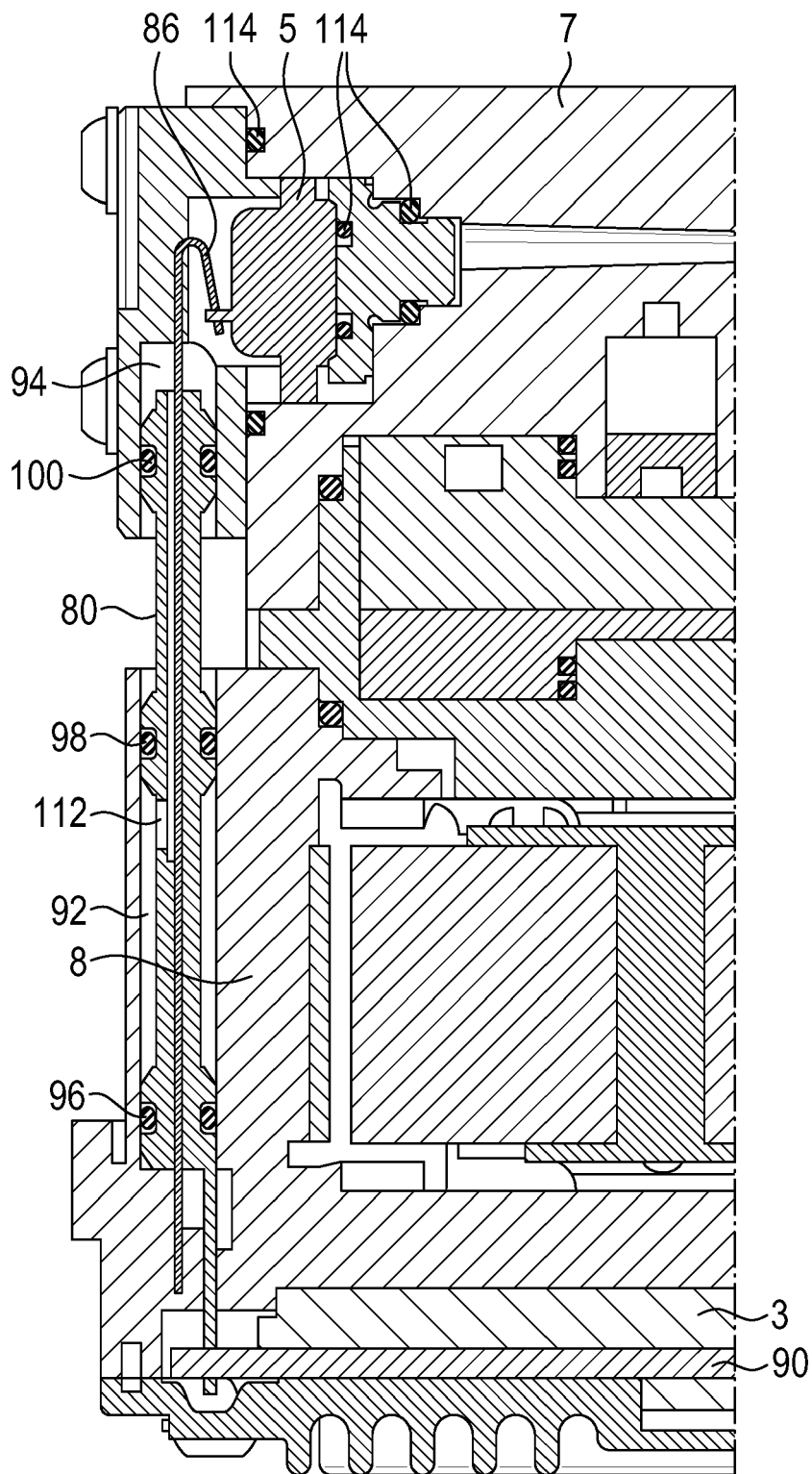


Fig. 15

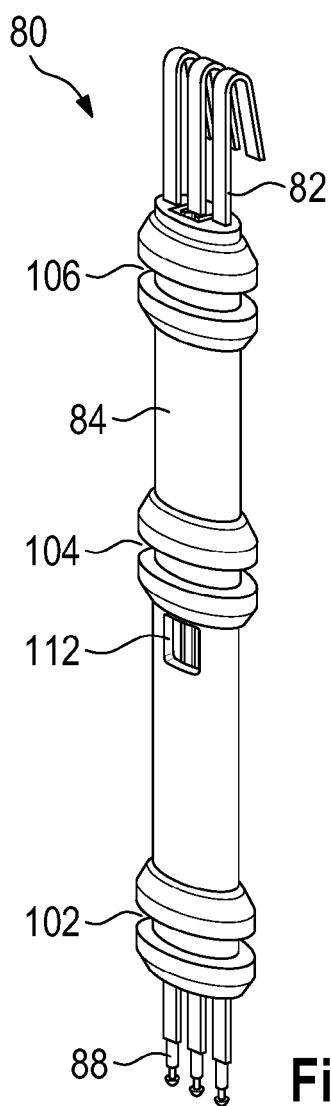


Fig. 16

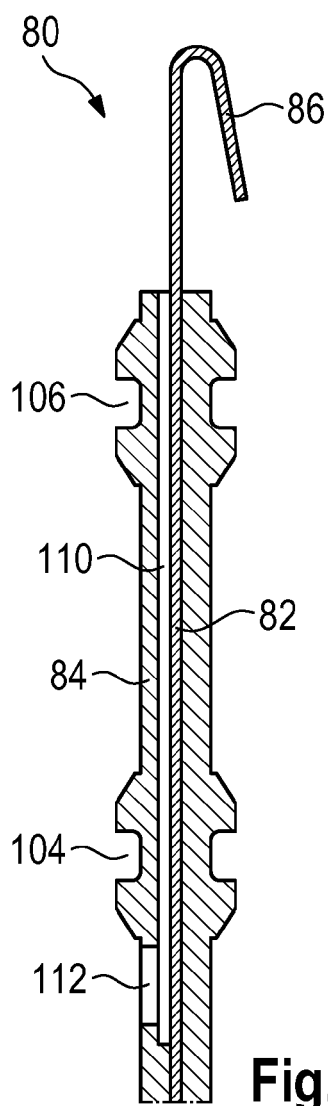


Fig. 17

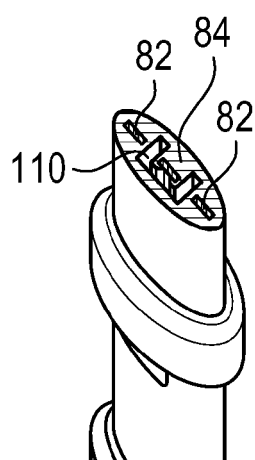


Fig. 18

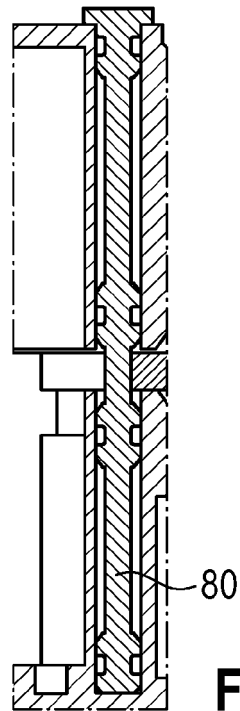


Fig. 19

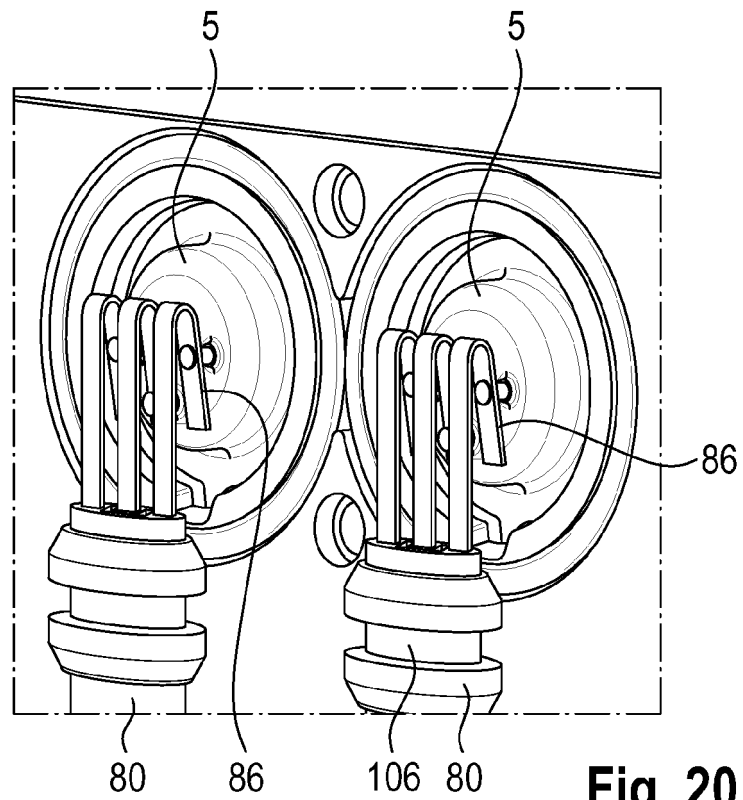


Fig. 20

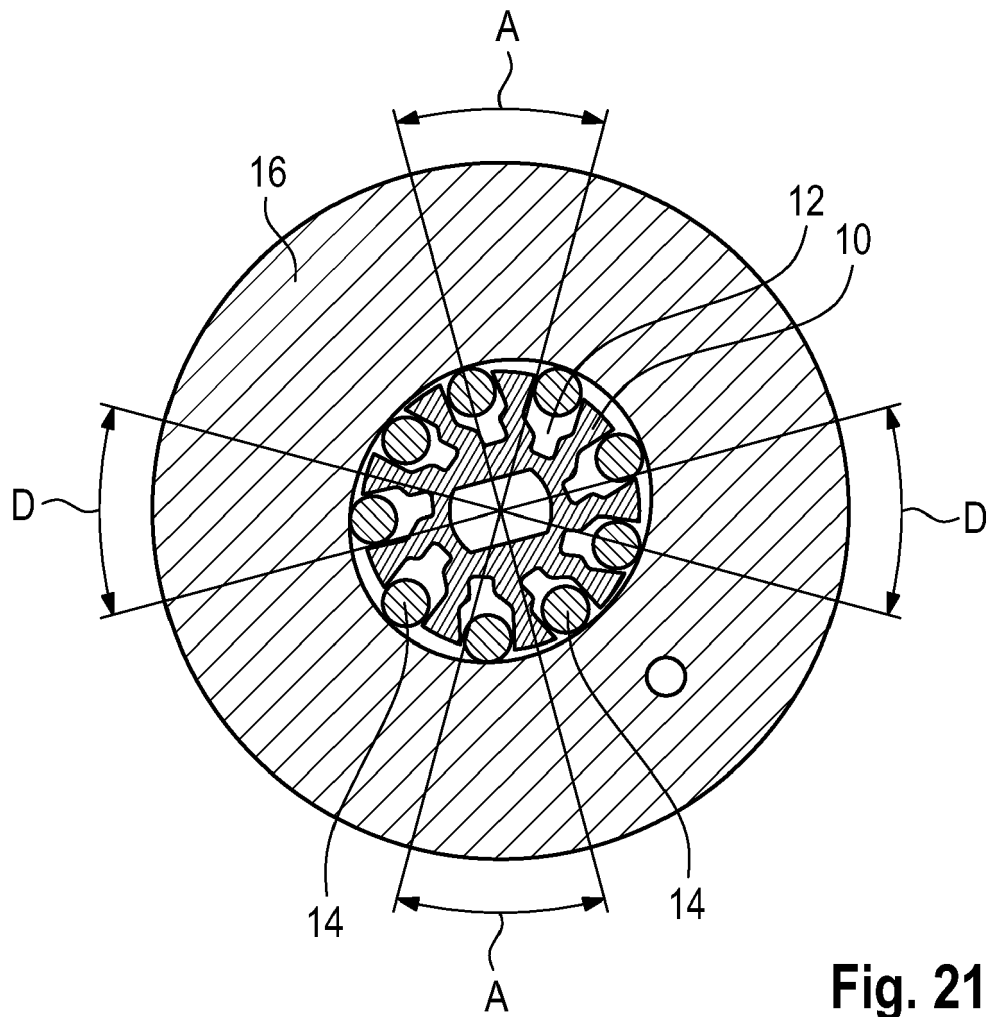


Fig. 21



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 19 19 5238

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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	DE 10 2015 014224 A1 (THOMAS MAGNETE GMBH [DE]) 4 May 2017 (2017-05-04)	1-10	INV. F04B49/08 F04B53/16 F04B53/22
Y	* paragraphs [0018] - [0021] * * abstract *; figures *	1	
Y	US 2012/312655 A1 (HEUBNER WILHELM [DE]) 13 December 2012 (2012-12-13) * abstract *paragraph 27; figures 1,2 *	1	
A	US 6 241 489 B1 (LEWIN DOUGLAS [US] ET AL) 5 June 2001 (2001-06-05) * figure 3 *	1	
A	US 2015/274138 A1 (HEISE ANDREAS [DE]) 1 October 2015 (2015-10-01) * abstract *; figures *	1	
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			F04B
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
Munich		29 October 2019	Pinna, Stefano
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