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(54) Title: SAFETY DEVICE FOR A VEHICLE DOOR HANDLE

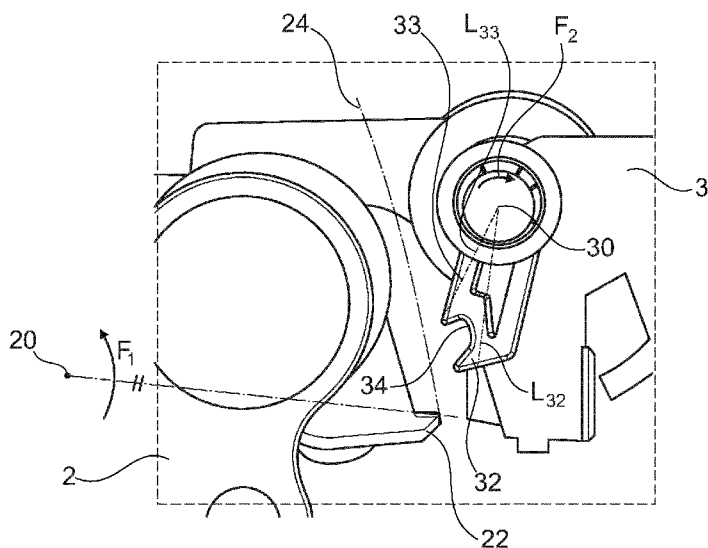


Fig. 2

(57) Abstract: The invention relates to a safety device for a vehicle door handle, the device comprising: - an activation element (2) configured to activate a latch by rotating from a rest position to an activation position, and comprising at least one activation protuberance (22), - a blocking element (3) comprising first and second blocking protuberances (32, 33) and being configured to rotate between a disengaged position in which the blocking element (3) allows the activation element (2) to rotate, first and second blocking positions in which the first or second blocking protuberance (32, 33) interact with the activation protuberance (22) so as to block the activation element (2) in a first or second intermediate positions disposed between the rest and activation positions of the activation element in case of a crash. The invention further relates to the corresponding vehicle door handle and vehicle.

Safety device for a vehicle door handle

The invention relates to a safety device for a vehicle door handle, as well as vehicle comprising such safety device.

5 Motor vehicle safety standards require that the doors of the vehicle stays closed in case of a collision, also called “crash”.

To meet these requirements, known safety devices comprise:

- an activation element configured to activate a latch by rotating around an activation axis from a rest position to an activation position, the activation element comprising at least
10 one activation protuberance,
- a blocking element comprising a blocking protuberance and being configured to rotate around a blocking axis between
a disengaged position in which the blocking element allows the activation element to rotate around the activation axis from a rest position to an activation position,
15 a blocking position in which the blocking protuberance interacts with the activation protuberance so as to block the activation element in an intermediate position disposed between the rest and activation position of the activation element in case of a crash.

The blocking element comprises an inertial mass and a blocking part, wherein the blocking part is configured to intercept a stop of the activation element during a collision.

20 However, in some specific circumstances, the blocking element may not be able to block the blocking element, due to a delay in the rotation of the blocking element in case of high acceleration.

An object of the invention is to propose a safety device simple, not expensive, more efficient and more reliable than the prior art.

25 Another object of the invention is to propose a safety device comprising a back-up system for blocking of the activation element when a blocking protuberance of the blocking element is too late to block the activation element.

To this end the invention relates to a safety device for a vehicle door handle, the device comprising:

- an activation element configured to activate a latch by rotating around an activation axis from a rest position to an activation position, the activation element comprising at least one activation protuberance,
- a blocking element comprising first and second blocking protuberances and being
5 configured to rotate around a blocking axis between
a disengaged position in which the blocking element allows the activation element to rotate around the activation axis from a rest position to an activation position,
a first blocking position in which the first blocking protuberance interacts with the activation protuberance so as to block the activation element in a first intermediate
10 position disposed between the rest and activation positions of the activation element,
and
a second blocking position in which the second blocking protuberance interacts with the activation protuberance so as to block the activation element in an intermediate position disposed between the rest and activation positions of the activation element, and,
15 wherein in case of a crash, the blocking element rotates around the blocking axis from the disengaged position to the first or the second blocking position depending on the rotation made by the activation element.

Advantageously, the safety device of the invention comprises a second blocking protuberance configured to block the activation element in case the activation element
20 rotates more quickly than the blocking element. This improves in a simple and not costly manner the efficiency and the reliability of the safety device.

