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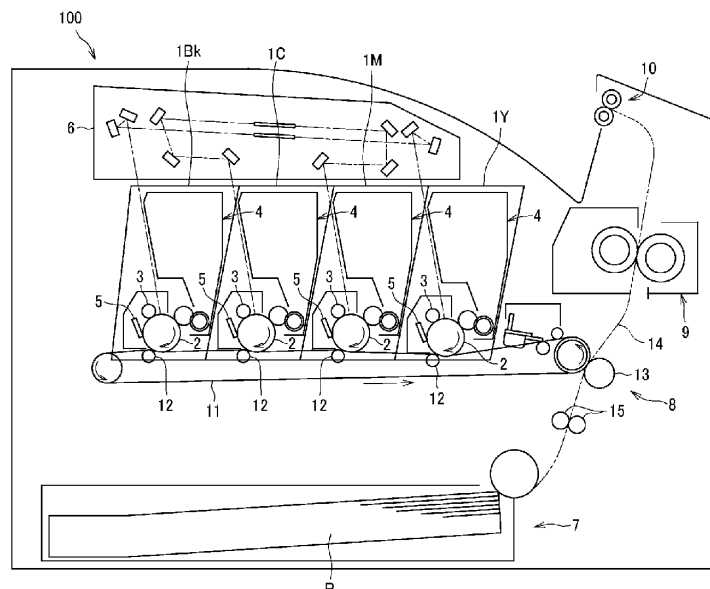
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(54) **NIP FORMING UNIT, HEATING DEVICE, FIXING DEVICE, AND IMAGE FORMING APPARATUS**

(57) A nip forming unit includes a rotating member (20), a pressure member (21), and a separating member (40). The pressure member (21) contacts the rotating member (20) to form a nip portion between the rotating member (20) and the pressure member (21). The separating member (40) separates a sheet from the rotating member (20). The separating member (40) is disposed downstream from the nip portion in a rotating direction

of the rotating member (20). The separating member (40) includes a contact part (40c) to contact the rotating member (20) and a separator part (40b) to contact the sheet to separate the sheet from the rotating member (20). The nip portion, the separator part, and the contact part are arranged in an order of the nip portion, the separator part, and the contact part from upstream to downstream in the rotating direction of the rotating member (20).

FIG. 1





PARTIAL EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

under Rule 62a and/or 63 of the European Patent Convention.
This report shall be considered, for the purposes of
subsequent proceedings, as the European search report

EP 23 21 3014

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
X	US 2011/249996 A1 (ASAKAWA MASAYA [JP] ET AL) 13 October 2011 (2011-10-13) * paragraphs [0045] - [0051]; figures 1-3 *	1-14	INV. G03G15/20
X	JP 2014 085540 A (SHARP KK) 12 May 2014 (2014-05-12) * figures 3,4,13,14 *	1,3-5, 10-14	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			G03G

INCOMPLETE SEARCH

The Search Division considers that the present application, or one or more of its claims, does/do not comply with the EPC so that only a partial search (R.62a, 63) has been carried out.

Claims searched completely :

Claims searched incompletely :

Claims not searched :

Reason for the limitation of the search:

see sheet C

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Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
Munich	24 June 2024	Mandreoli, Lorenzo
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		

EPO FORM 1503 03/82 (P04E07)

INCOMPLETE SEARCH
SHEET C

Application Number

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Claim(s) completely searchable:
1-14

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Claim(s) not searched:
15-21

Reason for the limitation of the search:

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Independent apparatus claim 1 and 15 do not comply with R. 43(2) EPC because they do not fall within any of the exceptional situations set out in paragraph (a), (b) or (c) of Rule 43(2) EPC. In particular, claims 1 and 15 are not alternative solutions because they refer to the same nip forming unit, which is claimed with a slightly different wording and a different level of details. In particular see that the bent portion claimed in claim 15, is also claimed in claim 4, which is dependent from claim 1, therefore the bent portion does not represents an alternative to the nip forming unit of claim 1.

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

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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
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24-06-2024

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For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82