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(54) MULTILAYER ARTICLE FOR FLOORING AND/OR CLADDING

(57) A multilayer article (1) for flooring and/or cladding, comprising:

- a substantially slab-like cladding layer (2) with a polygonal shape in plan view, provided with two mutually opposite main faces (2a, 2b), of which a first face (2a) is designed to remain visible in use, and a second face (2b),
- a substantially slab-like backing layer (5), which is provided with two mutually opposite main faces (5a, 5b), of which a first face (5a) is associated with the second face (2b) of the cladding layer (2) and a second face (5b) is designed to be associated, in use, with a surface to be covered, and
- shape mating means (6) associated with at least one

portion of the perimeter of the backing layer (5) for connection in use to at least one additional article (1) arranged adjacent thereto;

the mating means (6) comprise a substantially undulated profile (7) associated with at least one portion of the perimeter of the backing layer (5) along at least one corresponding side (3, 4) of the cladding layer (2), the undulated profile (7) extending along a longitudinal axis (L) to define a plurality of crests (8) and a plurality of troughs (9) alternating, and the longitudinal axis (L) being arranged, in plan view, within the outline of the cladding layer (2) and substantially parallel to the corresponding side (3, 4).

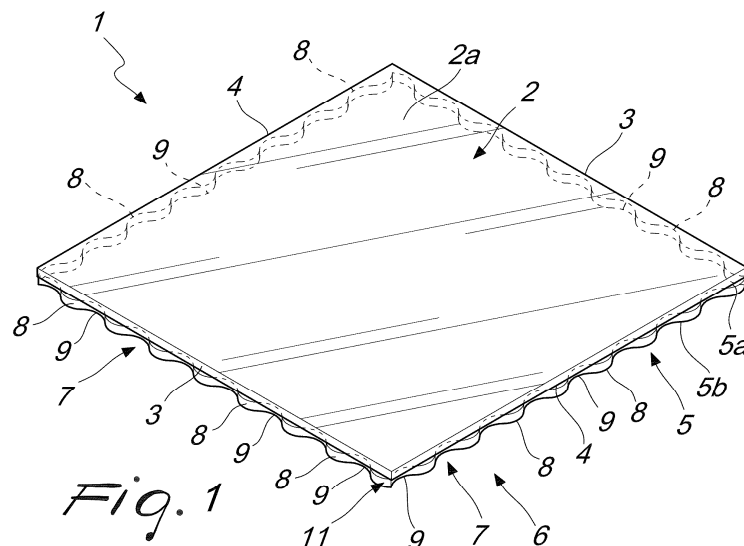


Fig. 1

Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a multilayer article for flooring and/or cladding.

[0002] In the construction sector, various types of articles are known for cladding surfaces. In particular, multilayer articles are known which are constituted by a ceramic slab, intended to remain in view, associated with a backing layer provided with coupling elements in order to allow two or more articles juxtaposed together to be connected.

[0003] For example, Italian patent no. 1,406,037 in the name of the same applicant describes a multilayer article wherein the backing layer has, on the periphery, interlocking coupling elements of the male/female type provided in the thickness.

[0004] This solution, although effective from a functional point of view, is very laborious and as a consequence burdensome at the production phase, as it is necessary to perform stock-removal machining on the profile of the backing layer in order to obtain the male/female interlocking coupling elements.

[0005] This aspect negatively affects the processing times and production costs of the finished articles.

[0006] Furthermore, the need to execute stock-removal machining along the perimeter of the backing layer means it is not possible to reduce the thickness of the article too much, so penalizing the bulk and the overall weight of the article.

[0007] Last but not least, the male interlocking coupling elements, being constituted by a protruding profile of reduced thickness with respect to the backing layer, are more fragile and can be subject to breakage, rendering the entire article unusable.

[0008] The aim of the present invention is to provide a multilayer article for flooring and/or cladding which is capable of improving the known art in one or more of the above-mentioned aspects.

[0009] Within this aim, an object of the invention is to simplify the required machining operations, so reducing the costs and times of production.

[0010] Another object of the invention is to enable a reduction in the thickness and, therefore, of the weight of the article, so facilitating possibilities for its laying and logistics.

[0011] Another object of the present invention is to reduce the risk of accidental breakage and, therefore, the creation of production discards.

[0012] Another object of the present invention is to ensure a stable connection between adjacent articles and to the surface to be covered, so allowing the creation of floors and/or claddings that are long-lasting.

[0013] Another object of the present invention is to overcome the drawbacks of the known art in a manner different from any existing solutions.

[0014] Another object of the invention is to provide a multilayer article for flooring and/or cladding that is highly reliable, easy to implement and low cost.

[0015] This aim and these and other objects which will become more apparent hereinafter are achieved by a multilayer article for flooring and/or cladding according to claim 1, optionally provided with one or more of the characteristics of the dependent claims.

[0016] Further characteristics and advantages of the invention will become more apparent from the description of some preferred, but not exclusive, embodiments of a multilayer article for flooring and/or cladding according to the invention, which are illustrated for the purposes of non-limiting example in the accompanying drawings wherein:

- Figure 1 is a perspective schematic view from above of a first embodiment of the multilayer article for flooring and/or cladding according to the invention;
- Figure 2 is a perspective schematic view from below of the article of Figure 1;
- Figure 3 is a plan schematic view from above of the article of Figure 1;
- Figure 4 is a schematic cross-sectional view taken along the line IV-IV in Figure 3;
- Figure 5 is a schematic enlarged-scale view of the detail indicated in Figure 3;
- Figure 6 is a schematic plan view from above of two articles in the first embodiment at the laying stage;
- Figure 7 is a schematic plan view from above of a portion of the articles of Figure 7 after laying;
- Figure 8 is a perspective schematic view from above of Figure 6;
- Figure 9 is a perspective schematic view from above of Figure 7;
- Figure 10 is a perspective schematic view from below of Figure 6;
- Figure 11 is a perspective schematic view from below of Figure 7;
- Figure 12 is a perspective schematic view from above of a portion of a second embodiment of the article according to the invention;
- Figure 13 is a schematic plan view from above of Figure 12;
- Figure 14 is a perspective schematic view from above of a portion of a third embodiment of the article according to the invention;

- Figure 15 is a schematic cross-sectional view taken along the line XV-XV in Figure 14;
- Figure 16 is a perspective schematic view from below of a fourth embodiment of the article according to the invention;
- Figure 17 is a schematic and partial cross-sectional view taken along the line XVII-XVII of Figure 16.

[0017] With reference to the figures, the reference numeral 1 generally designates a multilayer article for flooring and/or cladding according to the invention.

[0018] The article 1 comprises a substantially slab-like cladding layer 2 with a polygonal shape in plan view, provided with two mutually opposite main faces, of which a first face 2a is designed to remain visible in use and a second face 2b is arranged on the other side thereof.

[0019] The term "substantially" means "except for the usual machining tolerances and tolerances in the assembly of the component parts".

[0020] Furthermore, the term "slab-like" indicates a three-dimensional body with an extension along two dimensions at right angles from each other (generally width and length) that is much greater than the extension along a third dimension at right angles to the plane that comprises the first two (generally thickness). These two dimensions at right angles with each other define a main plane of arrangement of the three-dimensional body. The term "main faces" means the faces of the three-dimensional body that have greater surface extension, and that are substantially parallel to the main plane of arrangement of the three-dimensional body.

[0021] Preferably the main faces 2a and 2b are substantially flat and mutually parallel, and the cladding layer has a substantially constant thickness.

[0022] The cladding layer 2 can have different polygonal shapes in plan view. Preferably the cladding layer 2 has a quadrangular shape in plan view, being delimited by two substantially mutually parallel first sides 3 and by two substantially mutually parallel second sides 4. Even more preferably the first sides 3 and the second sides 4 are substantially at right angles to each other, the cladding layer 2 being substantially square or rectangular in shape, in plan view. As a consequence, the main faces 2a and 3b are also substantially square or rectangular in shape.

[0023] Furthermore the cladding layer 2 is made of a material chosen from ceramic, wooden materials or plastic materials. Preferably the cladding layer 2 is constituted by a ceramic tile or slab.

[0024] The cladding layer 2 is preferably made with materials that do not undergo substantial dilation owing to sudden changes in temperature and/or the presence of humidity, so that each article 1 can be laid with its

cladding layer 2 in contact with those of the articles 1 adjacent thereto so as to obtain flooring without separating gaps.

[0025] The article 1 also comprises a substantially slab-like backing layer 5, which is provided with two mutually opposite main faces of which a first face 5a is associated with the second face 2b of the cladding layer 2 and a second face 5b is designed to be associated, in use, with a surface to be covered, such as a floor or a vertical wall.

[0026] Preferably the main faces 5a and 5b are substantially flat and mutually parallel.

[0027] The backing layer 5 can be made of a material chosen from the group comprising wood and its derivatives, polymers, SPC (Stone Polymer Composite), or WPC (Wood Plastic Composite). Preferably the backing layer 5 is monolithic, but the possibility is not ruled out that it in turn could have a multilayer composition. The backing layer 5 preferably has a thickness comprised between 2mm and 5mm.

[0028] A conventional adhesive material, not shown in the figures, is interposed between the second face 2b of the cladding layer 2 and the first face 5a of the backing layer 5.

[0029] The article 1 further comprises shape mating means 6 associated with at least one portion of the perimeter of the backing layer 5 for connection in use to at least one additional article 1 arranged adjacent thereto.

[0030] According to the invention, such mating means 6 comprise a substantially undulated profile 7 associated with at least one portion of the perimeter of the backing layer 5 along at least one corresponding side 3 or 4 of the cladding layer 2. The undulated profile 7 extends along a longitudinal axis L to define a plurality of crests 8 and a plurality of troughs 9 which alternate and are arranged on opposite sides of that axis. The longitudinal axis L is arranged, in plan view, within the outline of the cladding layer 2 and substantially parallel to the corresponding side 3 or 4.

