



(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43)

Date of publication:
28.11.2018 Bulletin 2018/48

(51)

Int Cl.:
A47K 10/42 (2006.01)

(21)

Application number: 18173505.1

(22)

Date of filing: 22.05.2018

(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: KH MA MD TN	(71) Applicant: LUCART SPA 55016 Porcari (LU) (IT) (72) Inventor: PASQUINI, Massimo 55016 Porcari (Lucca) (IT) (74) Representative: Pallini, Laura APTA S.R.L. Piazza dei Martiri, 1 40121 Bologna (IT)
(30) Priority: 22.05.2017 IT 201700055365 U	

(54)

PAPER PRODUCT DISPENSER

(57)

A paper product dispenser (1), comprising a container (2), defining an inner compartment (3) for housing the paper products, provided with at least one opening (4) for picking up the products contained in the inner compartment (3), and a base (5) designed to be in contact with any supporting surface; the dispenser comprises swivelling coupling means (6) interposed between said container (2) and said base (5).

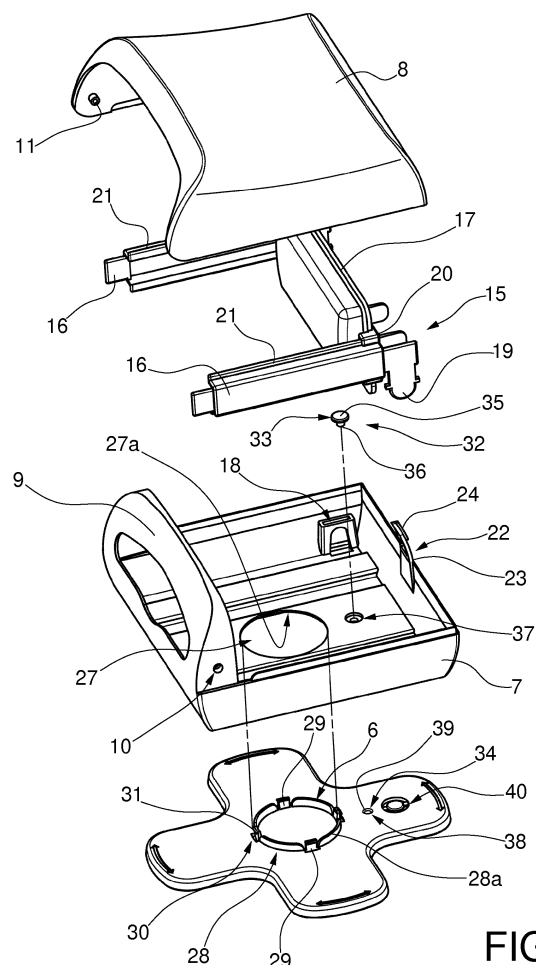


FIG. 7

Description

TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention concerns a paper product dispenser.

[0002] More specifically, the present invention concerns a dispenser of paper products such as napkins, tissues and the like.

BACKGROUND ART

[0003] There are various known types of dispensers of paper products such as napkins, tissues and the like which are designed to be placed, for example, on tables, furniture or other surfaces to allow such products to be freely picked up by users. A typical usage example of these dispensers is in bars, restaurants or other similar businesses where products are picked up by people consuming food or drinks.

[0004] Normally a dispenser of the above-mentioned type comprises a box-shaped container, which houses a pack of napkins or tissues internally, to be picked up one after the other in succession.

[0005] Typically, but not exclusively, the napkins or tissues are arranged interfolded, i.e. each is folded and positioned in relation to the other such that when a product is picked up, it drags the end flap of the product immediately following it: the latter can thus be easily picked up by the user.

[0006] The container of the dispenser usually has at least one opening through which the user can pick up one product at a time; when the products are arranged interfolded, the flap of the first product available for picking up partially protrudes from said opening.

[0007] With reference to the position of use, the opening can be provided at the front or the top of the dispenser.

[0008] The container can be opened to insert the paper products once they have been finished; the opening mechanism of the container and its positioning can also be different (e.g. top, front or rear opening).

[0009] In certain usage situations - for example the counter of a bar - the dispenser is placed, on a supporting surface, in a specific position that makes it possible to conveniently pick up the products, for example with the opening facing users.

[0010] However, there are other usage situations in which a single pick-up position is not equally convenient for all users.

[0011] For example, if the dispenser is placed at the centre of a table, the opening for picking up the products will always be facing a particular user; in order to pick up the product, the other users must continually turn the dispenser or ask the user located in front of the opening to pass them the product: this action is to the detriment of hygiene, as the product passes through multiple hands.

OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

[0012] The technical aim of the present invention is to improve the state of the art in the field of paper product dispensers.

[0013] Within such technical aim, it is an object of the present invention to provide a paper product dispenser that allows several users, located in different positions in relation to the dispenser itself, to easily pick up the products under conditions of maximum hygiene and comfort.

[0014] Another object of the present invention is to provide a paper product dispenser whose use is simple, practical and intuitive.

[0015] A further object of the present invention is to provide a paper product dispenser that allows the above-mentioned objects to be achieved with a constructive solution that is simple and economical.

[0016] This aim and these objects are achieved by the paper product dispenser according to the annexed claim 1.

[0017] The dispenser comprises a container, defining an inner compartment for housing the paper products, provided with at least one opening for picking up the products contained in the inner compartment, and a base designed to be in contact with any supporting surface; according to the invention, the dispenser comprises swivelling coupling means interposed between the container and the base.