According to further embodiments which can be considered alone or in combination:

- the first blocking protuberance is configured for blocking the activation protuberance of the activation element at a rotation angle of the blocking element lower than the one
25 in case of blocking the activation protuberance of the activation element by the second blocking protuberance with respect to the movement of the activation protuberance; and/or
- the first blocking protuberance has a radial length superior to the second blocking protuberance; and/or
- 30 - the blocking protuberances extend according to a plane substantially perpendicular to the blocking axis; and/or

- the blocking element comprises an inertial mass configured to make the blocking element rotate, in case of a crash, from the disengaged position to the first or the second blocking positions; and/or
- the first and second blocking protuberances define a recess for receiving the activation protuberance when the said activation protuberance is blocked by the second blocking protuberance; and/or
- the activation axis is substantially parallel to the blocking axis.

The invention further relates to a vehicle door handle comprising a safety device according to the invention, and a handle grip comprising a gripping part and a column projecting from the gripping part, wherein the column cooperates with the activation element to drive the activation element from the rest position to the activation position.

According to further embodiments which can be considered alone or in combination:

- the handle grip is rotationally mounted about a grip axis; and/or
- the grip axis is substantially parallel to the activation axis; and/or
- the grip axis is substantially parallel to the blocking axis; and/or
- the blocking axis is substantially placed between the activation axis and the grip axis.

According to another aspect, the invention relates to a vehicle comprising a vehicle door handle according to the invention.

Other features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description of non-limitative embodiments, with reference to the attached drawings in which:

- Figure 1 is a space view of a vehicle handle according to a preferred embodiment of the invention;

- Figure 2 is a side view of the activation element and of the blocking element, in which the activation element is in a rest position;

- Figure 3 is a side view according to figure 2, in which an activation protuberance of the activation element is blocked by a first protuberance of the blocking element;

- Figure 4 is a side view according to figures 2 and 3, in which the activation protuberance is blocked by a second protuberance of the blocking element;

Referring to figure 1, the vehicle door handle of the invention may comprise a handle grip 1 which may comprise a gripping part 12 and a column 11 projecting from the gripping part 12. The handle grip 1 may be rotationally mounted about a grip axis (10).

The vehicle door handle of the invention also comprises a safety device.

- 5 The safety device of the invention comprises an activation element 2 configured to activate a latch (not shown) by rotating around an activation axis 20 from a rest position to an activation position, the activation element 2 comprising at least one activation protuberance 22.

10 The column 11 is connected to the activation element 2 such that when the handle is actuated by a user, the column 11 drives the activation element 2 from a rest position to an activating position. When the activation element 2 is moved to the activation position, it activates a latch such that the door can be opened. The activation element 2 may be connected to the latch by a cable, for example a Bowden cable.

15 The safety device of the invention further comprises a blocking element 3 configured to block the activation element 2 in case of a crash.

The blocking element 3 comprises first and second blocking protuberances 32 and 33. The first and second blocking protuberances 32 and 33 are distincts from each other. The blocking element 3 is configured to rotate around a blocking axis 30 between a disengaged position and a first and second blocking positions.

- 20 In the disengaged position, the blocking element 3 allows the activation element 2 to rotate around the activation axis 20 from the rest position to the activation position.

25 In the first blocking position shown in figure 3, the first blocking protuberance 32 of the blocking element 3 interacts with the activation protuberance 22 of the activation element 2 so as to block the activation element 2 in a first intermediate position disposed between the rest and activation positions of the activation element 2.

30 In the second blocking position shown in figure 4, the second blocking protuberance 33 of the blocking element 3 interacts with the activation protuberance 22 of the activation element 2 so as to block the activation element 2 in an intermediate position disposed between the rest and activation positions of the activation element 2. The second blocking protuberance 22 is different from the first blocking position.

The safety device is configured such that in case of a crash, inertia of the handle parts may cause the activation element 2 to rotate around the blocking axis 30 from the disengaged position to the first or the second blocking position depending on the rotation made by the activation element 2. For example, activation element 2 may rotate in a direction, such as a counterclockwise direction F1 as shown in figure 2 towards the activation position. The same inertia may also cause the blocking element 3 to rotate in another direction, as such as the clockwise direction F2 as shown in figure 2 from the disengaged position to the first or the second blocking position.

