



(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**

(43) Date of publication:
26.06.2019 Bulletin 2019/26

(51) Int Cl.:
G08C 17/02 (2006.01)

(21) Application number: **17210451.5**

(22) Date of filing: **22.12.2017**

(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
Designated Validation States:
MA MD TN

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Remarks:

Amended claims in accordance with Rule 137(2) EPC.

(54) **AUTOMATION CONTROL SYSTEM FOR CONTROLLING A MACHINE FUNCTION OF REMOTE MACHINE**

(57) The disclosure relates to an automation control system (100) for wirelessly controlling a machine function of remote machine (121, 131), the automation control system (100) comprising: a base station (101); and a remote control receiver (111, 113) being arranged spaced apart from the base station (101); the base station (101) being configured to transmit a control signal for controlling the machine function using a transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109) that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver according to a mobile

communications technology; and wherein the control receiver (111, 113) comprises a communication interface (115, 125) being configured to receive the transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109), a processor (117, 127) being configured to extract a received version of the control signal from the received transmission beam, and an electrical interface (119, 129) which is connectable with an electrical interface of the machine for controlling the machine function of the machine (121, 131) upon the basis of the received version of the control signal.

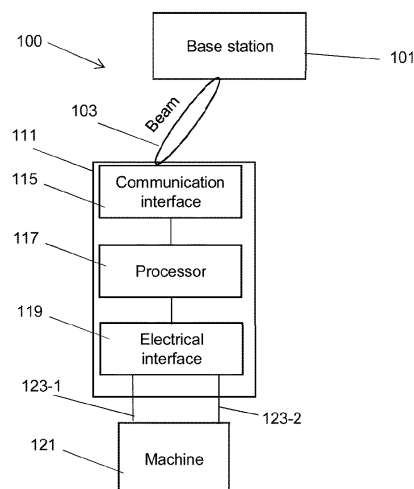


Fig. 1

Description

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present disclosure relates to the field of automation control systems.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Automation control systems are widely deployed for controlling machines in manufacturing industries. In this context, reliable control of machine functions of remote machines, such as emergency stop or speed control, are of particular interest.

[0003] In order to transmit a control signal to a machine, a telecommunication infrastructure is required. Traditionally, in order to remotely control a machine, the Profibus technology and the Profinet protocol can be used.

[0004] The transmission of the control signals is usually performed using a wired network. However, wired networks are inflexible and expensive, in particular in multichannel control systems. The infrastructure costs associated with wired networks can be reduced using wireless LAN (WLAN) communications. However, WLAN communication systems are designed for short range which is typically 30m. Moreover, a reliability of WLAN communication systems can be reduced in difficult channel conditions, in particular with increasing number of network entities communicating over the WLAN communication infrastructure or other radio technologies interfering by using the same frequency resources as WLAN.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] It is an object of the disclosure to provide an automation control system with improved telecommunication infrastructure.

[0006] The foregoing and other objects are achieved by the subject matter of the independent claims. Further implementation forms are apparent from the dependent claims, the description and the figures.

[0007] The disclosure is based on the finding, that the above object can be solved when deploying a mobile communication structure which is usually used for mobile communications of e.g. smartphones for wirelessly controlling a machine or an actuator of a machine.

[0008] The disclosure relates according to a first aspect to an automation control system for wirelessly controlling a machine function of remote machine, the automation control system comprising: a base station; and a remote control receiver being arranged spaced apart from the base station; wherein the base station being configured to transmit a control signal for controlling the machine function using a transmission beam that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver according to a mobile communications technology; and wherein the control receiver comprises a communication interface being configured to receive the transmission beam,

a processor being configured to extract a received version of the control signal from the received transmission beam, and an electrical interface which is connectable with an electrical interface of the machine for controlling the machine function of the machine upon the basis of the received version of the control signal.

[0009] Using mobile communications technology instead of WLAN enables transmitting the control signal via one, two or more channels according to mobile communication standards. Clearly, the infrastructure costs might be increased when compared to using e.g. WLAN transmission. However, mobile communication technologies support establishing dedicated communication channels for transmitting control signals with an increased reliability.

[0010] The base station can have features of base stations for supporting mobile communications, and can be a micro-cell base station. The cell covered by the base station corresponds to the size of the area with machines that should be controlled.

[0011] In order to dedicatedly transmit the control signal towards a respective machine, the control receiver can be uniquely associated or co-located with the machine too be controlled. However, the same control receiver can be providing for controlling several machines.

[0012] The control receiver acts in the communication network for example as a subscriber having its own subscriber identity. Therefore, each control receiver and thus each machine can dedicatedly be addressed by the base station.

[0013] The control receiver is electrically connectable or connected with the machine using the electrical interface, for example a clamp connector. Therefore, the control signal, which corresponds to its received version when not negatively affected by the communication channel, can be provided to the machine using e.g. the infrastructure for wired connections.

[0014] The base station can be configured to send more than one transmission beam towards the remote control receiver, each transmission beam forming a communication channel. In this way, e.g. two safety channels can be provided.

[0015] Moreover, the base station can be configured to communicate with a plurality of distributed control receivers for controlling functions of a plurality of machines in the same way as described with respect to only one remote control receiver.

[0016] In an embodiment, the remote receiver can be arranged or directly implemented in the machine.

[0017] Therefore, according to an example, the automation control system comprises the machine and the remote receiver implemented in the machine.

[0018] According to an example, the base station is configured to generate the control signal for controlling the machine function. Generally, the base station can be configured to control functions of the machine or functions of a plurality of machines. In other words, the base station can implement an automation controller.