[0018] This makes it possible to turn the container with respect to the base at will, allowing several users differently positioned in relation to the dispenser itself to comfortably and easily pick up the products.

[0019] Dependent claims refer to preferred and advantageous embodiments of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0020] The features of the invention will be better understood by any person skilled in the art from the following description and accompanying drawings, provided by way of non-limiting example, in which:

figure 1 is an axonometric view of the paper product dispenser according to the invention;

figure 2 is a view of the dispenser from the front;

figure 3 is a view of the dispenser from the top;

figure 4 is a view of the dispenser from the bottom;

figure 5 is a view of the dispenser from the back;

figure 6 is an axonometric view of the dispenser, with some parts removed to provide greater clarity;

figure 7 is an exploded axonometric view of the dispenser.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0021] With reference to the annexed figure 1, the reference number 1 generally indicates a paper product dispenser according to the present invention.

[0022] Any type of paper products can be dispensed by the dispenser 1, without particular limitations to the scopes of the present invention.

[0023] For example, these paper products can be napkins, tissues or the like, of any shape and/or size.

[0024] The dispenser 1 can also be used for dispensing other types of products, i.e. not necessarily paper.

[0025] The dispenser 1 comprises a container for paper products, generally indicated with reference number 2.

[0026] The container 2 comprises an inner compartment 3 for housing the products (not shown in the figures).

[0027] Furthermore, the container 2 comprises at least one opening 4, for picking up the products contained in the inner compartment 3.

[0028] According to one aspect of the invention, the dispenser 1 comprises at least a base 5.

[0029] The base 5 is designed to be in contact with any supporting surface; this supporting surface can be, for example, the top of a table, a piece of furniture, a bar counter, a shelf or other, without limitations.

[0030] According to another aspect of the invention, the dispenser 1 comprises swivelling coupling means 6, interposed between the container 2 and the base 5.

[0031] This solution allows the container 2 to be freely rotated with respect to the base 5, making it possible to turn the opening 4 in the desired direction, for example toward a particular user who intends to pick up a product.

[0032] In more detail, the container 2 comprises a lower portion 7 and an upper portion 8, which enclose said inner compartment 3.

[0033] The swivelling coupling means 6 are interposed between the lower portion 7 of the container 2 and the base 5.

[0034] In the embodiment shown in the figures, the lower portion 7 and the upper portion 8 of the container 2 are separable from one another, so as to allow access to the inner compartment 3.

[0035] In other words, the upper portion 8 of the container 2 constitutes, in practice, its opening and closing lid.

[0036] The lower portion 7 comprises a front element 9 that is affected by the opening 4 for picking up the products.

[0037] The upper portion 8 is articulated to the lower portion 7; the upper portion 8 can therefore be rotated from a closed position to an open position, in which it is possible to access the inner compartment 3.

[0038] The upper portion 8 is articulated, in particular, to the front element 9 of the lower portion 7; in more detail, the front element 9 is provided with two opposite side holes 10, in which respective pins 11 provided in the upper portion 8 can engage.

[0039] In other embodiments of the invention, it is clear that the side holes 10 could also be provided in the upper portion 8, while the pins 11 could be provided in the lower portion 7.

[0040] The opening 4 for picking up the products (see for example figures 1 and 2) has an elongated shape, rounded at the ends; with reference to its longitudinal axis, the opening 4 is asymmetrical, in that it comprises a substantially arched upper outline 12 and a lower outline 13, which define a recess 14 that facilitates the insertion of the fingers of a user's hand.

[0041] The upper portion 8 of the container 2 (see for example figures 1 and 7) is slightly divergent, in the sense that it widens toward the area of the opening 4; this makes it possible to create a front element 9 of ample size and consequently an opening 4 which is larger and easily accessible.

[0042] The dispenser 1 comprises compacting means for the products, indicated with reference number 15.

[0043] The compacting means 15 are housed in the inner compartment 3 of the container 2.

[0044] In more detail, the compacting means 15 make it possible to maintain the products consistently and correctly in contact with the front element 9 of the lower portion 7, so that they can be easily picked up through the opening 4, even when they have been almost entirely consumed.

[0045] The compacting means 15 comprise a pair of guides 16, and a plate 17 slidably associated with said guides 16.

[0046] The guides 16 are connected to the lower portion 7 of the container 2; in more detail, the bottom of the lower portion 7 is provided with opposite pockets 18 in which respective appendices 19, associated with said guides 16, are removably engaged.

[0047] The coupling between the appendices 19 and the pockets 18 can be, for example, through interlocking or other suitable means of connection.

[0048] The plate 17 comprises two side slides 20, slidably coupled to the respective upper edges 21 of the guides 16.

[0049] The plate 17 is associated to elastic means which exert a thrusting action on the same plate 17 in the direction of the opening 4 of the container 2, so that the packed paper products housed in the inner compartment 3 are always induced to abut against the front element 9, even when they have been almost entirely consumed.

[0050] The elastic means can be of any type which is suitable to implement the specific function described.

[0051] The container 2 comprises closing means 22, which make it possible to selectively access the inner compartment 3.

[0052] The closing means 22 comprise at least one elastically flexible tab 23, integral with the lower portion 7 (at the rear area, in use).

[0053] The tab 23 comprises a respective raised end portion 24; said raised end portion 24 has a circular shape, for example.

[0054] The closing means 22 also comprise a hole 25 created in the upper portion 8 (at the rear area, in use).

[0055] In a closed configuration of the container 2, the

raised end portion 24 of the tab 23 is engaged in the hole 25.