[0031] The troughs 8 and the crests 9 have a substantially constant amplitude A, i.e. the distance from the longitudinal axis L of the undulated profile 7. The distance of the longitudinal axis L from the corresponding side 3 or 4 is less than the amplitude A of the undulated profile. In this manner the crests 9 protrude from the corresponding side 3 or 4, while the troughs 10 are recessed into it. The distance d of the crests 9 from the corresponding side 3 or 4 of the cladding layer 2 is less than the distance D of the troughs 9 from that same side (Figure 5). In this manner the protrusion of the crests 8 from the perimeter of the cladding layer 2 is less than the recess of the troughs 9.

[0032] During laying, when two or more juxtaposed articles 1 are placed beside each other, each crest 8 of one is contained in a corresponding trough 9 of the other and is held between the surface to be covered, the trough, and the corresponding cladding layer 2.

[0033] Because the longitudinal axis L of the undulated profile 7 is positioned, in plan view, within the outline of the cladding layer 2 and at a distance that is less than the amplitude A of the profile itself, the protrusion of the crests 8 from the perimeter of the cladding layer 2 is less than the recess of the troughs 9. For this reason, during laying the crests 8 and the troughs 9 of one article 1 and those of the adjacent article 1 are not in contact, as a gap is maintained between them.

[0034] When, during laying, the covering layers 2 of the juxtaposed articles 1 are positioned adjacently in mutual contact, a compensating gap 10 is maintained between the undulated profiles 7 of the corresponding backing layers 5 precisely because the longitudinal axes L along which the profiles themselves extend are contained, in plan view, within the outline of the corresponding cladding layers 2 and lie at a distance from the corresponding side 3 or 4 that is less than the amplitude A of the undulated profiles 7. In this manner it is possible to allow a certain degree of dilation of the backing layers 5, for example in the event of sudden changes of temperature or absorption of humidity, while keeping the corresponding cladding layers 2 correctly positioned in mutual contact without generating tensions in those layers, which could lead to the formation of cracks.

[0035] Alternatively, if it is preferred to maintain a gap distance between the perimeters of the cladding layers 2 of adjacent articles 1, it is possible to use conventional spacers during laying, and the coupling between the juxtaposed articles occurs in the same manner as described above, in that the protrusion of the crests 8 is such as to still keep them engaged in the troughs 9 of the adjacent article.

[0036] During laying, each article 1 is positioned with its crests 8 accommodated in corresponding troughs 9 of one or more articles 1 already positioned on the surface to be covered by means of a movement that is substantially parallel to the plane of arrangement of that article (indicated by the arrows in Figures 6, 8, 10).

[0037] For a flooring, it is possible to execute a dry laying of the articles 1, or by means of the interposition of adapted conventional adhesive materials (for example quick-setting glues).

[0038] If, on the other hand, vertical walls or non-horizontal surfaces are to be covered, then adapted conventional adhesive materials (for example quick-setting glues) can be interposed between the second face 5b of the backing layer 5 and the surface to be covered.

[0039] It should be noted that the pitch P comprised between three consecutive intersection nodes N between the undulated profile 7 and the outline, in plan view, of the corresponding side 3 or 4 of the cladding layer 2 is contained an integer number of times in the length of that side (Figure 5).

[0040] In the preferred embodiment the undulated profile 7 extends along all the first sides 3 and the second sides 4, along respective longitudinal axes A. Preferably the pitch P is therefore comprised an integer number of times in the length of the first sides 3 and of the second sides 4.

[0041] The geometry and the dimensions of the undulated profile 7 can vary as a function of the requirements of the case and of the format of the cladding layer 2 to be used.

[0042] Advantageously it should be noted that the perimeter of the backing layer 2 is shaped so as to define the undulated profile 7 integrated in its thickness. The undulated profile 7 affects the entire thickness of the backing layer 5. The backing layer 5 can be cut or formed to define the undulated profile 7 along its perimeter according to predefined shapes and dimensions.

[0043] Since no machining needs to be executed through the thickness of the backing layer 5, it is possible for its extension to be reduced, as a consequence containing its overall thickness and the weight of the article 1.

[0044] Furthermore, at each vertex region 11 defined between a first side 3 and a second side 4 of the cladding layer 2, the undulated profile 7 comprises a crest 8 at either the first or the second side 3 or 4 and a trough 9 at the other of the first or the second side 3 or 4.

[0045] In this manner it is possible to juxtapose up to four articles 1 at respective vertex regions 11, as a function of the laying pattern it is desired to follow.

[0046] Furthermore, along each first or second side 3 or 4, the undulated profile 7 begins with a crest 8 and ends with a trough 9, or vice versa. In more detail, following the perimeter of the cladding layer 2 clockwise (or anti-clockwise), the undulated profile 7 along each first and second side 3 and 4 begins with a crest 8 and ends with a trough 9, or vice versa, so that at each crest 8 along a first or second side 3 or 4, a trough 9 is present along the facing first or second side 3 or 4 (Figure 4).

[0047] Usefully it is possible to have compressible and/or adhesive means 12 associated with the first face 5a of the backing layer 5 at one or more crests 8 protruding from the outline of the cladding layer 2, in order to facilitate holding the articles 1 in position after laying. Such compressible and/or adhesive means 12 can take the form of, for example, small inserts of rubber-like material or adhesive material (e.g. a fragment of double-sided adhesive tape).

[0048] Figures 12 and 13 show a second embodiment of the article 1 provided with such compressible and/or adhesive means.

[0049] Also, in an additional variation, the backing layer 5 along the perimeter proximate to the crests 8 which, in plan view, protrude from the outline of the cladding layer 2 has a reduced thickness so as to define respective guiding regions 13 in order to facilitate the coupling of juxtaposed articles 1. Preferably, an inclined beveling 14 is provided at the crests 8.

[0050] Figures 14 and 15 show a third embodiment of

the article 1, provided with guiding regions 13.

[0051] Finally, in a further variation, the backing layer 5 has a plurality of holes 15 passing through its thickness. Such holes 15 are distributed at the portion of cladding layer 5 that adheres to the cladding layer 2, i.e. not at the protruding crests 8.

[0052] If the article 1 is laid by means of the application of adhesive material, this material fills these holes 15 until it reaches the second face 2b of the cladding layer 2, so ensuring a total adhesion of the backing layer 5 and of the cladding layer 2 to the surface to be covered. This contrivance is particularly useful if the article 1 is applied to vertical walls or non-horizontal surfaces, in that it ensures greater stability and safety.

[0053] Figures 16 and 17 show a fourth embodiment of the article 1, provided with holes 15.

[0054] In an additional embodiment, not shown, there can be an additional functional layer, for example made of thermally insulating or sound-absorbing material, associated with the second face 5b of the backing layer 5. For example, such functional layer can be made of IXPE foam.

[0055] In this case the functional layer can be provided with holes that pass through its thickness, as described above.

[0056] In practice it has been found that the invention fully achieves the intended aim and objects, by providing a multilayer article for flooring and/or cladding that makes it possible to simplify the required machining operations, so reducing the costs and times of production.

[0057] Furthermore the article according to the invention makes it possible to reduce the thickness of the backing layer and therefore the overall thickness and the weight of the article, so facilitating possibilities for its laying and logistics.

[0058] Furthermore the article according to the invention makes it possible to reduce the risk of accidental breakage and, therefore, the creation of production discs.

[0059] Last but not least the article according to the invention makes it possible to obtain a stable connection between adjacent articles and to the surface to be covered, so allowing the creation of floors and/or claddings that are long-lasting.

[0060] The invention, thus conceived, is susceptible of numerous modifications and variations, all of which are within the scope of the appended claims. Moreover, all the details may be substituted by other, technically equivalent elements.

[0061] In practice the materials employed, provided they are compatible with the specific use, and the contingent dimensions and shapes, may be any according to requirements and to the state of the art.

[0062] The disclosures in Italian Patent Application No. 102025000008166 from which this application claims priority are incorporated herein by reference.

[0063] Where technical features mentioned in any

claim are followed by reference signs, such reference signs have been inserted for the sole purpose of increasing the intelligibility of the claims and accordingly such reference signs do not have any limiting effect on the interpretation of each element identified by way of example by such reference signs.

Claims

1. A multilayer article (1) for flooring and/or cladding, comprising:

- a substantially slab-like cladding layer (2) with a polygonal shape in plan view, provided with two mutually opposite main faces (2a, 2b), of which a first face (2a) is designed to remain visible in use, and a second face (2b),
- a substantially slab-like backing layer (5), which is provided with two mutually opposite main faces (5a, 5b), of which a first face (5a) is associated with the second face (2b) of said cladding layer (2) and a second face (5b) is designed to be associated, in use, with a surface to be covered, and
- shape mating means (6) associated with at least one portion of the perimeter of said backing layer (5) for connection in use to at least one additional article (1) arranged adjacent thereto,

characterized in that said shape mating means (6) comprise a substantially undulated profile (7) associated with at least one portion of the perimeter of said backing layer (5) along at least one corresponding side (3, 4) of said cladding layer (2), the substantially undulated profile (7) extending along a longitudinal axis (L) to define a plurality of crests (8) and a plurality of troughs (9) alternating, and the longitudinal axis (L) being arranged, in plan view, within the outline of the cladding layer (2) and substantially parallel to the corresponding side (3, 4).

2. The article (1) according to claim 1, **characterized in that** said plurality of crests (8) and said plurality of troughs (9) have a substantially constant amplitude (A) with respect to said longitudinal axis (L), the distance (d) of the crests (8) from the corresponding side (3, 4) of the cladding layer (2) being less than the distance (D) of the troughs (9) from said side.

3. The article (1) according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the pitch (P) comprised between three consecutive intersection nodes (N) of said substantially undulated profile (7) with the outline, in plan view, of said at least one corresponding side (3, 4)

of said cladding layer (2) is contained an integer number of times in the length of said side.