Depending on various circumstances such as the initial state of the blocking element 3 and of the activation element 2 as well as the strength and the kind of acceleration undergone by the handle of the invention, the first blocking protuberance 32 may be late to block the activation protuberance 22, such that the activation element 2 is moved toward the activation position and the door is opened. The second blocking protuberance 33 is configured to block the activation protuberance 22 if the first protuberance is late to block the activation protuberance 22 of the activation element 2.

Advantageously, the arrangement of the invention enables to have an early blocking made by the first blocking protuberance 32 when the blocking element 3 is early to move before the activation element 2 in case of a crash. The arrangement of the invention also enables to have a late blocking made by the second blocking protuberance 33 when the blocking element 3 is late to move before the activation element 2 in said case of a crash.

Advantageously, the second blocking protuberance 33 enables to have a second distinct and separate blocking position, thereby increasing the safety of the handle in case of a side crash when the first protuberance 32 of the blocking element 3 is late to block the activation protuberance of the activation element 2.

According to a preferred embodiment, the first blocking protuberance 32 is configured for blocking the activation protuberance 22 of the activation element 2 at a rotation angle of the blocking element 3 lower than the one in case of blocking the activation protuberance 22 of the activation element 2 by the second blocking protuberance 33 with respect to the movement of the activation protuberance 22. In particular, the first blocking protuberance 32 is configured to block the activation protuberance 22 at a lower position with reference to figures 2 and 3, with respect to the second blocking protuberance 33.

According to a preferred embodiment, the first blocking protuberance 32 has a radial length L_{32} superior to the one L_{33} of the second blocking protuberance 33. The radial length is measured with respect to the blocking axis 30. The length of the blocking protuberances 32, 33 enables a quick and a late blocking of the activation protuberance 22.

5 According to a preferred embodiment, the blocking protuberances 32, 33 extend according to a plane substantially perpendicular to the blocking axis 30. Coplanar blocking protuberances limit the space requirement of the blocking protuberances.

 According to a preferred embodiment, the blocking element 3 comprises an inertial mass 31 configured to make the blocking element 3 rotate, in case of a crash, from the
10 disengaged position to the first or the second blocking positions.

 The blocking element 3 may also be moved by an electronic system sensing the crash.

 According to a preferred embodiment, the first and second blocking protuberances 32, 33 define a recess for receiving the activation protuberance 22 when the said activation protuberance 22 is blocked by the second blocking protuberance 33. The recess improves
15 the maintaining of the activation protuberance in the second blocking position. The recess enables also a minimum overlapping between the activation protuberance 22 and the second blocking protuberance 33 during blocking.

 The safety device preferably comprises a link member 34 linking the blocking protuberances 32 and 33 together. The link member 34 ensures that the blocking
20 protuberances 32 and 33 are very close to the path done by activation protuberance 22 during the movement (shown by line 24 in figure 2).

 In particular, the link member 34 forms the recess receiving the activation protuberance 22.

 The recess enables to guarantee a minimum overlapping between the activation
25 protuberance 22 and blocking protuberance 33 during the blocking.

 According to a preferred embodiment, the activation axis 20 is substantially parallel to the blocking axis 30. Advantageously, parallel activation and blocking axes 20, 30 simplify the blocking as the protuberances are moved in a common plane in the same direction.

 According to a preferred embodiment, the handle grip 1 is rotationally mounted about
30 a grip axis 10, which is preferably substantially parallel to the activation axis 20.

Advantageously, parallel grip and activation axes 10, 20 limit the space requirement of the activation protuberance 22 as the latter may be aligned with a longitudinal handle grip 1.

According to a preferred embodiment, the grip axis 10 is substantially parallel to the blocking axis 30. Advantageously, parallel grip and blocking axes 10, 30 limit the space requirement of the blocking protuberances 32, 33 as the latter may be aligned with a longitudinal handle grip 1.

According to a preferred embodiment, the blocking axis 30 is substantially placed between the activation axis 20 and the grip axis 10 as shown in figure 1. Such an arrangement enables to optimize the space requirement of the safety device by placing the blocking element 3 and the activation element 2 at one side of the column 12, and to leave some space for a lock another side of the column.

The invention has been described above with the aid of embodiments without limitation of the general inventive concept as defined in the claims.

Many modifications and variations will suggest themselves to those skilled in the art upon making reference to the foregoing illustrative embodiments, which are given by way of example only and which are not intended to limit the scope of the invention, that being determined solely by the appended claims.