[0056] To open the container 2 and access the inner compartment 3, slight pressure must be exerted on the raised end portion 24 so that it disengages from the hole 25, thus releasing the upper portion 8 from lower portion 7.

[0057] The base 5 of the dispenser 1 is substantially shaped like a cross; this solution allows dispenser 1 to obtain optimum stability on a support surface, while limiting the weight of the object and the use of the materials.

[0058] Supporting feet 26 are provided at the four corners of the cross (figure 4).

[0059] The feet 26 can comprise - or be covered by - a material that creates a high friction coefficient on the supporting surface for the dispenser 1; for example, this material can be rubber or the like.

[0060] This makes it possible to keep the base 5 stably in contact with the supporting surface even while the container 2 is rotated with respect to the same.

[0061] The base 5 can however have any shape according to the specific application needs. According to one aspect of the invention, the swivelling coupling means 6 comprise a female element 27 and a male element 28, with the latter rotatably engaged inside the female element 27.

[0062] The female element 27 and the male element 28 can be respectively associated with the lower portion 7 of the container 2 and the base 5, or respectively with the base 5 and the lower portion 7, in an inverse kinematic configuration with respect to the former.

[0063] In the embodiment shown in the annexed figures, which is of particular practical interest, the female element 27 is associated with the lower portion 7 of the container 2, while the male element 28 is associated with the base 5.

[0064] The female element 27 comprises (or is constituted by) a circular seat 27a formed in the lower portion 7 of the container 2 (in more detail, formed in the bottom of the lower portion 7).

[0065] The male element 28 comprises (or is constituted by) an annular protrusion 28a, integral with the upper surface of the base 5 in use, and suitable to engage within the circular seat 27a.

[0066] According to another aspect of the invention, the annular protrusion 28a comprises a plurality of constraining portions 29 of the annular protrusion 28a itself inside the circular seat 27a.

[0067] In more detail, the constraining portions 29 prevent the annular protrusion 28a from accidentally withdrawing from the circular seat 27a.

[0068] In the embodiment shown in the figures, the annular protrusion 28a comprises four constraining portions 29, arranged at 90° with respect to one another.

[0069] Each of the constraining portions 29 comprises a respective section of said annular protrusion 28a, physically separated or isolated by means of discontinuous sections (e.g. cuts).

[0070] This makes it possible to render each constraining portion 29 elastically flexible; for this purpose a respective through slot or cut 30 is provided in the thickness of the base 5 and near each constraining portion 29, which allows the free flexion of the constraining portion 29 itself.

[0071] Each constraining portion 29 has its respective terminal end 31 bent toward the outside of the annular protrusion 28a: in doing so, a sort of tooth is created which, when the annular protrusion 28a is engaged inside the circular seat 27a, abuts against the peripheral edge of the same and prevents, precisely, any accidental withdrawal of the annular protrusion 28a.

[0072] In order to disengage the container 2 from the base 5, for example for cleaning, maintenance and similar purposes, it is sufficient to press the constraining portions 29 toward the centre of the annular protrusion 28a, so as to detach the constraining portions 29 themselves from the peripheral edge of the circular seat 27a.

[0073] The coupling between the annular protrusion 28a and the circular seat 27a makes it possible to freely rotate the container 2 with respect to the base 5, so as to orient the opening 4 for picking up the products at will.

[0074] The rotation of the container 2 with respect to the base 5 is particularly safe and stable, given the large diameter of the annular protrusion 28a and the circular seat 27a.

[0075] According to another aspect of the invention, the dispenser 1 comprises selective locking means 32 of the container 2 with respect to the base 5.

[0076] In more detail, the selective locking means 32 make it possible - at the user's discretion - to constrain the container 2 with respect to the base 5, so as to prevent its rotation, or to release the container 2 from the base 5 so that the two components are freely rotatable with respect to one another.

[0077] The selective locking means 32 comprise a first element 33 that selectively couples with a second element 34, integral with the base 5.

[0078] According to another aspect of the invention, a housing 40 is provided in the base 5 in which the same first element 33 is inserted when not used, so that it can be preserved.

[0079] To be able to be used, the first element 33 must be extracted from the housing 40. In the embodiment illustrated in the figures, which is of particular practical interest, the first element 33 comprises a first portion 35 for connection to the container 2, and a second portion 36 for connection to the second element 34.

[0080] The first element 33 is substantially shaped like a mushroom, where the first portion 35 constitutes the head, and the second portion 36 the stem.

[0081] The bottom of the lower portion 7 of the container 2 is provided with a through hole 37 with two diameters: one slightly larger than the diameter of the first portion 35, and the other slightly larger than the diameter of the second portion 36.

[0082] In this way, the first element 33 can be engaged

inside the through hole 37 so that the second portion 36 of the same protrudes downward in relation to the lower portion 7 of the container 2.

[0083] Correspondingly, the second element 34 comprises a hole 38 formed in the base 5, at the centre of which a small rod 39 of a tubular shape facing downwards is provided, exiting from the lower surface of the base 5; said rod 39 is suitable to selectively receive the second portion 36 of the first element 33.

[0084] Therefore - as shown in figure 6 - when the first element 33 is engaged inside the through hole 37, the engagement of the second portion 36 inside the hole of the rod 39 prevents the container from rotating with respect to the base 5.

[0085] When the first member 33 is instead disengaged from the through hole 37, the container 2 is freely rotatable with respect to the base 5.

[0086] It has thus been seen how the invention achieves the intended purposes.

[0087] The dispenser 1 according to the invention constitutes a practical and economical solution to allow easier consumption of paper products by multiple users located in different positions in relation to the dispenser itself.