4. The article (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said at least one portion of the perimeter of said backing layer (5) is shaped so as to define said substantially undulated profile (7) integrated in its thickness. 5

5. The article (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said cladding layer (2) is substantially quadrangular in plan view and said corresponding sides (3, 4) comprise a pair of first sides (3) which are substantially parallel and a pair of second sides (4) which are substantially parallel, and **in that** said substantially undulated profile (7) extends along the entire perimeter of said cladding layer (2) at said first and second sides (3, 4) along respective longitudinal axes (A). 10
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6. The article (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said pitch (P) is contained an integer number of times in the length of said first and second sides (3, 4). 25

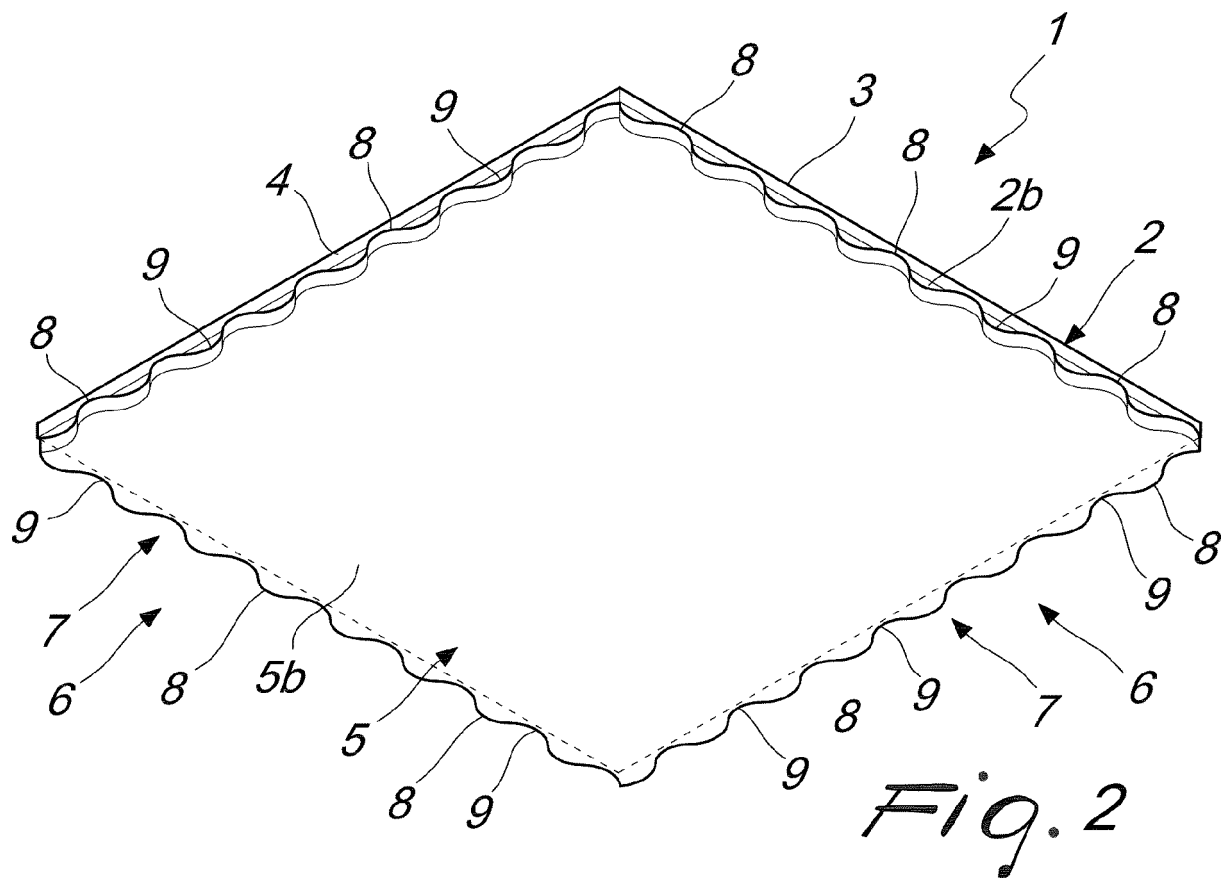
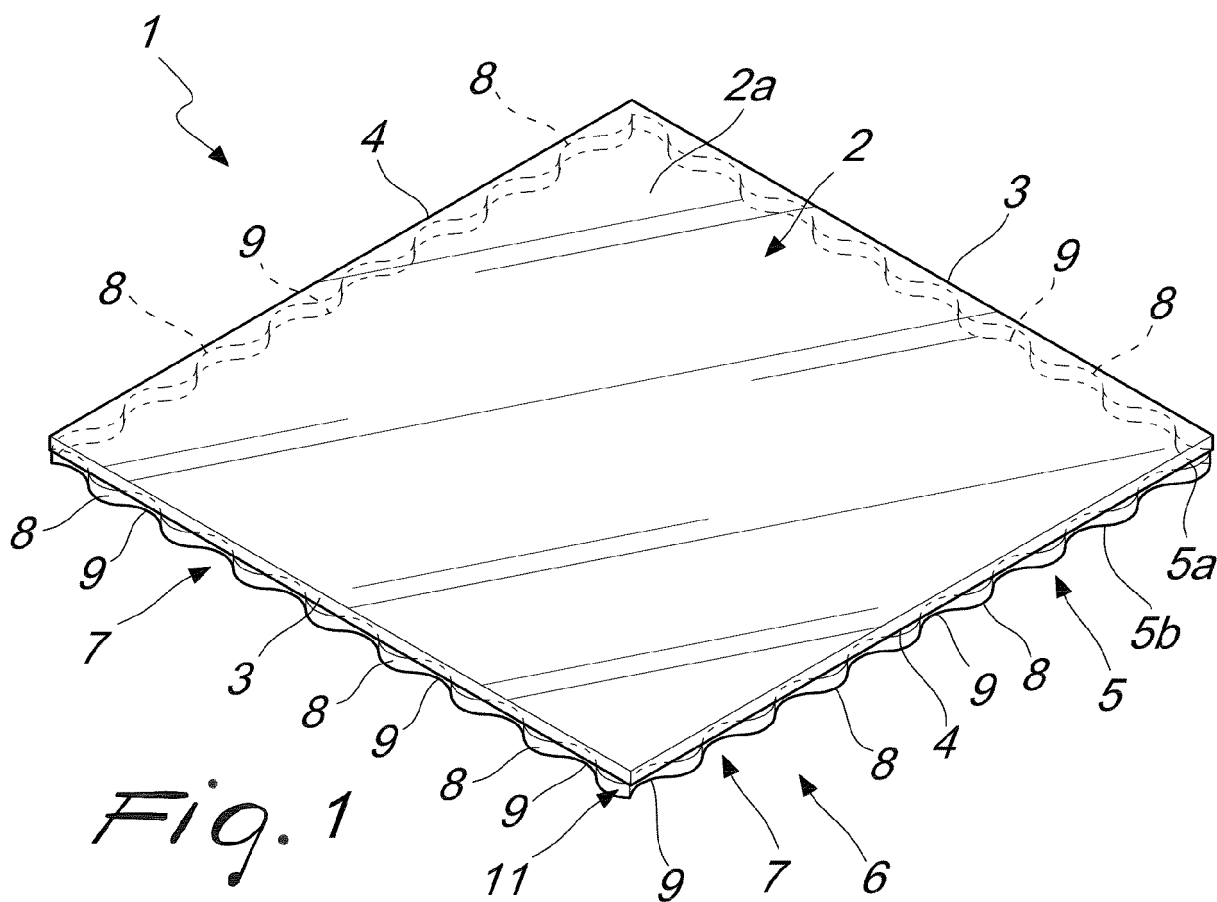
7. The article (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** at each vertex region (11) defined between a first side of said first sides (3) and a second side of said second sides (4) of said cladding layer (2) said undulated profile (7) comprises a crest (8) at either the first or the second side (3, 4) and a trough (9) at the other of the first or the second side (3, 4). 30