[0019] However, the automation controller can be a separate entity and can provide the control signals to the base station for transmission using a wired or wireless communication channel. The automation controller can form another subscriber which communicates with the respective remote controller via the base station, which provides access to the remote controller.

[0020] According to an example, the machine function is a safety function such as emergency stop or speed control or power off/on. In another example, the machine function can be e.g. a service function for servicing the machine.

[0021] According to an example, the base station can also use the transmission beam for transmitting time-sensitive information, i.e. real-time information, in particular control information for controlling time-sensitive operations of the machine, such as speed control, movement control, in particular in robotics.

[0022] According to an example, the base station can also use the transmission beam for transmitting non-time-sensitive information, i.e. non-real-time-information, such as parameters for parametrizing the machine, such as temperature or speed thresholds.

[0023] The received version of the control signal corresponds in an example to the transmitted version of the control signal. However, in particular upon noisy channel conditions, the received version of the control signal may be affected by transmission errors. Therefore, a two-channel transmission and control can be advantageous.

[0024] According to an example, the base station is further configured to transmit the control signal using a second transmission beam that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver according to a mobile communications technology; wherein the communication interface is configured to receive the second transmission beam; the processor is configured to extract a second received version of the control signal from the received second transmission beam; and wherein the electrical interface is configured to output the first received version of the control signal and the second received version of the control signal for a two-channel machine control.

[0025] The two transmission beams support two-channel communications, in particular two safety channels for controlling a safety machine function.

[0026] According to an example, the base station comprises a beamforming antenna with an array of antenna elements, in particular phased antenna elements, wherein the base station is configured to drive the array of antenna elements using a beamforming signal to generate the transmission beam.

[0027] Thereby, multiple channels forming e.g. safety channels can be established using space diversity. The respective beam can be fixedly directed towards the respective control receiver.

[0028] According to an example, the base station is configured to drive different sub-arrays of the array of antenna elements to generate the respective transmis-

sion beam or different transmission beams. The subarrays can be driven using different phases in order to generate different beams.

[0029] According to an example, the base station is configured to generate the respective transmission beam using a beamforming codebook according to a MIMO communication technology.

[0030] The codebook can for example indicate an amplitude and/or a phase of a signal driving the respective antenna element or several antenna elements to generate the spatially directed beam. For example, the codebook can have an entry $1 + j1$ defining an amplitude and a phase of a complex signal.

[0031] According to an example, the communication interface of the remote control receiver comprises a receiving antenna comprising an array of antenna elements for receiving the transmission beam. Thereby, communication using beam forming can be supported.

[0032] According to an example, the automation control system is further adapted for controlling a machine function of a further remote machine arranged spaced apart from the remote machine, further comprising a further remote control receiver being associated with the further remote machine wherein the base station is configured to transmit a further control signal for controlling the machine function of the further machine using a third transmission beam and to transmit the further control signal using a fourth transmission beam, wherein the third transmission beam is spatially directed towards the further control receiver, and wherein the fourth transmission beam is spatially directed towards the further control receiver.

[0033] According to an example, the further control receiver comprises: a communication interface being configured to receive the third transmission beam and the fourth transmission beam, a processor being configured to extract a first received version of the further control signal from the third received transmission beam, to extract a second received version of the further control signal from the fourth received transmission beam; and an electrical interface which is connectable with an interface of the further machine for controlling the machine function of the further machine upon the basis of the first received version of the control signal and the second received version of the control signal.

[0034] The features of the automation control system as described in connection with only one control receiver correspondingly apply for each further control receiver of the automation control system with a plurality of control receivers.

[0035] According to an example, the base station is configured to transmit different transmission beams simultaneously or one after another. Thereby, space diversity and time diversity can be achieved.

[0036] According to an example, the respective machine function is a safety function, and wherein the base station is configured to transmit the transmission beam occupying a band that is licensed for mobile communi-

cations, in particular any frequency band extending from 1.8 GHz to 6 GHz and/or 24.25 GHz to 29.5 GHz and/or at 31.8 to 33.4 GHz and/or 37 GHz to 40 GHz. This increases the reliability of transmission of the control signal because a licensed frequency band is accessible for fewer authorized entities than a non-licensed frequency band.

[0037] According to an example, the base station can in addition transmit real time control signals, i.e. time sensitive signals as aforementioned using the licensed frequency band. Other signals, which are non-real-time signals, such as maintenance signals, can be transmitted using the mobile communication technology in non-licensed frequency bands.

[0038] Thereby, the base station can communicate with a plurality of control receivers to control a plurality of machines. The control receivers can have corresponding features, so that the description with respect to the remote control receiver correspondingly applies to all remote control receivers.

[0039] According to an example, the base station is configured to transmit the transmission beam according to one of the following communication technologies: GSM, LTE, LTE-A, UMTS, HSPA, 3GPP, in particular 3GPP NR, New Radio, 5G or IEEE radio systems such as Wireless LAN, WiGig, or any of the evolutions and successors of these technologies.

[0040] According to an example, the respective processor is configured to compare received versions of the respectively received control signal for detecting a transmission error. Thereby, transmission errors negatively affecting the control channel can be detected, which increases the system's reliability. If a transmission error is detected, then the respective receiver can request a retransmission of the control signal by the base station. However, this comparison can also be performed by the machine.

[0041] According to an example, the respective electrical interface of the respective control receiver is adapted for a wired connection with an electrical interface of the respective remote machine or wherein the respective machine interface is a clamp interface. Thereby, the two channels can be separately provided to the machine.

[0042] According to an example, the respective electrical interface of the respective control receiver comprises a first clamp and a second clamp for outputting received versions of the control signal. Generally, the respective interface can be formed by an electrical connector according to any automation connector requirement.