In the claims, the word “comprising” does not exclude other elements or steps, and the indefinite article “a” or “an” does not exclude a plurality. The mere fact that different features are recited in mutually different dependent claims does not indicate that a combination of these features cannot be advantageously used. Any reference signs in the claims should not be construed as limiting the scope of the invention.

CLAIMS

1. Safety device for a vehicle door handle, the device comprising:

- an activation element (2) configured to activate a latch by rotating around an activation
5 axis (20) from a rest position to an activation position, the activation element (2)
comprising at least one activation protuberance (22),

- a blocking element (3) comprising first and second blocking protuberances (32, 33) and
being configured to rotate around a blocking axis (30) between

a disengaged position in which the blocking element (3) allows the activation element (2)

10 to rotate around the activation axis (20) from a rest position to an activation position,

a first blocking position in which the first blocking protuberance (32) interacts with the
activation protuberance (22) so as to block the activation element (2) in a first
intermediate position disposed between the rest and activation positions of the
activation element (2), and

15 a second blocking position in which the second blocking protuberance (33) interacts with
the activation protuberance (22) so as to block the activation element (2) in an
intermediate position disposed between the rest and activation positions of the
activation element (2), and,

wherein in case of a crash, the blocking element (3) rotates around the blocking axis (30)

20 from the disengaged position to the first or the second blocking position depending on
the rotation made by the activation element (2).

2. Safety device according to claim 1, wherein the first blocking protuberance (32) is
configured for blocking the activation protuberance (22) of the activation element (2) at
25 a rotation angle of the blocking element (3) lower than the one in case of blocking the
activation protuberance (22) of the activation element (2) by the second blocking
protuberance (33) with respect to the movement of the activation protuberance (22).

3. Safety device according to the preceding claim, wherein the first blocking protuberance
30 (32) has a radial length superior to the second blocking protuberance (33).

4. Safety device according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the blocking protuberances (32, 33) extend according to a plane substantially perpendicular to the blocking axis (30).
- 5 5. Safety device according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the blocking element (3) comprises an inertial mass (31) configured to make the blocking element (3) rotate, in case of a crash, from the disengaged position to the first or the second blocking positions.
- 10 6. Safety device according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the first and second blocking protuberances (32, 33) define a recess for receiving the activation protuberance (22) when the said activation protuberance (22) is blocked by the second blocking protuberance (33).
- 15 7. Safety device according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the activation axis (20) is substantially parallel to the blocking axis (30).
8. Vehicle door handle comprising a safety device according to any of the preceding claims, and a handle grip (1) comprising a gripping part (12) and a column (11)
20 projecting from the gripping part (12), wherein the column (11) cooperates with the activation element (2) to drive the activation element (2) from the rest position to the activation position.
9. Vehicle door handle according to the preceding claim, wherein the handle grip (1) is
25 rotationally mounted about a grip axis (10).
10. Vehicle door handle according to the preceding claim, wherein the grip axis (10) is substantially parallel to the activation axis (20).
- 30 11. Vehicle door handle according to any of claims 10 to 12, claim 11 applying, wherein the grip axis (10) is substantially parallel to the blocking axis (30).

12. Vehicle door handle according to any of claims 10 to 13, claim 11 applying, wherein the blocking axis (30) is substantially placed between the activation axis (20) and the grip axis (10).
- 5 13. Vehicle comprising a vehicle door handle according to any of claims 8 to 12.