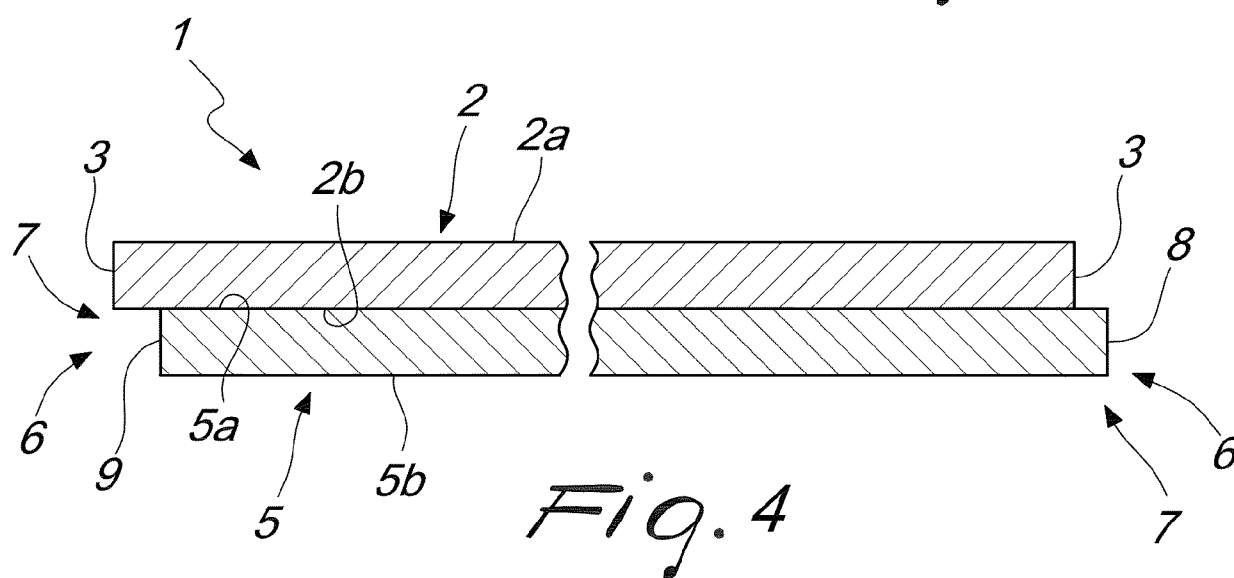
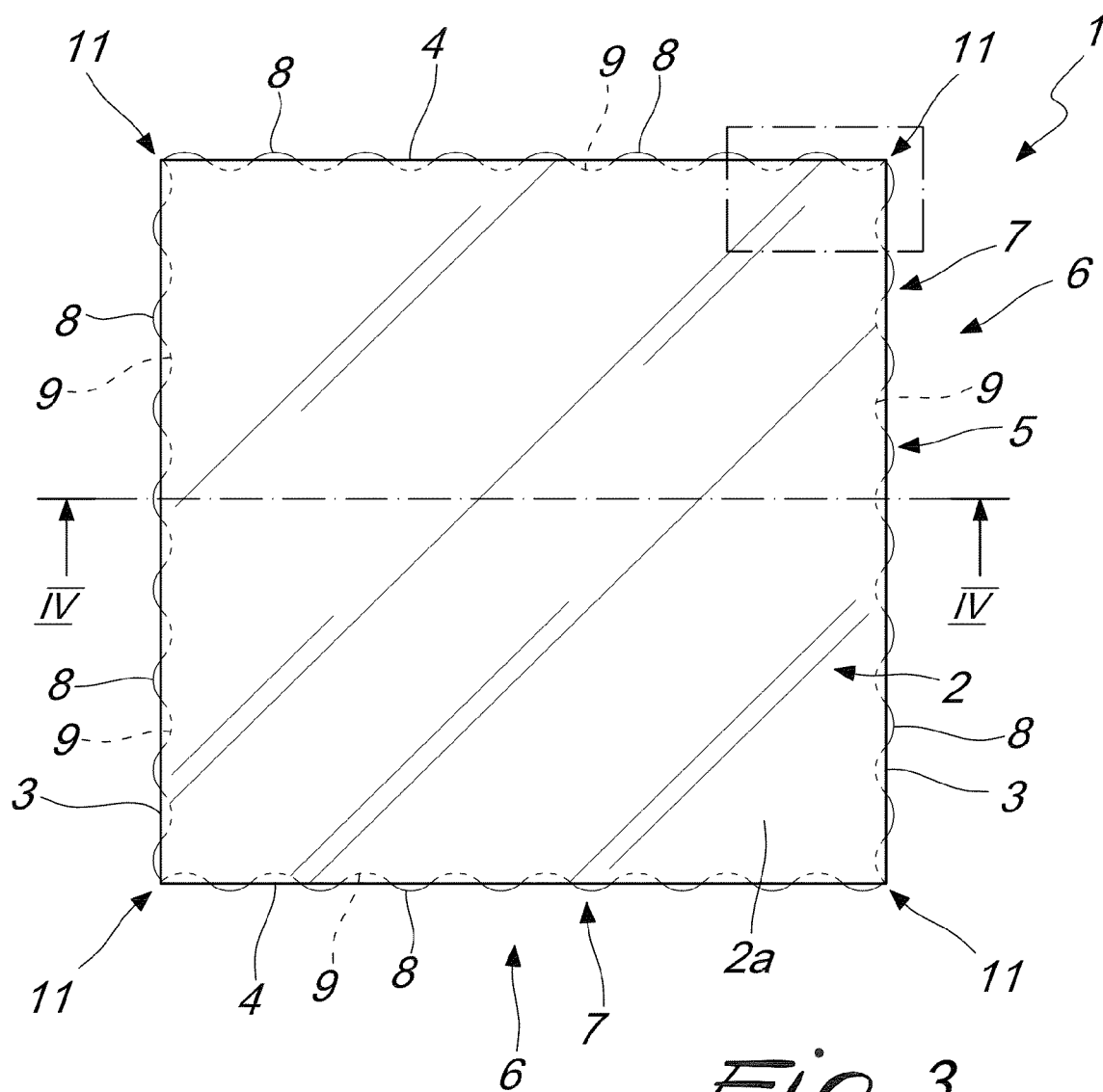
8. The article (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** along each of said first or second sides (3, 4) said undulated profile (7) begins with a crest (8) and ends with a trough (9) or vice versa. 35
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9. The article (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** it comprises compressible and/or adhesive means (12) associated with the first face (5a) of the backing layer (5) at at least one crest (8) which protrudes from the outline of said cladding layer (2). 45

10. The article (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said backing layer (5) proximate to said crests (9) has a reduced thickness so as to define respective guiding regions (13). 50

11. The article (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said backing layer (5) comprises a plurality of holes (15) that pass through its thickness. 55