[0088] The use of the dispenser 1 according to the invention is very simple and easy, as well as safe from the viewpoint of the necessary hygiene requirements.

[0089] Thanks to the presence of the selective locking means 32, the dispenser 1 according to the invention can also be transformed into a traditional dispenser, i.e. not rotatable with respect to the base.

[0090] This invention has been described according to preferred embodiments, but equivalent variants are still possible without departing from the scope of the appended claims.

Claims

1. Paper product dispenser (1), comprising a container (2), defining an inner compartment (3) for housing the paper products, provided with at least one opening (4) for picking up the products contained in the inner compartment (3), and a base (5) designed to be in contact with any supporting surface, **characterised in that** it comprises swivelling coupling means (6) interposed between said container (2) and said base (5).
2. A dispenser (1) according to claim 1, wherein said container (2) comprises a lower portion (7) and an upper portion (8) enclosing said inner compartment (3), said swivelling coupling means (6) being interposed between said lower portion (7) and said base (5).
3. A dispenser (1) according to claim 2, wherein said swivelling coupling means (6) comprise a female el-

ement (27) and a male element (28), said male element (28) being rotatably coupled inside said female element (27).

4. A dispenser (1) according to claim 3, wherein said female element (27) comprises a circular seat (27a), formed in said lower portion (7) of said container (2).
5. A dispenser (1) according to claim 4, wherein said male element (28) comprises an annular protrusion (28a), integral with the upper surface of said base (5), in use, and adapted to engage within said circular seat (27a).
6. A dispenser (1) according to claim 5, wherein said annular protrusion (28a) comprises a plurality of constraining portions (29) inside said male element (28).
7. A dispenser (1) according to claim 6, wherein at each of said constraining portions (29) of said male element (28), there are sections of said annular protrusion (28a) physically separated or isolated from the same by means of discontinuous sections, so as to make said constraining portions (29) elastically flexible.
8. A dispenser (1) according to claims 6 or 7, wherein each constraining portion (29) has its respective terminal end (31) bent toward the outside of said annular protrusion (28a), so that a sort of tooth is created which, when said annular protrusion (28a) is engaged inside said circular seat (27a), abuts against the peripheral edge of the same and prevents any accidental withdrawal of said annular protrusion (28a).
9. A dispenser (1) according to one of the preceding claims, comprising selective locking means (32) of said container (2) with respect to said base (5), said selective locking means (32) comprising a first element (33), integral with said container (2), adapted to selectively couple to a second element (34), integral with said base (5).
10. A dispenser (1) according to claim 9, wherein said first element (33) comprises a first portion (35) for connection to said container (2), and a second portion (36) for connection to said second element (34), said first member (33) being substantially shaped like a mushroom, wherein said first portion (35) constitutes the head, and said second portion (36) the stem.
11. A dispenser (1) according to claim 10, wherein said lower portion (7) comprises a through hole (37) with two diameters, one slightly larger than the diameter of said first portion (35) and the other slightly larger than the diameter of said second portion (36), so that

said first element (33) can be engaged within said through hole (37) such that said second portion (36) protrudes downward with respect to said lower portion (7).

5

12. A dispenser (1) according to claim 11, wherein said second element (34) comprises a hole (38) formed in said base (5), at the centre of which a small rod (39) is provided which is suitable to selectively receive said second portion (36).

10

13. A dispenser (1) according to one of claims 9-12, wherein said base (5) comprises a housing (40) in which said first element (33) is present before it can be used.

15

14. A dispenser (1) according to one of claims 2-13, wherein said bottom portion (7) and said upper portion (8) are separable from one another so as to allow access to said inner compartment (3).

20

15. A dispenser (1) according to one of the preceding claims, comprising compacting means (15) for the paper products, housed inside said inner compartment (3).