[0043] According to an example, the respective control receiver comprises a SIM (subscriber identity module) or eSIM (embedded SIM), in particular eUICC (embedded universal integrated circuit card, and a subscriber identity such as IMSI (international mobile subscriber identity) or eID (electronic identity), or ICCID (integrated circuit card identifier).

[0044] The base station handles the respective control receiver as a subscriber, so that for communications with

the respective remote controller mobile communication protocols can be used.

[0045] According to a second aspect, the disclosure relates to a control receiver for controlling a machine function of a machine in an automation control system that comprises a base station being configured to transmit a control signal for controlling the machine function using a transmission beam that is spatially directed towards the control receiver according to a mobile communications technology, wherein the control receiver comprises: a communication interface being configured to receive the transmission beam; a processor being configured to extract a received version of the control signal from the received transmission beam; and an electrical interface which is connectable with an electrical interface of the machine for controlling the machine function of the machine upon the basis of the received version of the control signal, wherein the control receiver is arranged spaced apart from the base station.

[0046] The control receiver of the second aspect has according to examples the features of the control receiver as described with regard to the first aspect and its examples.

[0047] According to a third aspect, the disclosure relates to a machine having a machine function that is controllable by a control signal, the control signal being transmittable by a base station for controlling the machine function using a transmission beam that is spatially directed towards the control receiver according to a mobile communications technology, wherein the machine comprises: the control receiver of the second aspect, wherein the electrical interface is configured to output the received version of the control signal; and an electrical interface being electrically connectable or connected to the electrical interface of the control receiver for receiving the received version of the control signal; and a processor being configured to control the machine function of the machine on the basis of the received version of the control signal.

[0048] In some examples, the electrical interface of the control receiver is adapted for a wired connection with the electrical interface of the machine, e.g. using an electric connector or a clamp.

[0049] In an example, the control receiver is embedded in the machine, so that the electrical interface of the control receiver and the electrical interface are fixedly connected.

[0050] In an error-free transmission, the received version of the control can correspond to the transmitted control signal, so that the received version of the control signal can be used for controlling the machine, in particular an actuator of the machine such as emergency switch or a power switch or a relays.

[0051] In an example, a multi-channel transmission scheme can be provided in order to e.g. detect transmission errors, in particular in the case of controlling safety functions.

[0052] According to a fifth aspect, the disclosure re-

lates to an automation control method for wirelessly controlling a machine function of remote machine with the automation control system according to the first aspect, the automation control method comprising: transmitting a control signal for controlling the machine function using a transmission beam that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver according to a mobile communications technology by the base station; receiving the transmission beam; extracting a received version of the control signal from the received transmission beam; and outputting the received version of the control signal via the electrical interface that is connected with an electrical interface of the machine for controlling the machine function of the machine. The machine can use the received version of the control signal for performing an action indicated by the control signal.

[0053] According to a fifth aspect, the disclosure relates to a computer program comprising a computer readable program code which, when executed on the base station and/or the remote control receiver of the automation control system, performs the method according to the second aspect.

[0054] According to a sixth aspect, the disclosure relates to a computer programm product comprising the computer program according to the third aspect.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0055] Further embodiments of the invention will be described with respect to the following figures, wherein:

Figure 1 shows an example of an automation control system;

Figure 2 shows an example of the automation control system;

Figures 3a, 3b show examples of the automation control system;

Figure 4 shows a diagram of a control method in an example; and

Fig. 5 shows a block diagram of a machine.

[0056] In the various figures, identical reference signs will be used for identical or at least functionally equivalent features.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

[0057] In the following description, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, which form part of the disclosure, and in which are shown, by way of illustration, specific aspects in which the present invention may be placed. It will be appreciated that other aspects may be utilized and structural or logical changes may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention.

The following detailed description, therefore, is not to be taken in a limiting sense, as the scope of the present invention is defined by the appended claims.

[0058] For instance, it will be appreciated that a disclosure in connection with a described method may also hold true for a corresponding device or system configured to perform the method and vice versa. For example, if a specific method step is described, a corresponding device may include a unit to perform the described method step, even if such unit is not explicitly described or illustrated in the figures.

[0059] Moreover, in the following detailed description as well as in the claims, embodiments with different functional blocks or processing units are described, which are connected with each other or exchange signals. It will be appreciated that the present invention covers embodiments as well, which include additional functional blocks or processing units that are arranged between the functional blocks or processing units of the embodiments described below.

[0060] Fig. 1 shows an automation control system 100 for wirelessly controlling a machine function of a remote machine 121.

[0061] Fig. 2 shows another example of the automation control system 100 in which a second remote machine 133 is present.

[0062] In the following, reference will be made to Fig. 2. It is, however, understood that the following description also applies to the scenario with only one remote machine 121 as depicted in Fig. 1.

[0063] The automation control system 100 comprises a base station 101 and a (first) remote control receiver 111 being arranged spaced apart from the base station 101. The remote control receiver 111 is associated with the (first) machine 121.

[0064] The automation control system 100 can comprise a second remote control receiver 113 being arranged spaced apart spaced apart from the base station 101.

[0065] The base station 101 is configured to transmit a transmission beam 103 with control signal for controlling the machine function that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver 111.

[0066] According to an example, the base station 101 is configured to transmit the transmission beam 103 in a single-channel scenario. According to another example, the base station 101 can be configured to transmit a second transmission beam 105 towards the remote control receiver 111. The (first) transmission beam 103 and the second transmission beam 105 jointly form two channels, for example two safety channels for two-channel automation control. The beams 103, 105 are spatially separated and transmitted e.g. parallel or slightly inclined, e.g. by 1°, 5° or 10°.