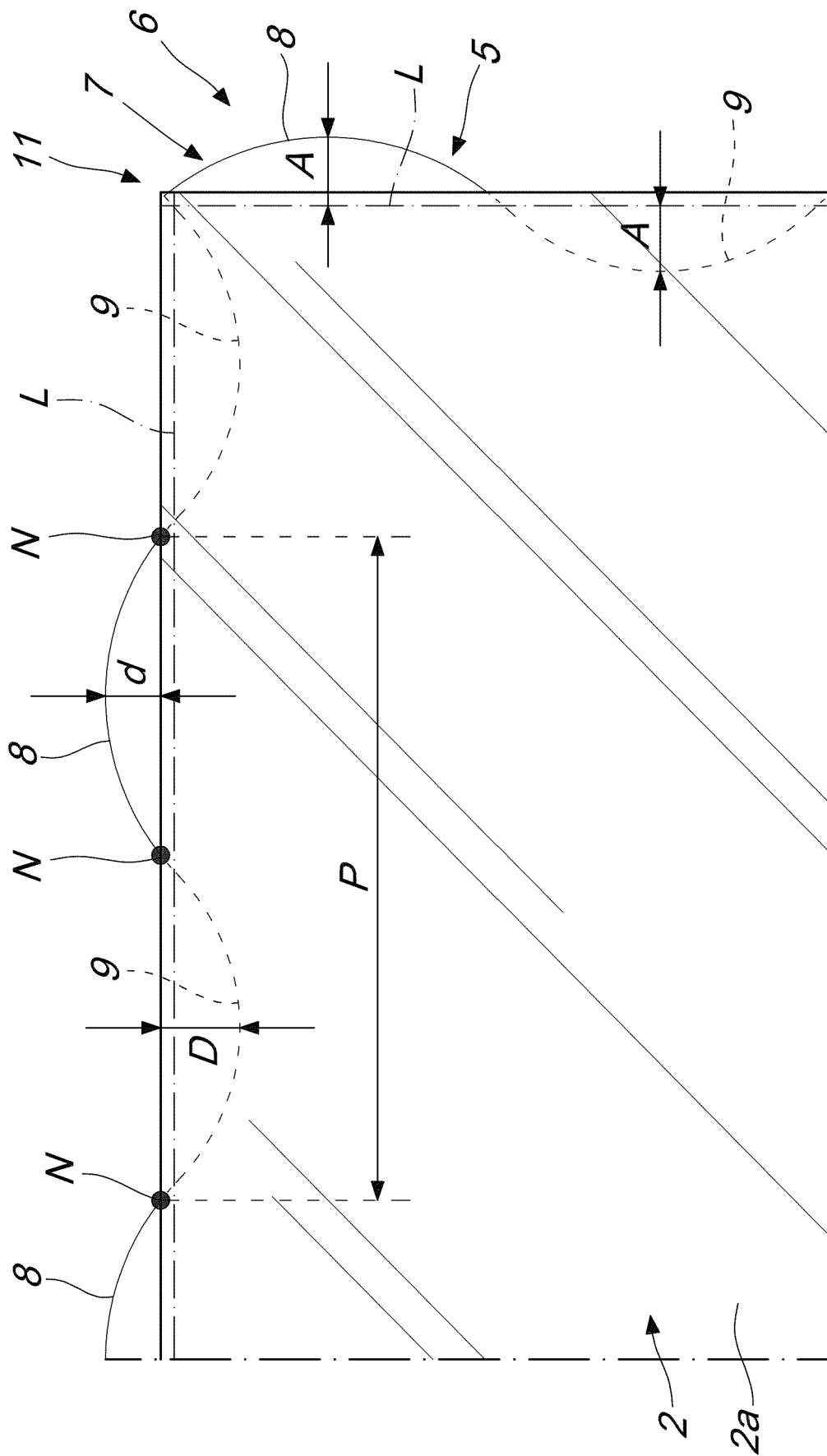
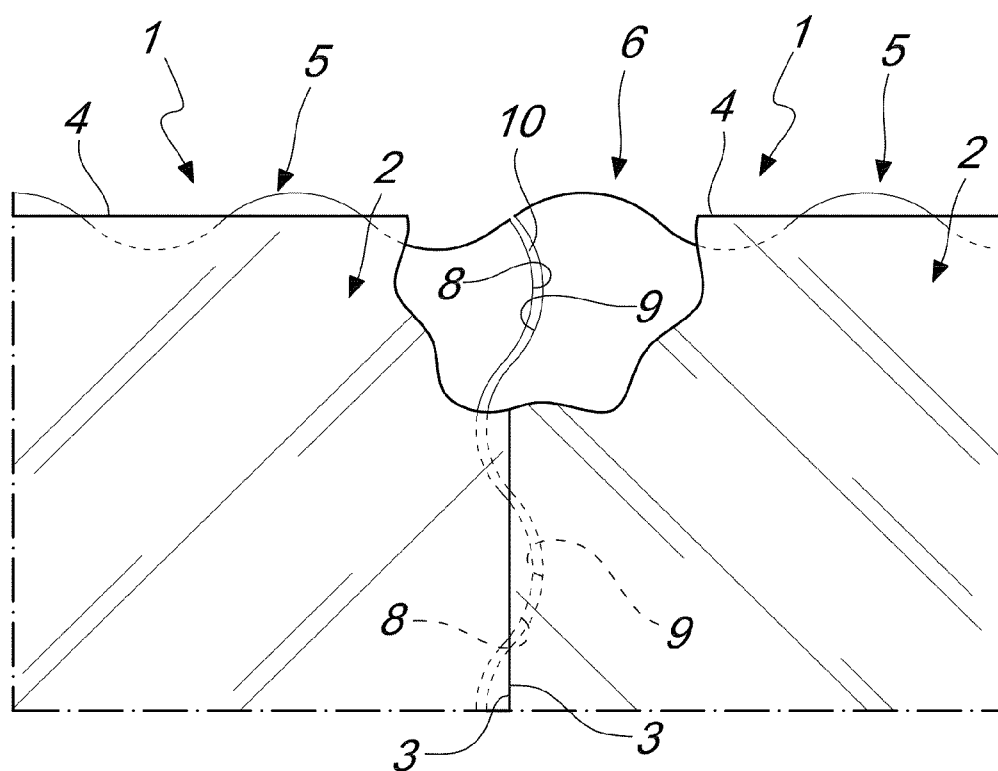
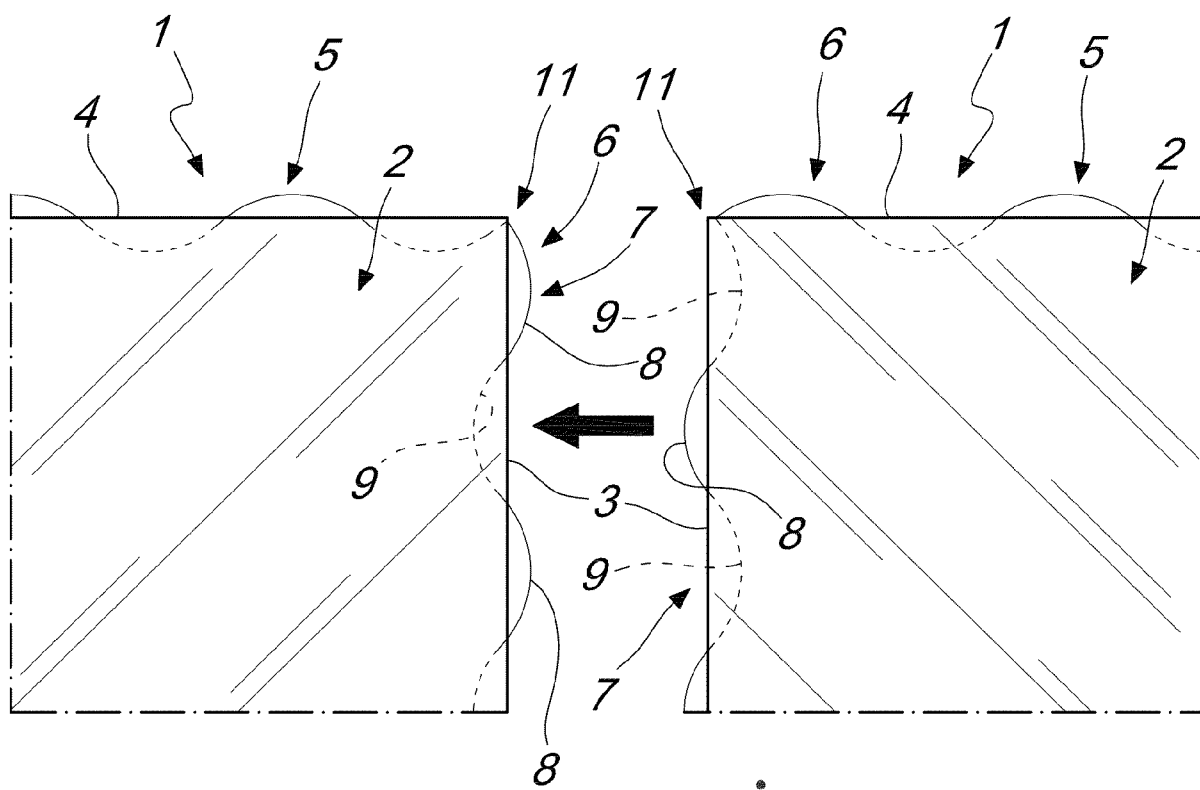