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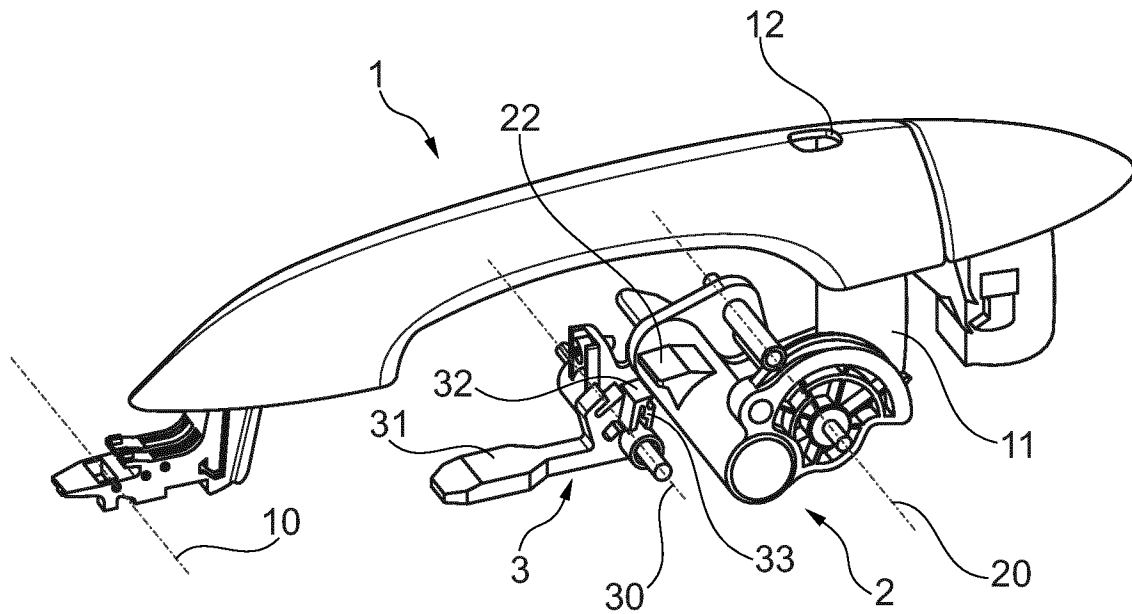