[0067] According to an example, the base station 101 is correspondingly configured to transmit one or more transmission beams 107, 109 towards the second remote control receiver 113.

[0068] The (first) control receiver 111 comprises a communication interface 115 being configured to receive one or more transmission beams 103 and 105, a processor 117 being configured to extract a received version of the control signal from the received transmission beam, and an electrical interface 119 which is connectable or electrically connected with an electrical interface of the machine for controlling the machine function of the machine 121 upon the basis of the received version of the control signal.

[0069] Correspondingly, the second control receiver 115 comprises a communication interface 125 being configured to receive one or more transmission beams 107, 109, a processor 127 being configured to extract a received version of the control signal from the received transmission beam, and an electrical interface 129 which is connectable or electrically connected with an electrical interface of the machine for controlling the machine function of the machine 131 upon the basis of the received version of the control signal.

[0070] In an example, the transmission beams 103-109 can be made orthogonal with respect to each other using orthogonal spreading codes, whereby a CDMA transmission scheme can be deployed.

[0071] In order to provide the control signal to the respective machine 121, 131, the respective electrical interface 119, 129 of the respective control receiver 111, 113 can be adapted for wired connection. The respective electrical interface 119, 129 can comprise, in a two-channel scenario a first clamp 123-1, 131-1 adapted for outputting the first received version of the respective control signal and a second clamp 123-2, 131-2 for outputting the second received version of the respective control signal. Thereby, wired connection to the remote machine 121, 131 can be established using well known connectors deployed in automation systems.

[0072] However, in a single-channel scenario or using the orthogonal coding, respectively only one clamp for outputting the received version of the control signal can be used.

[0073] In another example as shown in Fig. 2, the transmission beams 105-109 can be transmitted using separated transmission beams. However, also a mixture of transmitting methods is possible, where the transmission beams 103, 105 are transmitted using transmission beams, and the transmission beams 107, 109 are transmitted using the CDMA transmission scheme.

[0074] The transmission beams 130-109 can be transmitted upon the basis of the Profinet or Profibus scheme.

[0075] As depicted in Fig. 3a, the respective control signal for controlling the respective remote machine 121, 133 can be generated in the base station 101, having an integrated automation controller 301.

[0076] However, as depicted in Fig. 3b), the respective remote machine 121, 133 can be generated by a remote automation controller 303 which provided the respective control signal to the base station 101 via a wired or wireless communication network. The remote controller 303

can be handled as another subscriber in the communication cell served by the base station 101. Therefore, the remote controller 303 can have its own subscribe identity as described herein, and communicate with the base station 101 using a mobile telecommunication technology as described herein.

[0077] In an embodiment, the remote controller 303 can transmit the respective transmission beam 103-109 towards the base station 101 in a multichannel fashion. In this embodiment, the remote controller 303 can initiate a call or a data session towards the respective control receiver 111, 113 using the base station 101.

[0078] According to an embodiment, the base station 101 is configured to transmit the first transmission beam 103 and the second transmission beam 105 with the control signal relating to the machine function occupying a band that is licensed for mobile communications, in particular a frequency band extending from 1.8 GHz to 6 GHz and/or 24.25 GHz to 29.5 GHz and/or at 31.8 to 33.4 GHz and/or 37 GHz to 40 GHz.

[0079] In addition, the base station 101 can transmit further signals, which e.g. do not relate to controlling machine functions, using frequency bands which unlicensed and typically used for WLAN (so-called RLAN bands in Europe for example), e.g. RLAN bands at 2.4 GHz, 5.8 GHz or 60 GHz.

[0080] In an embodiment, the first transmission beam 103 and the second transmission beam 105 can be transmitted in the same licensed frequency band, or in different licensed frequency bands.

[0081] In an embodiment, the first transmission beam 103 and the second transmission beam 105 can be transmitted using different transmission parameters or channel parameters relating to modulation, error coding, data rate, bit error probability, or delay.

[0082] In an embodiment, the base station 101 can be configured to transmit real-time communications in one or several licensed frequency bands, and to transmit non-real-time communications in non-licensed frequency bands.

[0083] The protocols used to transmit real-time communications such as real-time control and the non-real-time communications such as maintenance functions or software updates or retrieving system information can chose different frequencies or frequency bands.

[0084] The deployed protocol stack can comprise for real-time communications and non-real-time communications, i.e. non time critical communications a common standard Ethernet layer.

[0085] Real-time communications can be handled using a Profinet real-time channel following the Ethernet layer, whereas non time critical communications can be handled by an IP layer followed by TCP/UDP layer.

[0086] The Profinet real-time channel and the TCP/UDP layer can converge in the Profinet application layer.

[0087] In an embodiment, real-time communications and non-real-time communications can be mapped on

different frequencies or on two frequency bands for double, i.e. redundant, transmission.

[0088] Fig. 4 depicts a diagram of an automation control method for wirelessly controlling a machine function of the remote machine 121, the automation control method comprising: transmitting 401 a control signal for controlling the machine function using a transmission beam 103, 105 that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver according to a mobile communications technology by the base station 101, and receiving 403 the transmission beam 103, 105 extracting 405 a received version of the control signal from the received transmission beam, and outputting the received version of the control signal via the electrical interface 119 that is connected with an electrical interface of the machine for controlling the machine function of the machine 121.

[0089] The automation control method can further comprise controlling the machine function of the remote machine, e.g. an emergency stop using the first received version of the control signal and the second received version of the control signal

[0090] The automation control method can be implemented in hardware and/or in software.