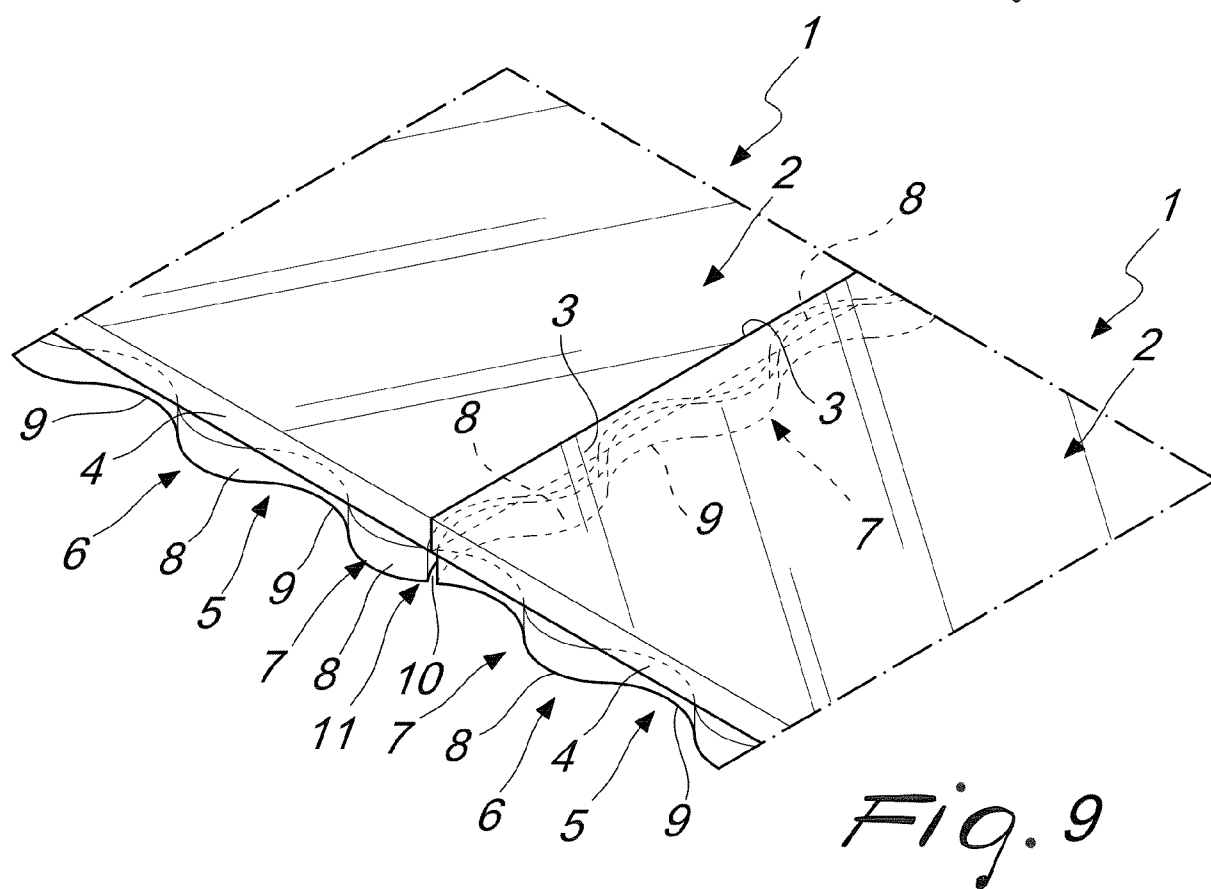
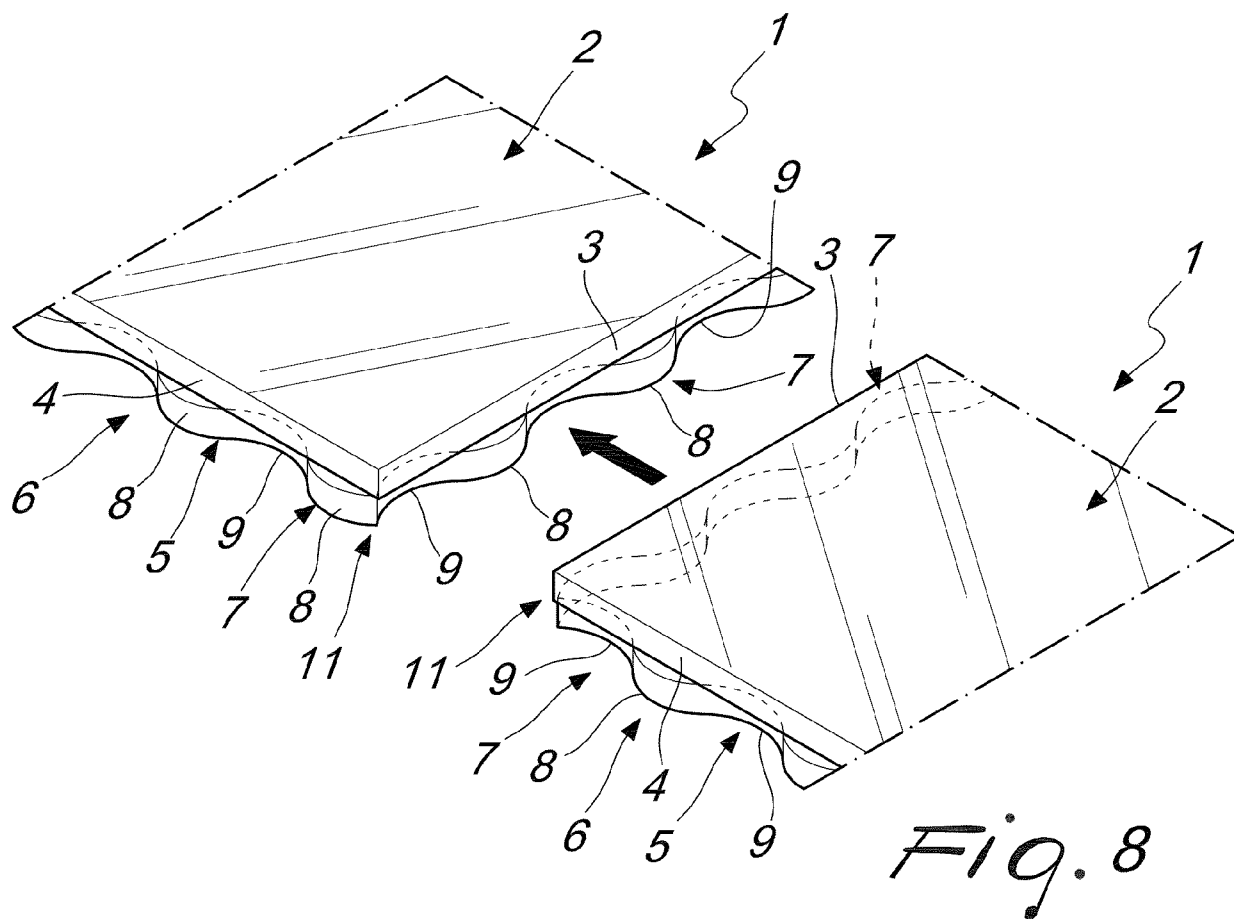
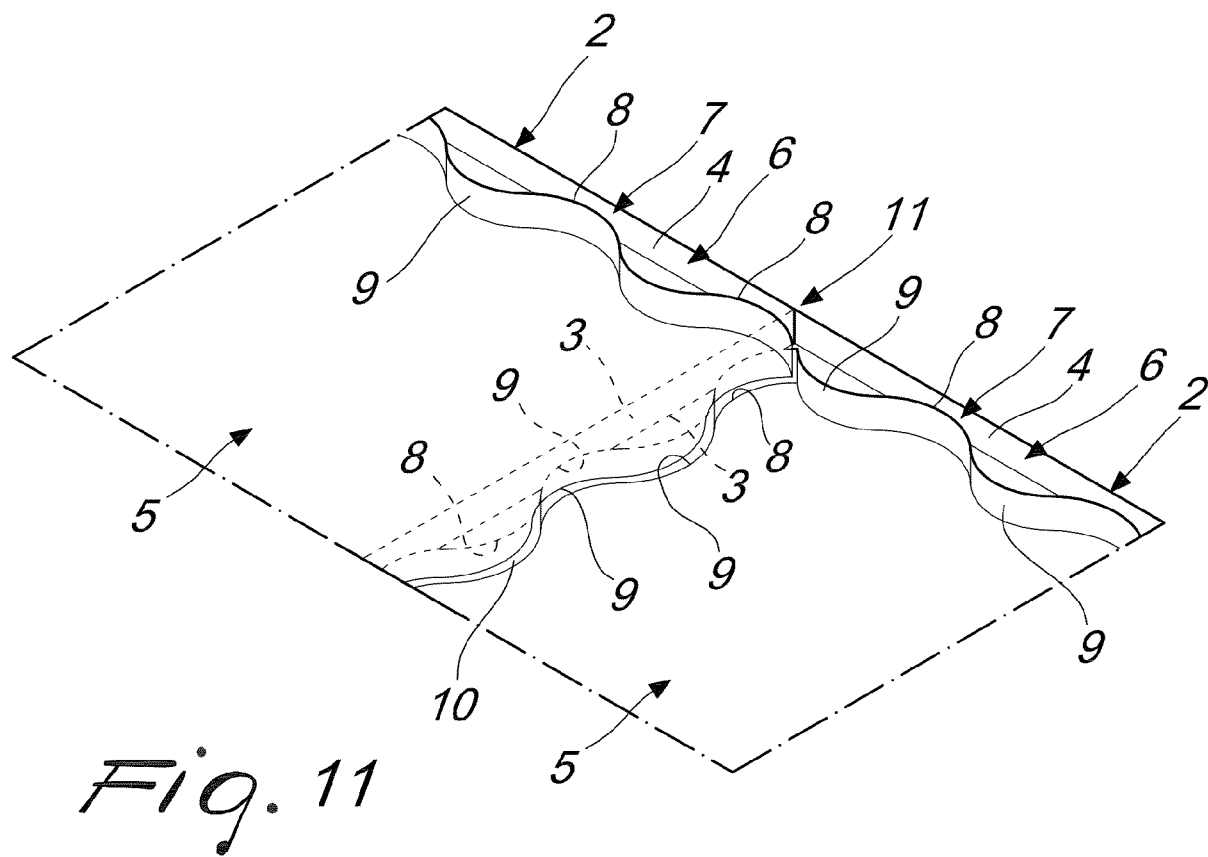