25

30

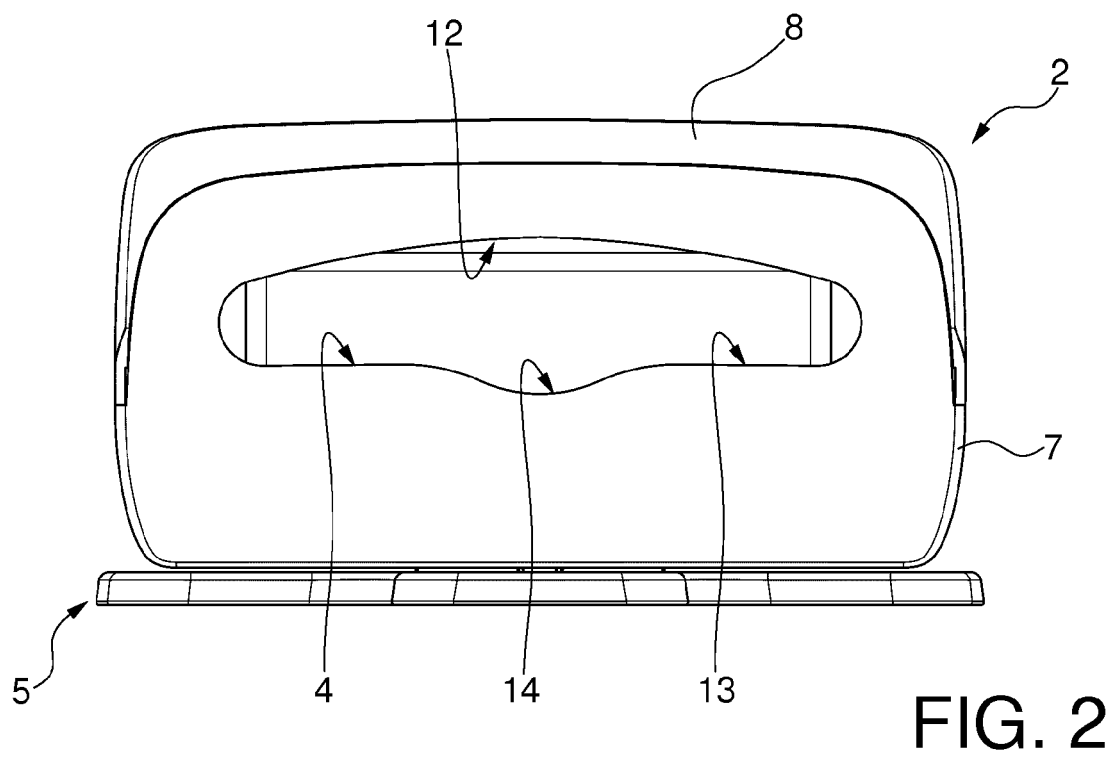
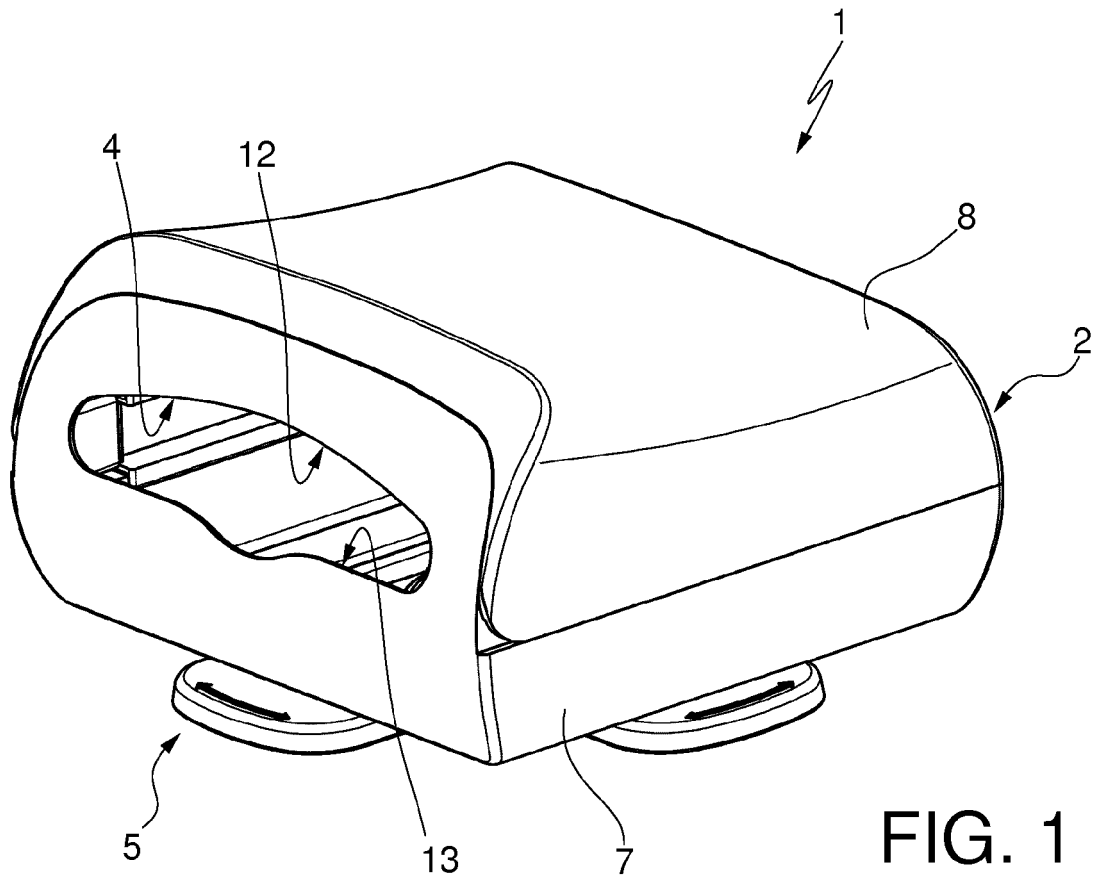
35