[0091] Fig. 5 shows a block diagram of the machine 121 having a machine function that is controllable by a control signal, the control signal being transmittable by a base station for controlling the machine function using a transmission beam that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver according to a mobile communications technology, wherein the machine comprises the control receiver 111 as described in connection with the above examples, wherein the electrical interface 119 is configured to output the received version of the control signal and, and an electrical interface 501 being electrically connectable to the electrical interface 119 of the control receiver 111 for receiving the received version of the control signal, and a processor 503 being configured to control the safety function of the machine 121 on the basis of the first received version of the control signal and the second received version of the control signal.

[0092] In an example, the processor 503 is configured to control the machine 121, in particular an optional actuator 505 of the machine 121, such as emergency switch or a power switch or a relais or any other controllable function.

[0093] It is understood that the features of the various exemplary aspects described herein may be combined with each other, unless specifically noted otherwise.

[0094] While a particular feature or aspect of the disclosure may have been disclosed with respect to only one of several implementations or embodiments, such feature or aspect may be combined with one or more other features or aspects of the other implementations or embodiments as may be desired and advantageous for any given or particular application. Furthermore, to the extent that the terms "include", "have", "with", or other variants thereof are used in either the detailed description or the claims, such terms are intended to be inclusive in

a manner similar to the term "comprise". Also, the terms "exemplary", "for example" and "e.g." are merely meant as an example, rather than the best or optimal. The terms "coupled" and "connected", along with derivatives may have been used. It should be understood that these terms may have been used to indicate that two elements cooperate or interact with each other regardless of whether they are in direct physical or electrical contact, or they are not in direct contact with each other.

[0095] Although specific aspects have been illustrated and described herein, it will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art that a variety of alternate and/or equivalent implementations may be substituted for the specific aspects shown and described without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. This application is intended to cover any adaptations or variations of the specific aspects discussed herein.

[0096] Although the elements in the following claims are recited in a particular sequence with corresponding labeling, unless the claim recitations otherwise imply a particular sequence for implementing some or all of those elements, those elements are not necessarily intended to be limited to being implemented in that particular sequence.

[0097] Many alternatives, modifications, and variations will be apparent to those skilled in the art in light of the above teachings. Of course, those skilled in the art readily recognize that there are numerous applications of the invention beyond those described herein. While the present invention has been described with reference to one or more particular embodiments, those skilled in the art recognize that many changes may be made thereto without departing from the scope of the present invention. It is therefore to be understood that within the scope of the appended claims and their equivalents, the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described herein.

Claims

1. An automation control system (100) for wirelessly controlling a machine function of remote machine (121, 131), the automation control system (100) comprising:

a base station (101); and
a remote control receiver (111, 113) being arranged spaced apart from the base station (101); wherein
the base station (101) is configured to transmit a control signal for controlling the machine function using a transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109) that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver (111, 113) according to a mobile communications technology; and wherein
the remote control receiver (111, 113) comprises a communication interface (115, 125) being

- configured to receive the transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109), a processor (117, 127) being configured to extract a received version of the control signal from the received transmission beam, and an electrical interface (119, 129) which is connectable with an electrical interface of the machine for controlling the machine function of the machine (121, 131) upon the basis of the received version of the control signal.
2. The automation control system (100) according to claim 1, wherein the base station (101) is further configured to transmit the control signal using a second transmission beam (105, 109) that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver (111, 113) according to a mobile communications technology; wherein the communication interface (125) is configured to receive the second transmission beam (105, 109); the processor (127) is configured to extract a second received version of the control signal from the received second transmission beam; and wherein the electrical interface (129) is configured to output the first received version of the control signal and the second received version of the control signal for a two-channel machine control.
 3. The automation control system (100) of anyone of the preceding claims, wherein the base station (101) comprises a beamforming antenna with an array of antenna elements, in particular phased antenna elements, wherein the base station (101) is configured to drive the array of antenna elements using a beamforming signal to generate the transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109), in particular using beamforming signals differing in phase for generating different transmission beams (103, 105, 107, 109).
 4. The automation control system (100) of claim 3, wherein the base station (101) is configured to drive different sub-arrays of the array of antenna elements to generate different transmission beams (103, 105, 107, 109).
 5. The automation control system (100) of claim 3 or 4, wherein the base station (101) is configured to generate the respective transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109) using a beamforming codebook according to a MIMO communication technology.
 6. The automation control system (100) of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the communication interface (115, 125) of the remote control receiver (111, 113) comprises a receiving antenna comprising an array of antenna elements for receiving the transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109).
 7. The automation control system (100) of one of the preceding, being further adapted for controlling a machine function of a further remote machine (131) arranged spaced apart from the remote machine (121), further comprising a further remote control receiver (113) being associated with the further remote machine (131) wherein the base station (101) is configured to transmit a further control signal for controlling the machine function of the further machine (131) using a third transmission beam (107) and to transmit the further control signal using a fourth transmission beam (109), wherein the third transmission beam (107) is spatially directed towards the further control receiver (113), and wherein the fourth transmission beam (109) is spatially directed towards the further control receiver (113).
 8. The automation control system (100) according to anyone of the preceding claims, wherein the respective machine function is a safety function, and wherein the base station (101) is configured to transmit the transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109) occupying a band that is licensed for mobile communications, in particular a frequency band extending from 1.8 GHz to 6 GHz and/or 24.25 GHz to 29.5 GHz and/or at 31.8 to 33.4 GHz and/or 37 GHz to 40 GHz.
 9. The automation control system (100) of anyone of the preceding claims, wherein the base station (101) is configured to transmit the transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109) according to one of the following communication technologies: GSM, LTE, LTE-A, UMTS, HSPA, 3GPP, in particular 3GPP NR, New Radio, 5G or IEEE radio systems such as Wireless LAN, WiGig, or any of the evolutions and successors of these technologies.
 10. The automation control system (100) of anyone of the preceding claims, wherein the respective control receiver (111, 113) comprises a SIM (subscriber identity module) or eSIM (embedded SIM), in particular eUICC (embedded universal integrated circuit card, and a subscriber identity such as IMSI (international mobile subscriber identity) or eID (electronic identity), or ICCID (integrated circuit card identifier).
 11. A control receiver (111, 113) for controlling a machine function of a machine (121) in an automation control system (100) that comprises base station (101) being configured to transmit a control signal for controlling the machine function using a transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109) that is spatially directed towards the control receiver (111, 113) according to a mobile communications technology, wherein the control receiver (111) comprises:
 - a communication interface (115, 125) being configured to receive the transmission beam (103,