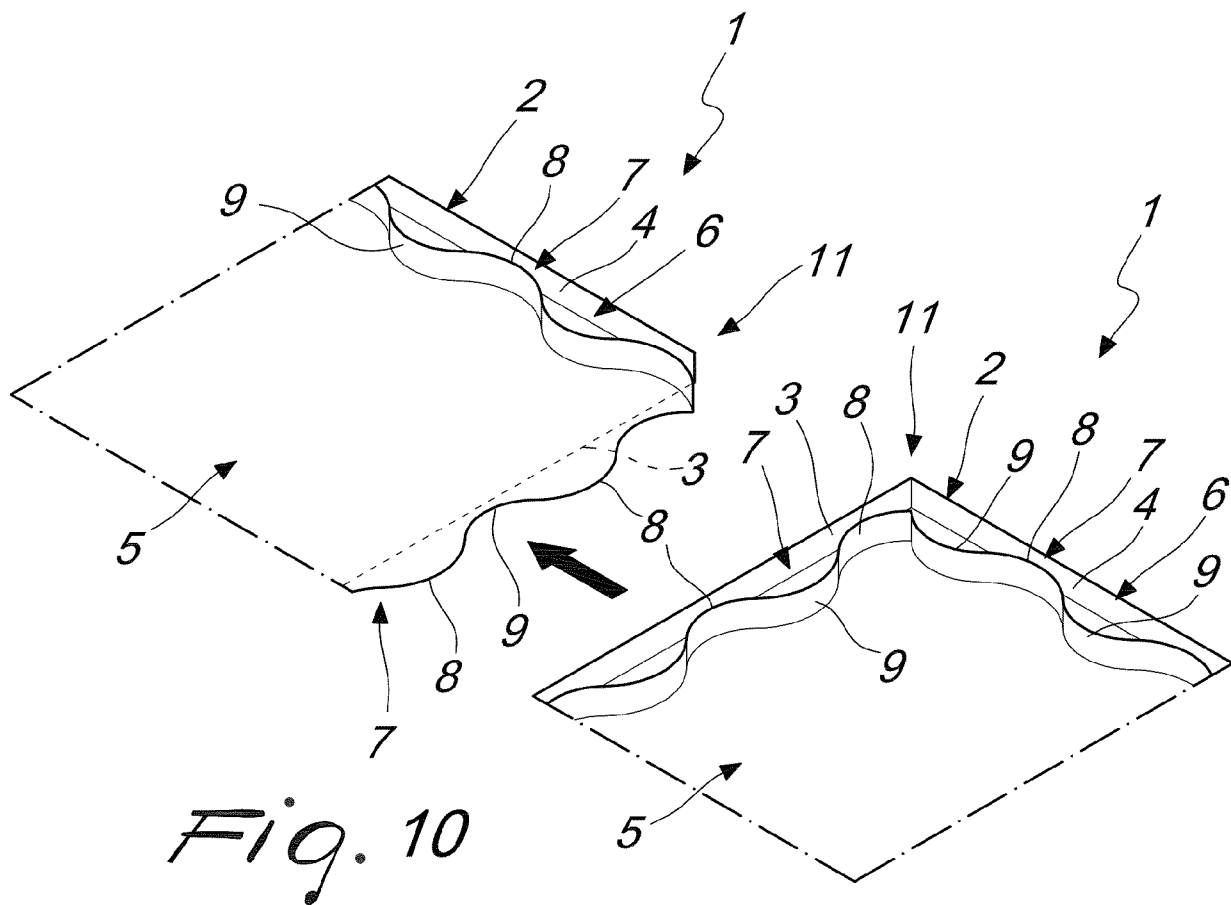
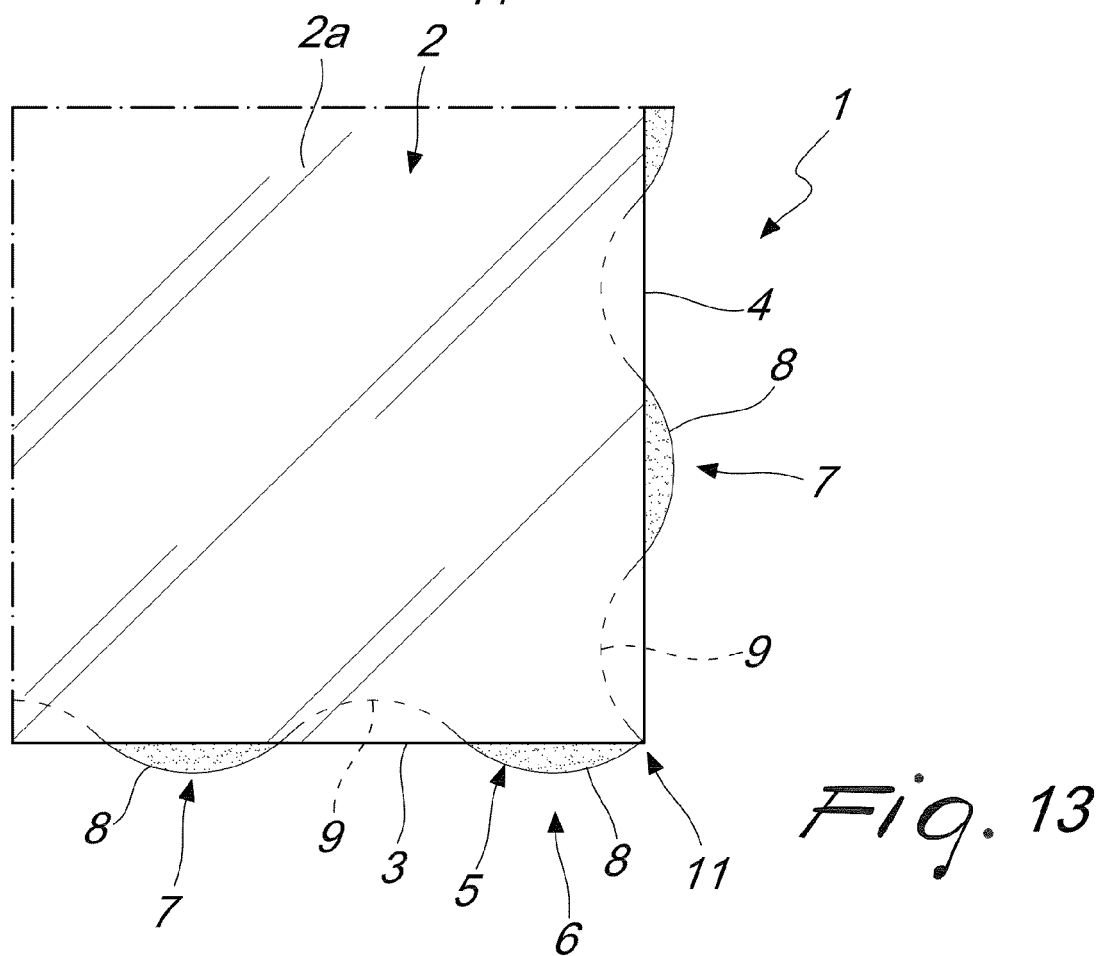
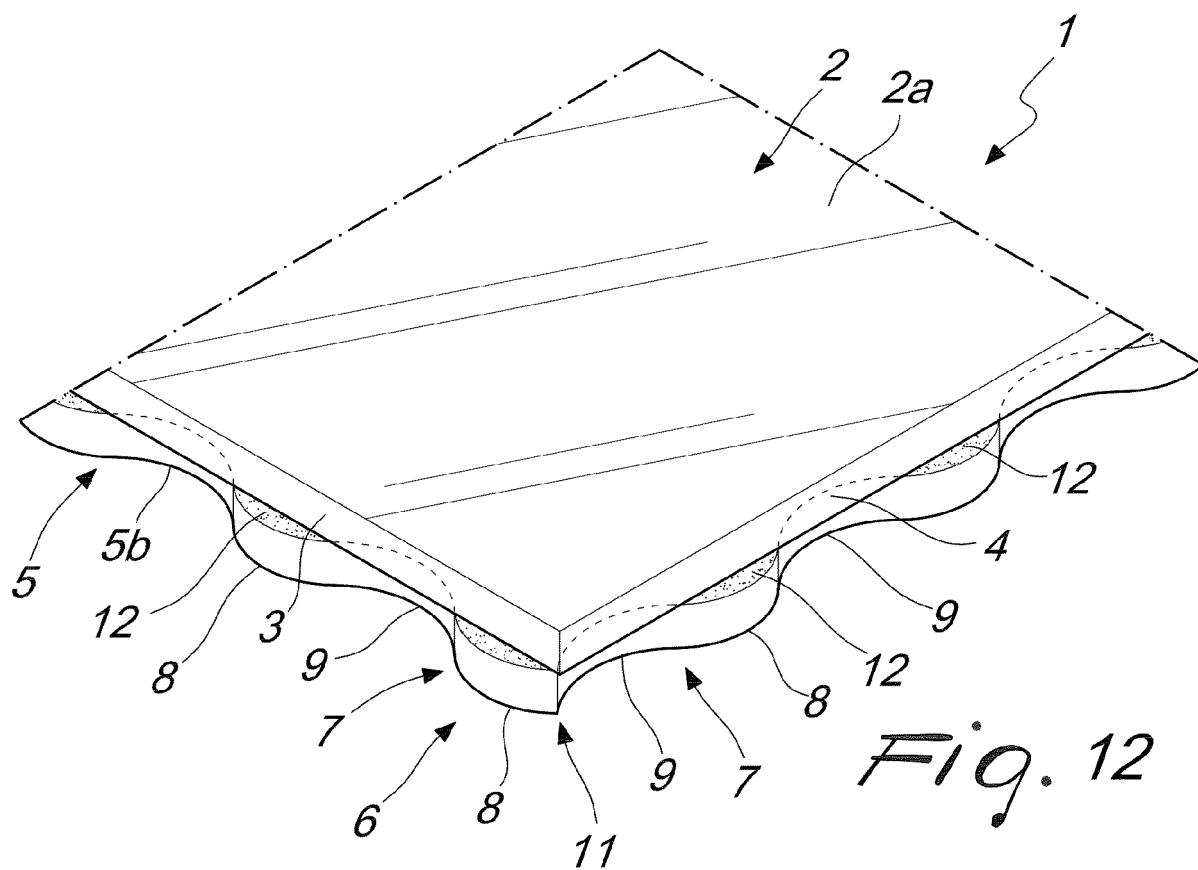