40

45

50

55



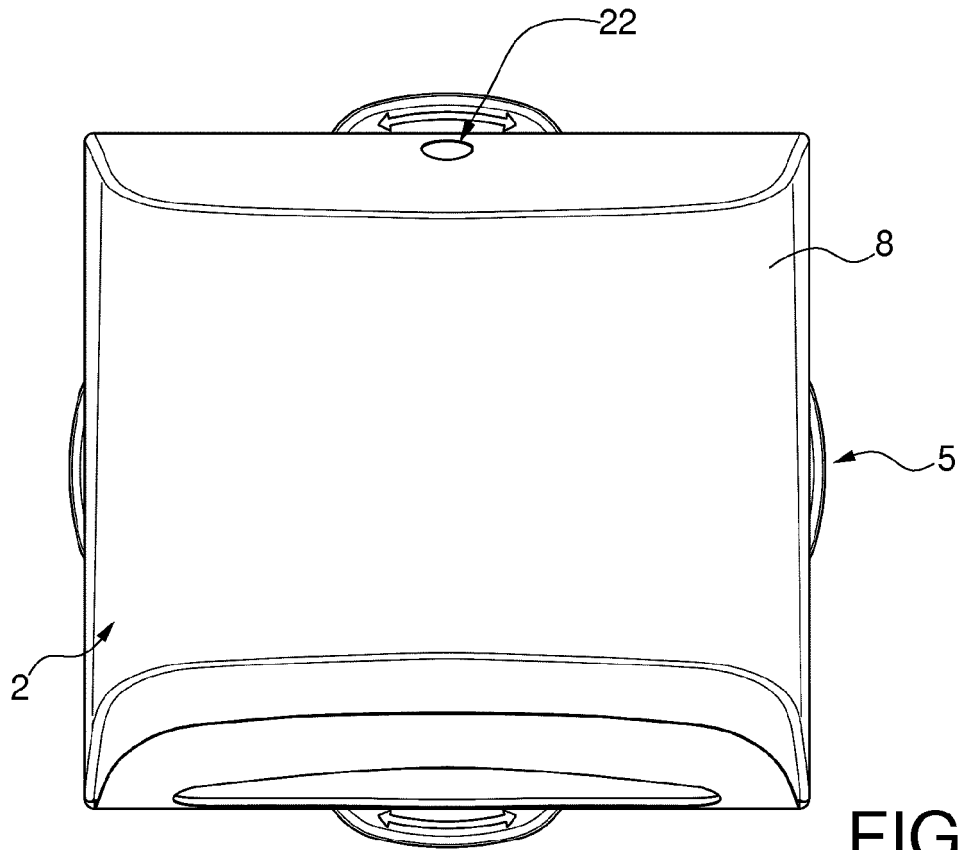


FIG. 3

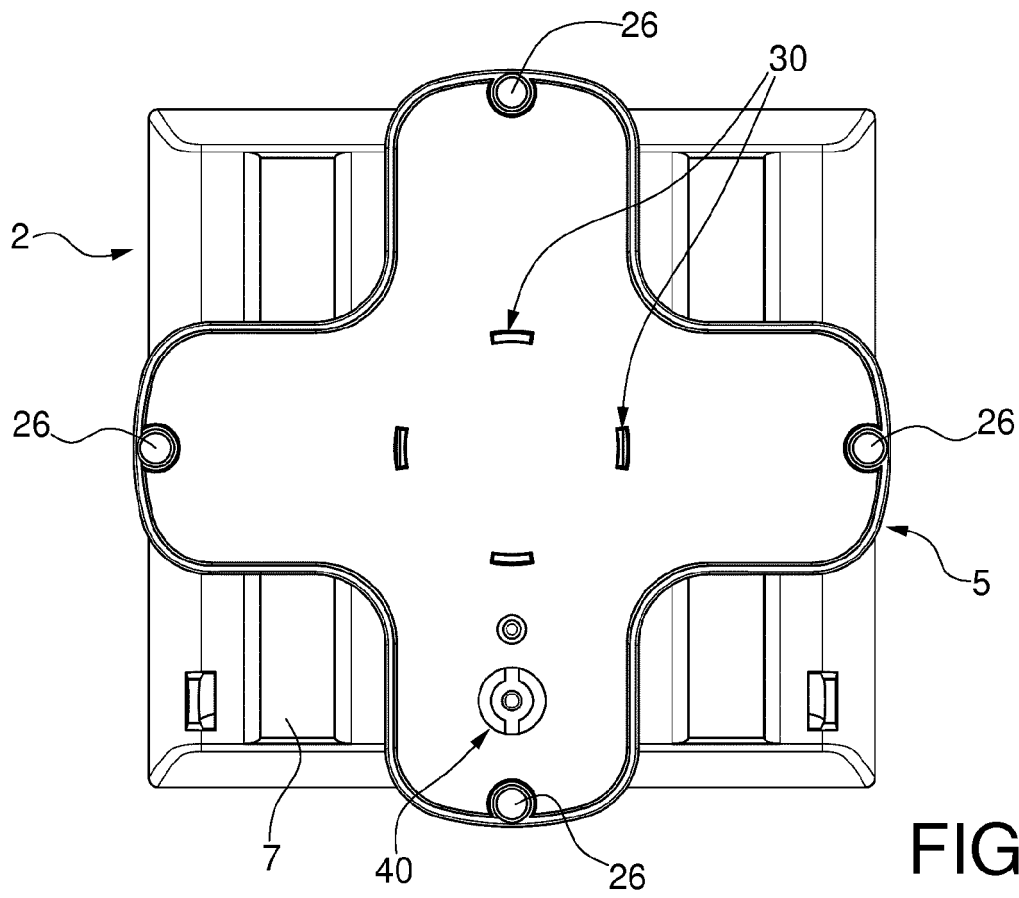


FIG. 4

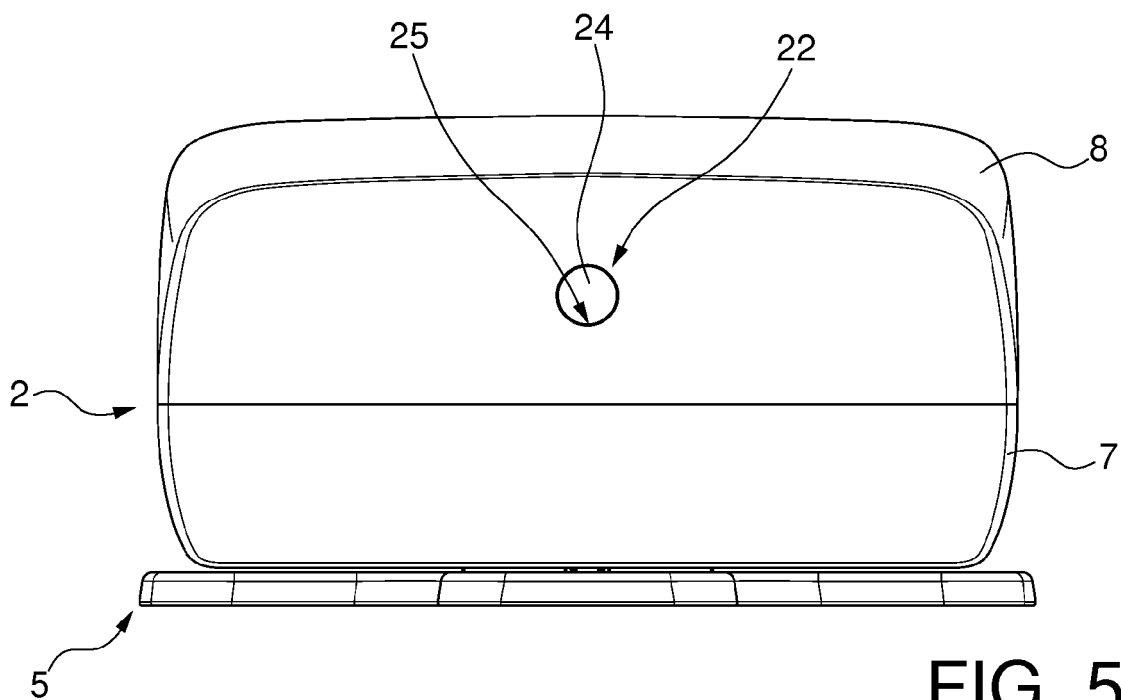


FIG. 5

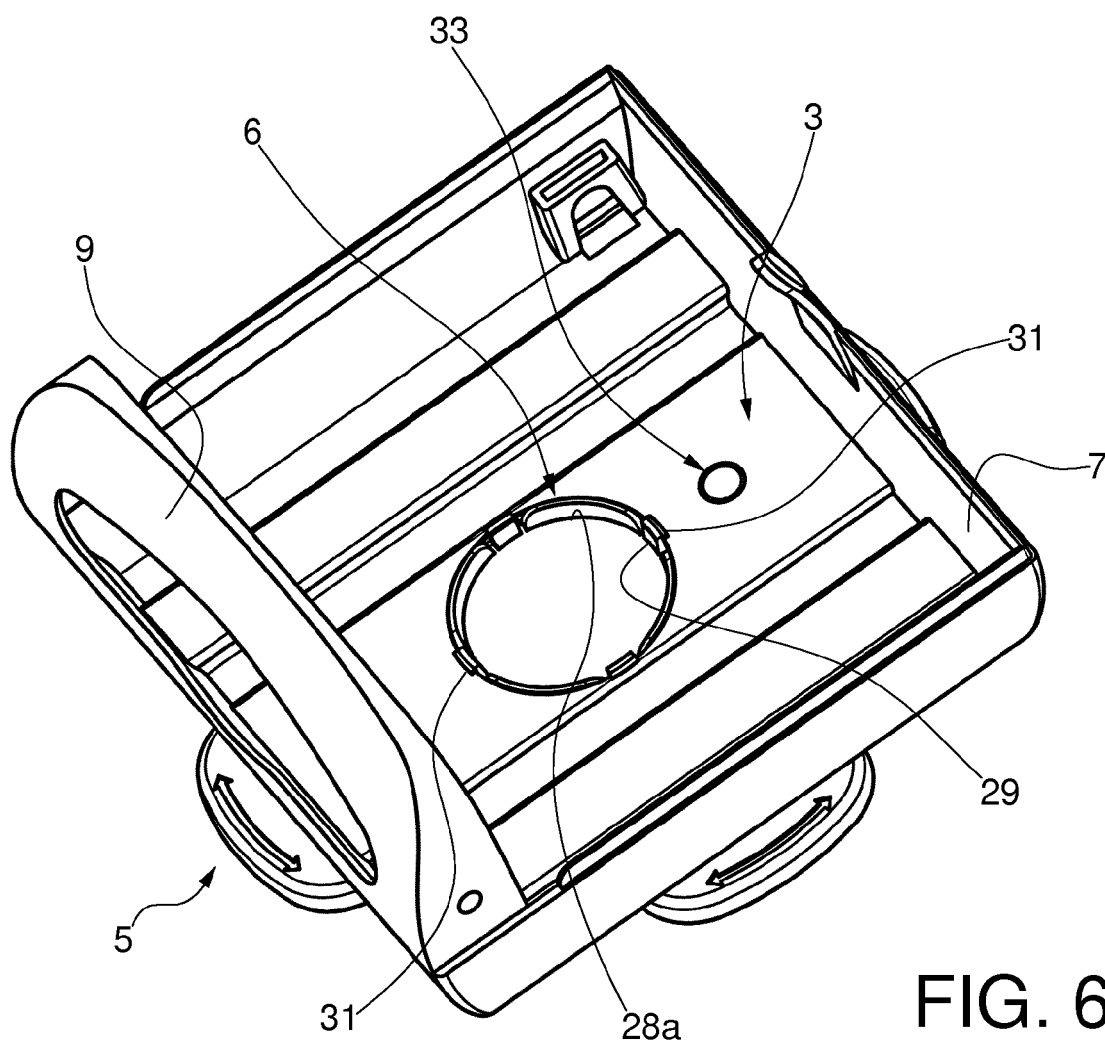


FIG. 6

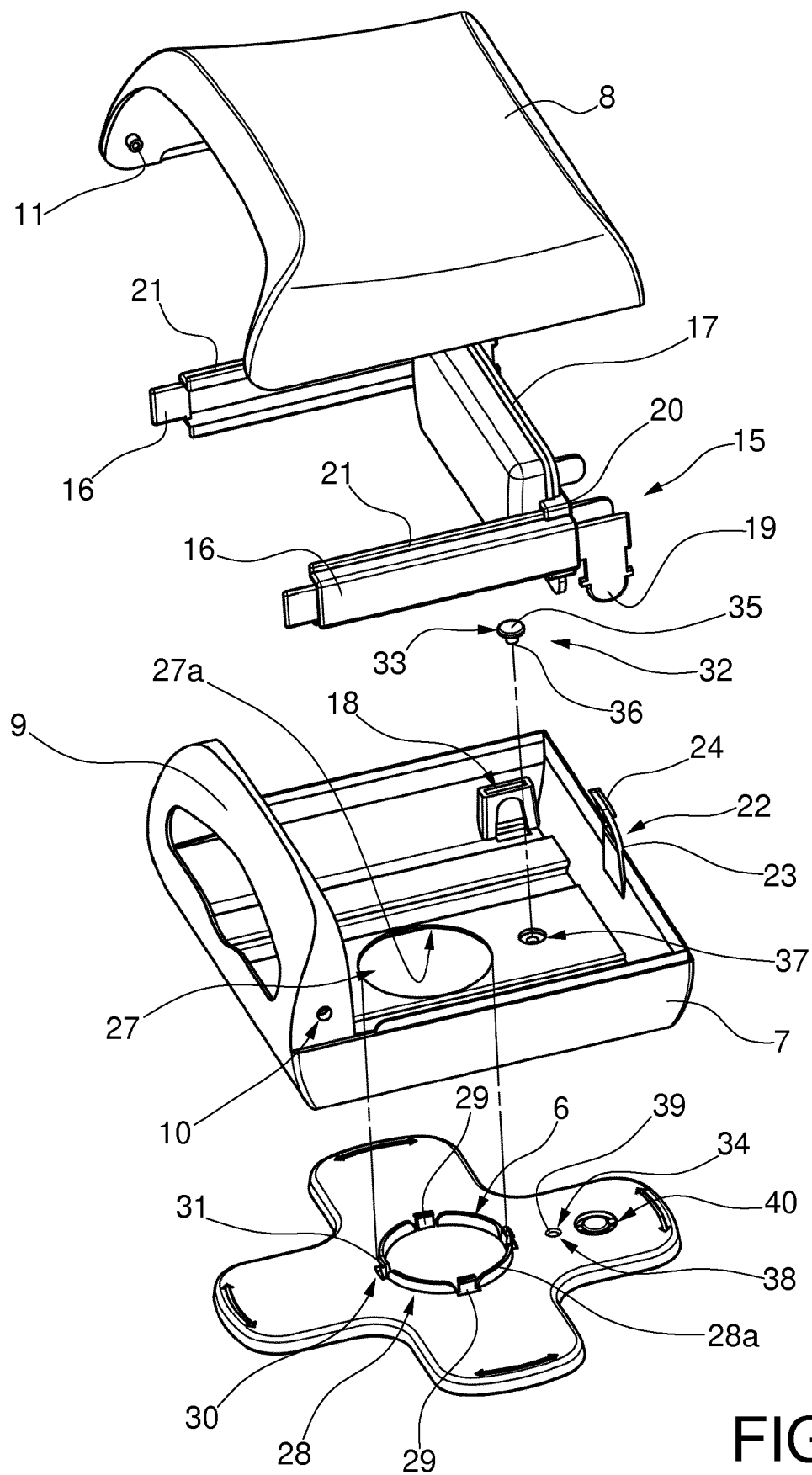


FIG. 7



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 18 17 3505

5

10

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
X	US 9 480 372 B1 (TAYLOR KYLE [US]) 1 November 2016 (2016-11-01) * column 3, line 22 - column 4, line 60 * * figures 1,3,4 *	1-5,14,15	INV. A47K10/42