105, 107, 109);
 a processor (117, 127) being configured to extract a received version of the control signal from the received transmission beam; and
 an electrical interface (119, 129) which is connectable with an electrical interface of the machine for controlling the machine function of the machine (121, 131) upon the basis of the received version of the control signal; wherein the control receiver (111) is arranged spaced apart from the base station (101).

12. A machine (121) having a machine function that is controllable by a control signal, the control signal being transmittable by a base station (101) for controlling the machine function using a transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109) that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver (111, 113) according to a mobile communications technology, wherein the machine (121) comprises:

the control receiver (111) of claim 11, wherein the electrical interface (119) is configured to output the received version of the control signal;
 an electrical interface (501) being electrically connectable or connected to the electrical interface (119) of the control receiver (111) for receiving the received version of the control signal; and
 a processor (503) being configured to control the machine function of the machine (121) on the basis of the received version of the control signal.

13. An automation control method (400) for wirelessly controlling a machine function of remote machine (121, 131) with the automation control system (100) according to anyone of the preceding claims 1 to 10, the automation control method (400) comprising:

transmitting (401) a control signal for controlling the machine function using a transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109) that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver according to a mobile communications technology by the base station (101); and
 receiving (403) the transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109);
 extracting (405) a received version of the control signal from the received transmission beam;
 outputting (407) the received version of the control signal via the electrical interface (119, 129) that is connected with an electrical interface of the machine for controlling the machine function of the machine (121, 131).

14. A computer program comprising a computer readable program code which, when executed on the base

station (101) and/or the remote control receiver (111, 113) of the automation control system (100) according to anyone of the preceding claims 1 to 10, performs the method (400) of claim 13.

15. A computer program product comprising the computer program according to claim 14.

Amended claims in accordance with Rule 137(2) EPC.

1. An automation control system (100) for wirelessly controlling a machine function of remote machine (121, 131), the automation control system (100) comprising:

a base station (101); and
 a remote control receiver (111, 113) being arranged spaced apart from the base station (101); wherein

the base station (101) is configured to transmit a control signal for controlling the machine function using a transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109) that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver (111, 113) according to a mobile communications technology; and wherein the remote control receiver (111, 113) comprises a communication interface (115, 125) being configured to receive the transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109), a processor (117, 127) being configured to extract a received version of the control signal from the received transmission beam, and an electrical interface (119, 129) which is connectable with an electrical interface of the machine for controlling the machine function of the machine (121, 131) upon the basis of the received version of the control signal, wherein

the base station (101) is further configured to transmit the control signal using a second transmission beam (105, 109) that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver (111, 113) according to a mobile communications technology; wherein the communication interface (125) is configured to receive the second transmission beam (105, 109); the processor (127) is configured to extract a second received version of the control signal from the received second transmission beam; and wherein the electrical interface (129) is configured to output the first received version of the control signal and the second received version of the control signal for a two-channel machine control.

2. The automation control system (100) of claim 1, wherein the base station (101) comprises a beam-forming antenna with an array of antenna elements,

in particular phased antenna elements, wherein the base station (101) is configured to drive the array of antenna elements using a beamforming signal to generate the transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109), in particular using beamforming signals differing in phase for generating different transmission beams (103, 105, 107, 109).

3. The automation control system (100) of claim 2, wherein the base station (101) is configured to drive different sub-arrays of the array of antenna elements to generate different transmission beams (103, 105, 107, 109).
4. The automation control system (100) of claim 2 or 3, wherein the base station (101) is configured to generate the respective transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109) using a beamforming codebook according to a MIMO communication technology.
5. The automation control system (100) of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the communication interface (115, 125) of the remote control receiver (111, 113) comprises a receiving antenna comprising an array of antenna elements for receiving the transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109).
6. The automation control system (100) of any one of the preceding claims, being further adapted for controlling a machine function of a further remote machine (131) arranged spaced apart from the remote machine (121), further comprising a further remote control receiver (113) being associated with the further remote machine (131) wherein the base station (101) is configured to transmit a further control signal for controlling the machine function of the further machine (131) using a third transmission beam (107) and to transmit the further control signal using a fourth transmission beam (109), wherein the third transmission beam (107) is spatially directed towards the further control receiver (113), and wherein the fourth transmission beam (109) is spatially directed towards the further control receiver (113).
7. The automation control system (100) according to anyone of the preceding claims, wherein the respective machine function is a safety function, and wherein the base station (101) is configured to transmit the transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109) occupying a band that is licensed for mobile communications, in particular a frequency band extending from 1.8 GHz to 6 GHz and/or 24.25 GHz to 29.5 GHz and/or at 31.8 to 33.4 GHz and/or 37 GHz to 40 GHz.
8. The automation control system (100) of anyone of the preceding claims, wherein the base station (101) is configured to transmit the transmission beam (103,

105, 107, 109) according to one of the following communication technologies: GSM, LTE, LTE-A, UMTS, HSPA, 3GPP, in particular 3GPP NR, New Radio, 5G or IEEE radio systems such as Wireless LAN, WiGig, or any of the evolutions and successors of these technologies.