Fig. 5









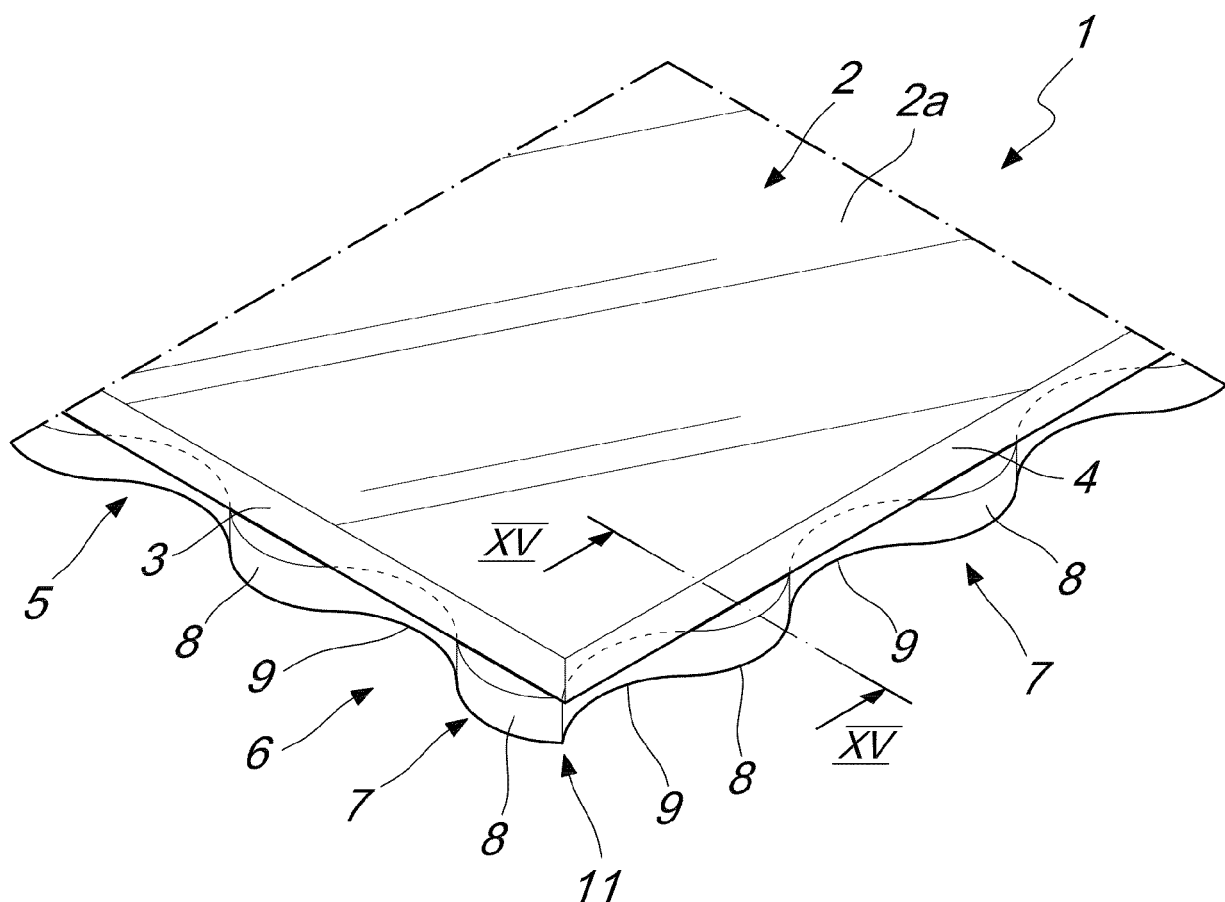


Fig. 14

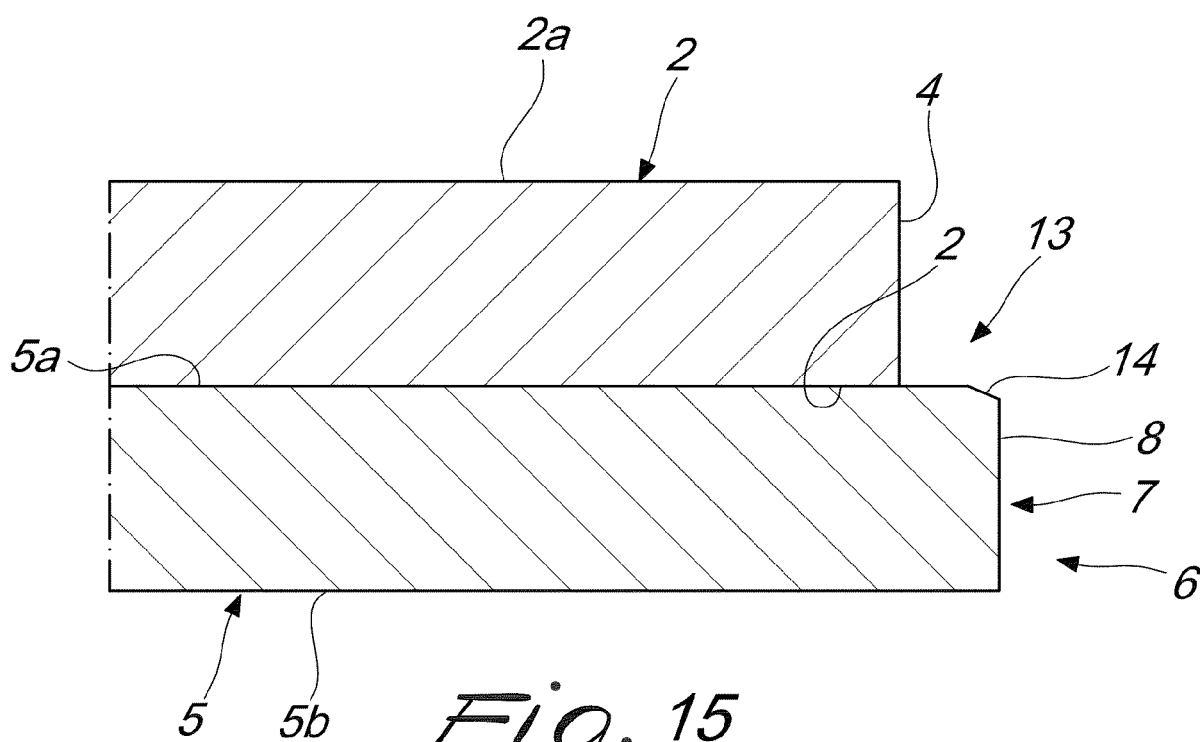


Fig. 15

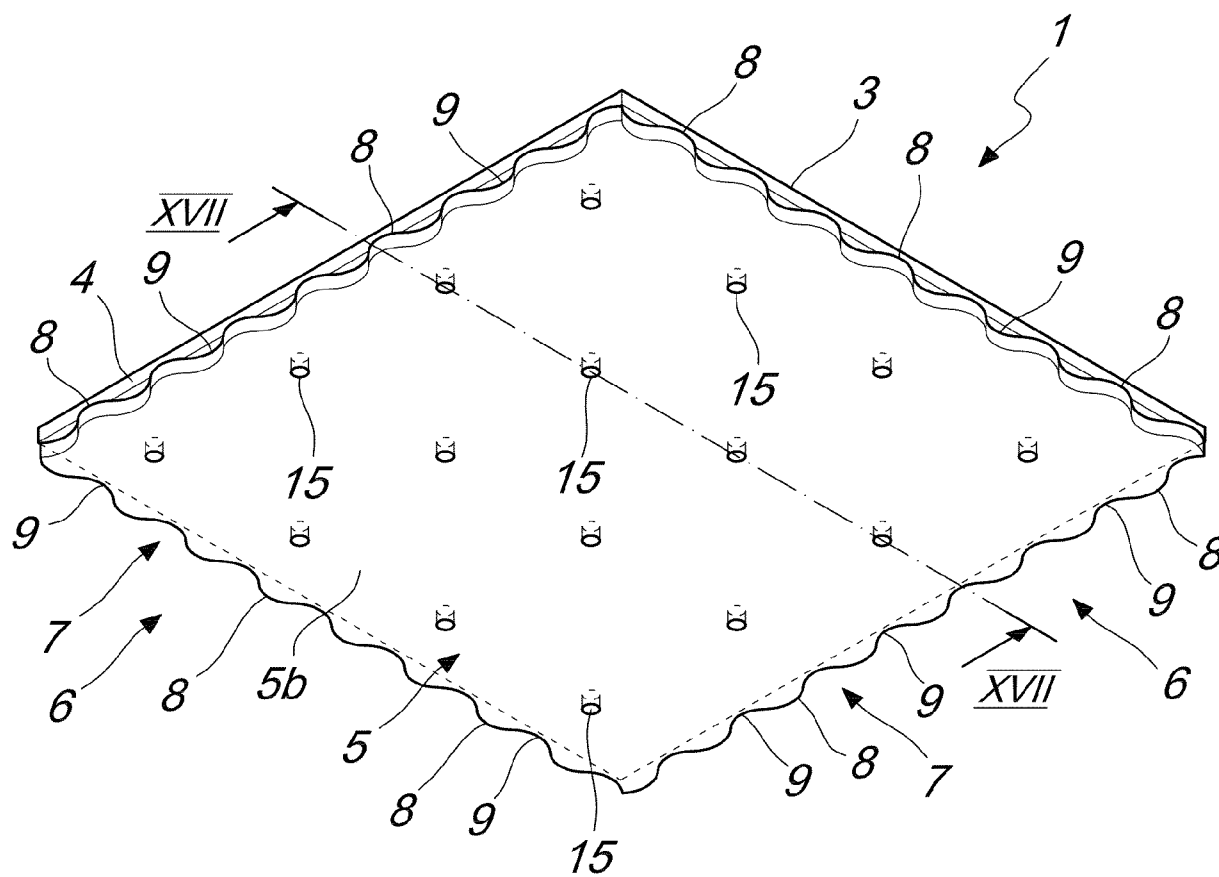


Fig. 16

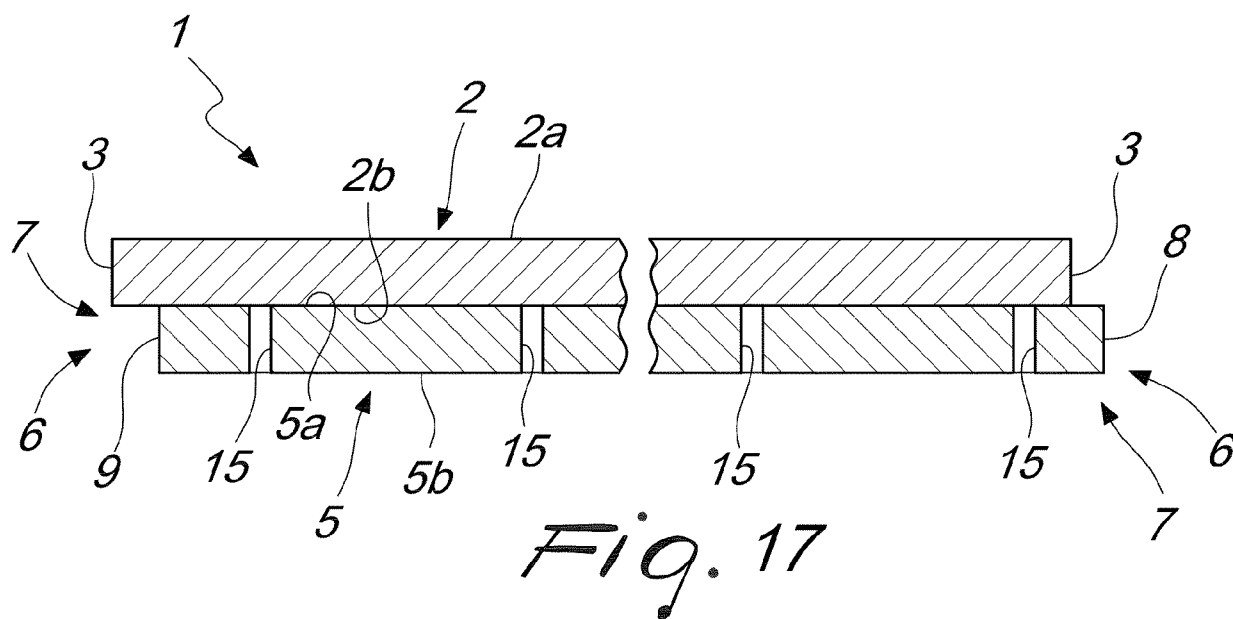


Fig. 17



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 25 22 5209

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	EP 3 620 589 A1 (GERFLOR [FR]) 11 March 2020 (2020-03-11)	1,2,4	INV. E04F13/08
Y	* figures 1-5 *	3,6-9,11	E04F13/14
A	* paragraph [0029] - paragraph [0033] * * paragraph [0048] - paragraph [0051] *	5,10	E04F15/02 E04F15/08
Y	WO 2004/090257 A1 (SYSTEM SPA [IT]; GOZZI FRANCO [IT]) 21 October 2004 (2004-10-21) * figures 1-5 * * page 3, line 10 - line 13 *	3,6-8	
Y	DE 101 44 801 A1 (DEBOLON DESSAUER BODENBELAEGE [DE]) 27 March 2003 (2003-03-27) * figures 1,3,6 * * paragraph [0017] *	9	
Y	DE 20 2007 006447 U1 (FLECK OSKAR [DE]) 16 August 2007 (2007-08-16) * figures 3a-3d * * paragraph [0088] *	11	
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			E04F
Place of search			Examiner
Munich			Estorgues, Marlène
Date of completion of the search			
9 February 2026			
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			
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