X	US 8 544 390 B1 (BAHNSEN SCOTT M [US]) 1 October 2013 (2013-10-01) * sentence 55, paragraph 3 - sentence 56, paragraph 4 * * figures 1a-3 *	1-8	
X	DE 90 18 042 U1 (GRUNDMANN ERNST H [DE]) 17 February 1994 (1994-02-17) * page 9, line 17 - page 10, line 16 * * figures 1,3,4 *	1-13	
X	US 2013/105508 A1 (HESS LINDSAY WIND [US] ET AL) 2 May 2013 (2013-05-02) * paragraph [0042] * * figures 7A-12 *	1,2,14	
X	US 2016/029856 A1 (OREFICE CLAUDIO [US]) 4 February 2016 (2016-02-04) * paragraphs [0024], [0025] * * figures 1,2,4,7 *	1-3,9,10,14,15	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC) A47K A47G B65D
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search The Hague		Date of completion of the search 8 October 2018	Examiner Urbahn, Stephanie
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 (P04C01)

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

EP 18 17 3505

5

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

08-10-2018

10

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 9480372	B1	01-11-2016	NONE
US 8544390	B1	01-10-2013	NONE
DE 9018042	U1	17-02-1994	NONE
US 2013105508	A1	02-05-2013	NONE
US 2016029856	A1	04-02-2016	NONE

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

EPO FORM P0459

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