Fig. 1

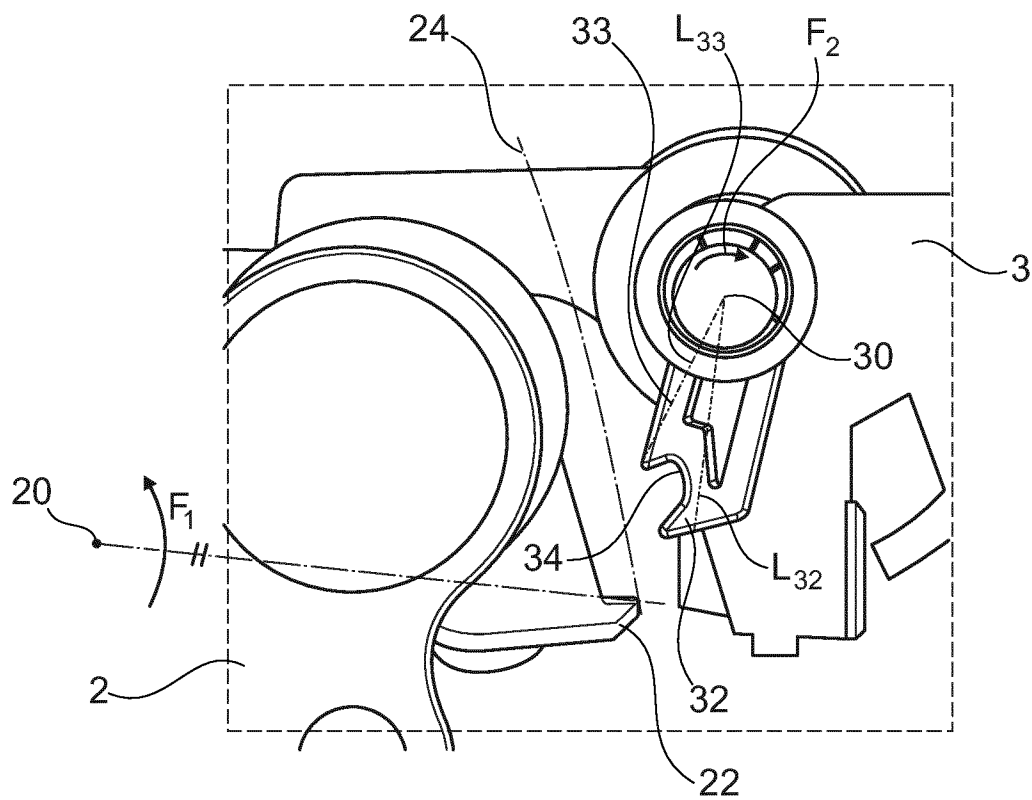


Fig. 2

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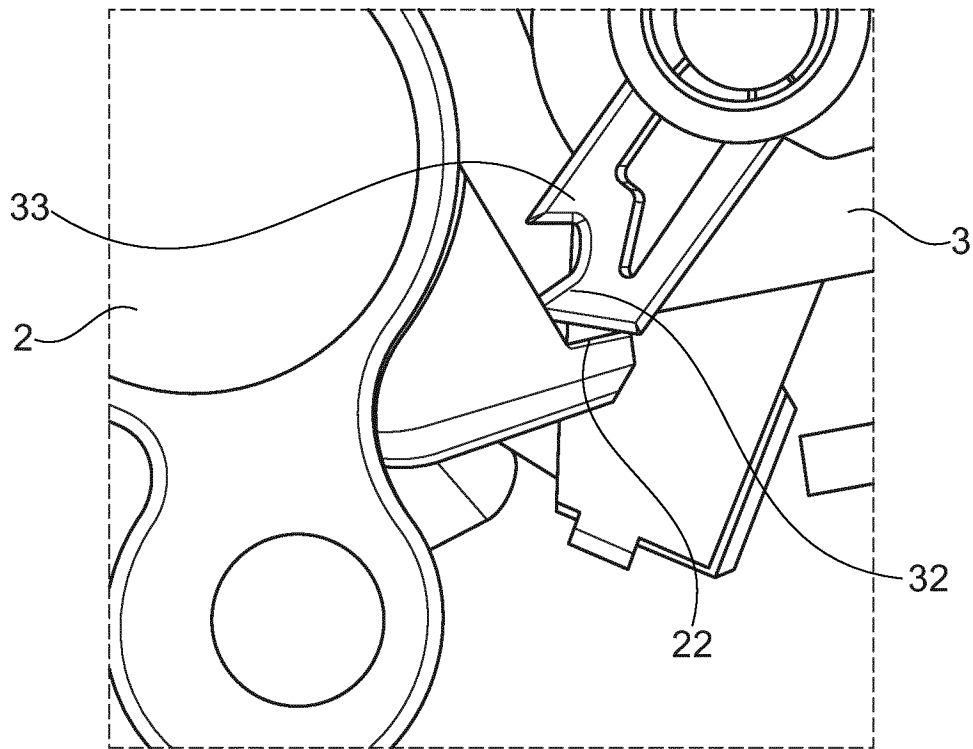


Fig. 3

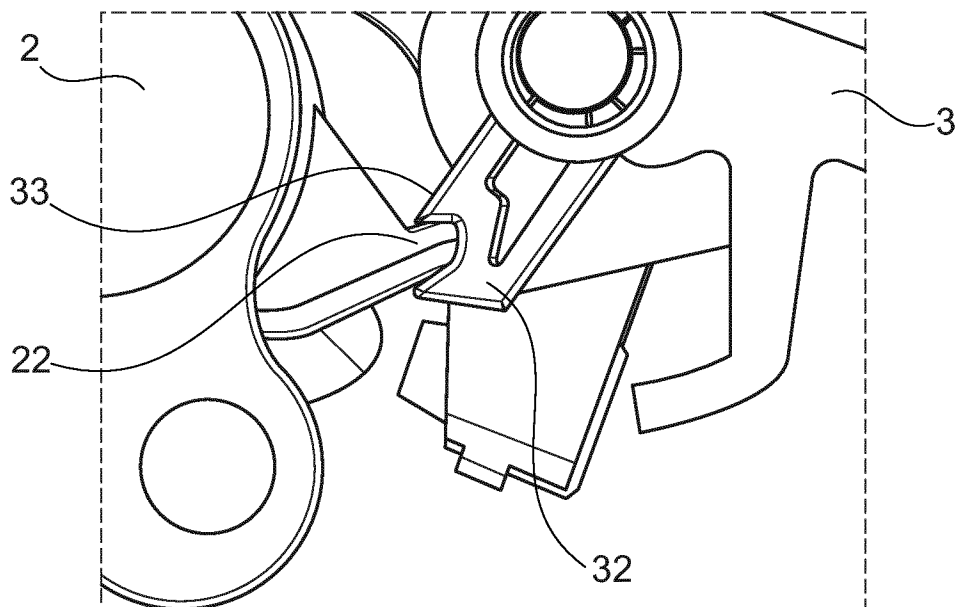


Fig. 4

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No

PCT/EP2016/059971

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

INV. E05B77/06 E05B85/16
ADD.

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
E05B

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 2014/145454 A1 (DA DEPP0 LYNN D [US] ET AL) 29 May 2014 (2014-05-29)	1-5,7-13
A	the whole document	6
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A	DE 10 2013 203808 A1 (KIEKERT AG [DE]) 11 September 2014 (2014-09-11)	1



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/EP2016/059971

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