9. The automation control system (100) of anyone of the preceding claims, wherein the respective control receiver (111, 113) comprises a SIM (subscriber identity module) or eSIM (embedded SIM), in particular eUICC (embedded universal integrated circuit card, and a subscriber identity such as IMSI (international mobile subscriber identity) or eID (electronic identity), or ICCID (integrated circuit card identifier).
10. A control receiver (111, 113) for controlling a machine function of a machine (121) in an automation control system (100) that comprises base station (101) being configured to transmit a control signal for controlling the machine function using a transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109) that is spatially directed towards the control receiver (111, 113) according to a mobile communications technology and being further configured to transmit the control signal using a second transmission beam (105, 109) that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver (111, 113) according to a mobile communications technology, wherein the control receiver (111) comprises:
 - a communication interface (115, 125) being configured to receive the transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109) and to receive the second transmission beam (105, 109);
 - a processor (117, 127) being configured to extract a received version of the control signal from the received transmission beam and to extract a second received version of the control signal from the received second transmission beam; and
 - an electrical interface (119, 129) which is connectable with an electrical interface of the machine for controlling the machine function of the machine (121, 131) upon the basis of the received version of the control signal, wherein the electrical interface (129) is configured to output the first received version of the control signal and the second received version of the control signal for a two-channel machine control; wherein the control receiver (111) is arranged spaced apart from the base station (101).
11. A machine (121) having a machine function that is controllable by a control signal, the control signal being transmittable by a base station (101) for controlling the machine function using a transmission beam

(103, 105, 107, 109) that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver (111, 113) and a second transmission beam (105, 109) that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver (111, 113) according to a mobile communications technology, wherein the machine (121) comprises:

the control receiver (111) of claim 11, wherein the electrical interface (119) is configured to output the first received version of the control signal and the second received version of the control signal for a two-channel machine control; an electrical interface (501) being electrically connectable or connected to the electrical interface (119) of the control receiver (111) for receiving the respective received version of the control signal; and a processor (503) being configured to control the machine function of the machine (121) on the basis of the respective received version of the control signal.

12. An automation control method (400) for wirelessly controlling a machine function of remote machine (121, 131) with the automation control system (100) according to anyone of the preceding claims 1 to 10, the automation control method (400) comprising:

transmitting (401) a control signal for controlling the machine function using a transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109) that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver according to a mobile communications technology by the base station (101); transmitting the control signal for controlling the machine function using a second transmission beam (105, 109) that is spatially directed towards the remote control receiver according to a mobile communications technology by the base station (101); receiving (403) the transmission beam (103, 105, 107, 109); receiving the second transmission beam (105, 109); extracting (405) a received version of the control signal from the received transmission beam; extracting a second received version of the control signal from the second transmission beam (105, 109); outputting (407) the respective received version of the control signal via the electrical interface (119, 129) that is connected with an electrical interface of the machine for controlling the machine function of the machine (121, 131).

13. A computer program comprising a computer readable program code which, when executed on the base station (101) and/or the remote control receiver (111,

113) of the automation control system (100) according to anyone of the preceding claims 1 to 9, performs the method (400) of claim 12.

14. A computer program product comprising the computer program according to claim 13.

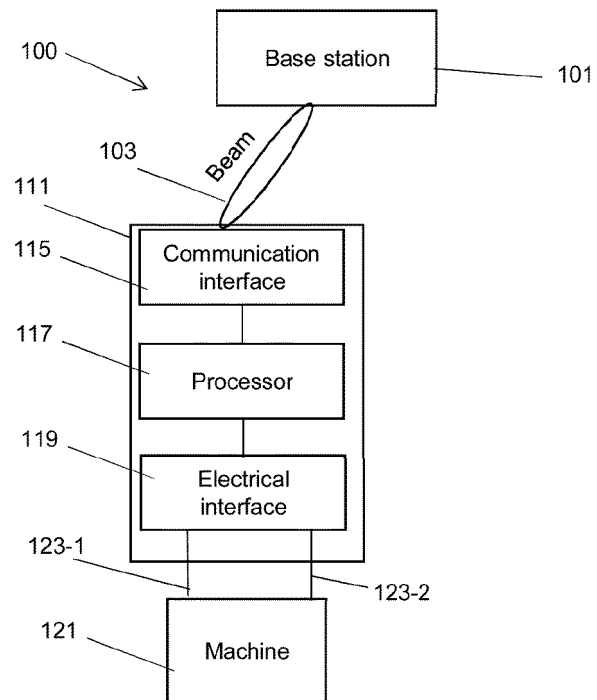


Fig. 1

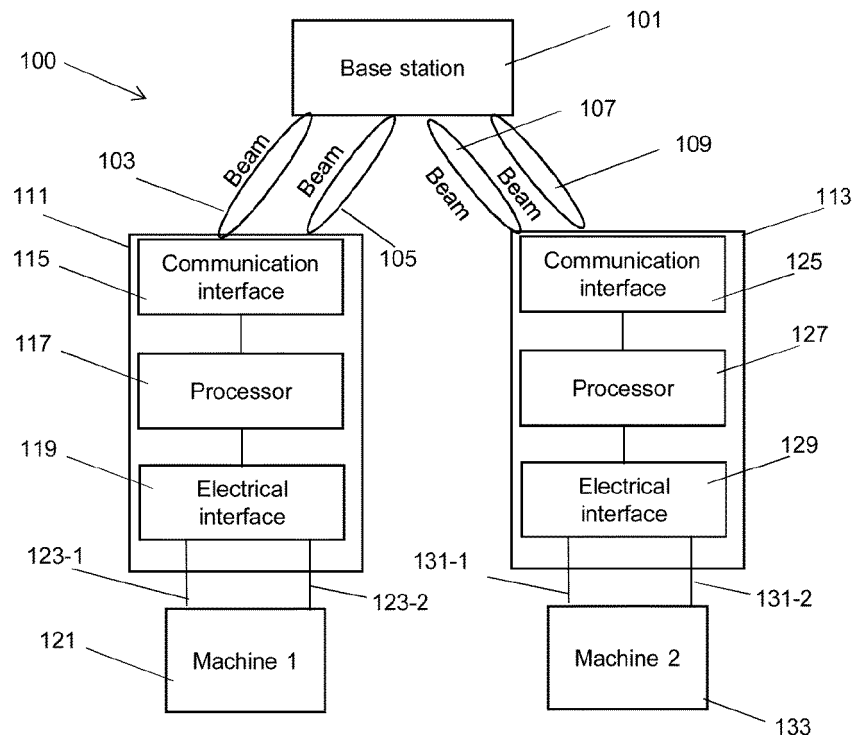


Fig. 2

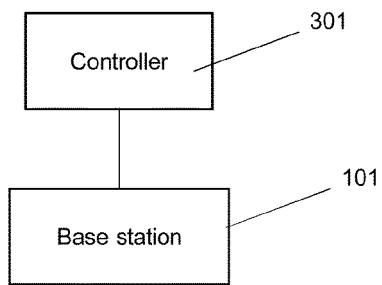


Fig. 3a)

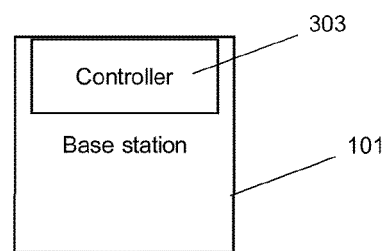


Fig. 3b)

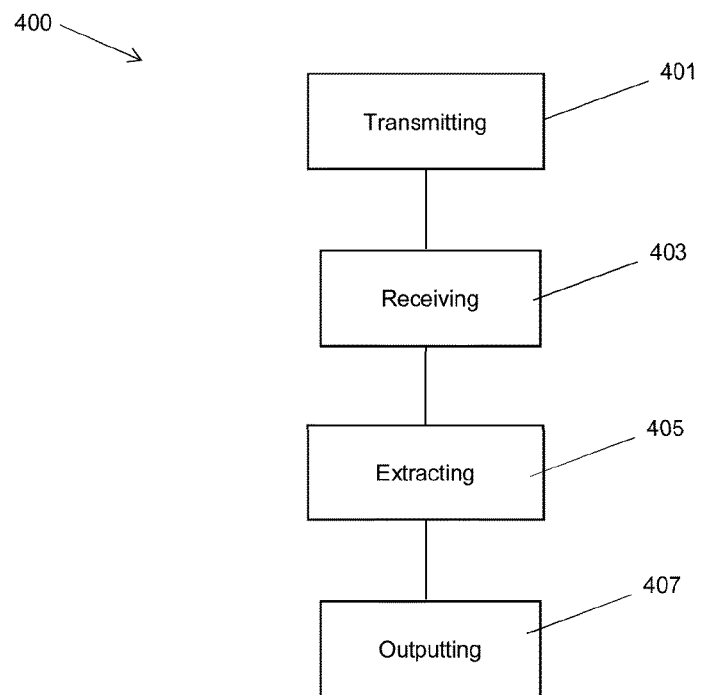


Fig. 4

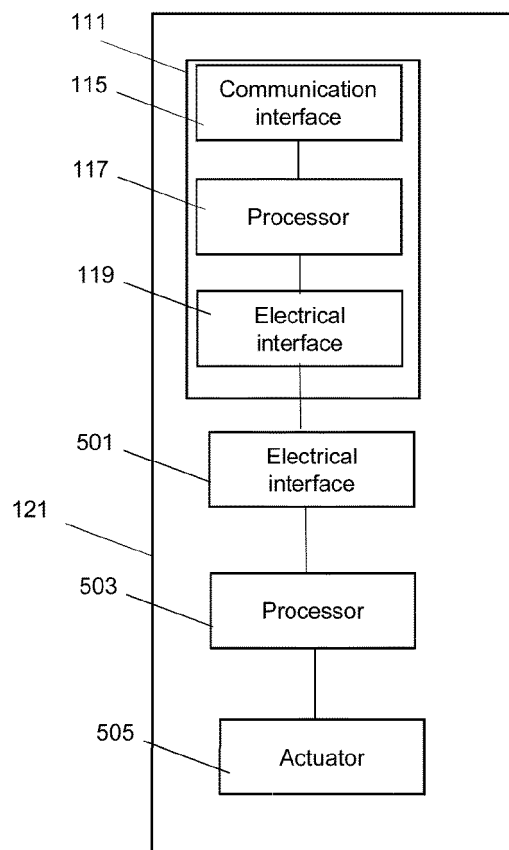


Fig.5



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

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Place of search The Hague		Date of completion of the search 20 June 2018	Examiner Gijssels, Willem
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