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(54) **Packaged set of panels**

Verpackter Satz von Paneelen

Ensemble de panneaux emballé

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Description

[0001] This invention relates to a packaged set of panels, more particularly of floor panels.

[0002] Packaging a stack of a plurality of floor panels, such as laminate panels, in a cardboard box is widely known. WO 2006/103565 discloses such packaging. Herein, a box, folded of a flat packaging element, covers the back side of the stack and four edges thereof. The decorative side of one of the outermost panels of the stack is left free. The arrangement of box and floor panels is wrapped by means of a transparent or translucent film, such as shrink film. However, the film can simply be punctured when being sold, or by inquisitive clients. Hereby, the risk is obtained that the panels may slide out of the package and thereby damage the box. This will lead to a sloppy impression at the sales point. Moreover, selling the damaged packaging units will be difficult. Due to the tension of the shrink film, it becomes difficult to put panels, which have been taken out of the package, back into the latter in an orderly fashion.

[0003] Further, the package of WO 2006/103565 is insufficient for packaging floor panels having a limited stiffness, such as floor panels consisting substantially of soft synthetic material. So, for example, so-called LVT (Luxury Vinyl Tile) panels have a high density, but a low inherent stiffness. Bending of such panels under their own weight may lead to damages to the package. It is not recommended to use the package of WO 2006/103565 for such floor panels, when they are to be presented upright as well as when they have to be presented lying down. With an upright presentation, the panels may slide off the stack and in this manner puncture the film.

[0004] From DE 20 2004 019 319 U1 and EP 1 712 489, a flat packaging element is known from which a box can be folded for packaging a stack of floor panels. Apart from the back side and the four edges of the stack, the box also covers the decorative side of one of the outermost panels. However, the packaging element covering this decorative side comprises a window through which the pattern of the floor panel can be seen. However, inquisitive clients who also want to inspect the edges of the floor panels still tend to open the package, such that here, too, a sloppy impression may arise in the sales point due to the presence of damaged packages and floor panels which have been taken completely or partially out of the package.

[0005] In first instance, the present invention aims at an alternative packaged set of panels wherein, according to various preferred embodiments, also a solution is offered for the problems related to the packages of the state of the art.

[0006] To this aim, the invention relates to a packaged set of panels, wherein this packaged set comprises at least a stack of a plurality of floor panels situated with their flat sides on top of each other, wherein a flat side of at least one of the outermost floor panels of the respective stack is at least partially covered by a packaging

element, with the characteristic that the respective packaging element is provided with a removable edge portion, wherein the removal of this edge portion reveals at least an initially covered portion of said flat side of the outermost floor panel. By providing a removable edge portion, the possibility is offered of creating an inspection flap through which the inquisitive client can inspect the respective covered portion of the floor panels. As the removable portion is an edge portion of the packaging element, this portion is situated at a location which is intuitive to the user and the removal can be performed in a simple manner. By "removable" is meant that the respective portion is provided especially for being removed, if so desired. Preferably, it can be removed without breaking possible glue connections and/or without damaging remaining portions of the package.

[0007] According to a particular preferred embodiment, the aforementioned edge portion is connected to the remaining portions of the packaging element at least by means of a hinge. The edge portion then can be removed by pivoting it away from the stack around said hinge. Herein, by means of the hinge the edge portion remains connected to the remaining portions of the packaging element. Preferably, the hinge is made as a thinned section of the packaging element. By providing a hinge for pivoting the edge portion away, the intuition of the client is addressed, and in this manner it is avoided that other packing portions might be damaged for inspecting the panels.

[0008] It is not excluded that during pivoting around a hinge, slits are created in the packaging element in a direction transverse to said hinge. Preferably, the packaging element comprises provided for this purpose weakened, for example, perforated, areas, such as line-shaped areas, along which such tear can occur. As the slits are directed along beforehand-provided areas, a less sloppy impression of opened packages will be obtained. Herein, the remaining portions of the packaging element itself remain entirely or substantially undamaged. According to the most preferred embodiment, the packaging element comprises at least two line-shaped areas along which the slit can occur, namely a first line-shaped area in the plane of the floor panels and transverse to the hinge, and a second line-shaped area transverse to the plane of the floor panels and transverse to the hinge.

[0009] Such weakened, preferably perforated and/or line-shaped areas may also be applied when the edge portion can be removed in another manner than by pivoting it away over a hinge.

[0010] Preferably, said floor panels are oblong and rectangular, wherein they then are equipped with a pair of long edges and a pair of short edges. In case that said particularly preferred embodiment is applied, said hinge then preferably extends at an angle with said pair of short edges, wherein this angle is larger than 5° and preferably smaller than 75°, and still better at an angle situated between 15° and 45°. According to another embodiment,

which possibly can be combined therewith, said hinge extends between both aforementioned long edges. This means that an imaginary line, which encompasses the hinge, intersects both long edges. Preferably, the hinge extends over the entire distance between both long edges. In this manner, the initially covered portion can be inspected over its complete width by removing, in this case at least by pivoting, the respective edge portion.

[0011] Preferably, said edge portion is situated at an edge of said outermost floor panel. Preferably, the removable edge portion is at least situated at a corner area of said outermost floor panel. Thus, the removal of the edge portion allows inspecting the edge or even the corner and thus at least two edges of the floor panel at least for a part thereof.

[0012] Still better, the removal of said removable edge portion leads to revealing at least one entire edge or substantially an entire edge of the outermost floor panel.

[0013] According to the most preferred embodiment, the removal of said removable edge portion leads to revealing at least portions of three edges of the outermost floor panel, wherein preferably one of these edges is completely revealed. The completely revealed edge preferably relates to a short edge, in the case of an oblong and rectangular floor panel.

[0014] Preferably, the packaged set of panels is reclosable. This means that the removable edge portion can be brought back into a position in which said initially covered portion of the floor panel is covered again. Herein, a minimum of damage, for example, slits along the areas possibly provided for this purpose, is not excluded.

[0015] According to an important practical embodiment for realizing a reclosable packaged set of floor panels, said packaged set of panels comprises locking portions, namely at least a first locking portion forming part of said removable edge portion, and at least a second locking portion which can cooperate with said first locking portion. Preferably, by means of their interaction a retaining force is realized holding said removable edge portion in a position in which said initially covered portion is covered.

[0016] Preferably, said first locking portion is a corner portion forming part of the removable portion of said packaging element, wherein said corner portion can be provided over a corner of the aforementioned stack. Said second locking portion then is preferably formed on a corner portion of a packaging element.

[0017] The cooperation of the first and the second locking portion can consist of a mutual engagement of these locking portions behind each other or can be limited to a tensioning effect which results in a static friction sufficient for holding the removable edge portion in the closed position.

[0018] Preferably, said packaging element substantially consists of cardboard, for example, of corrugated cardboard.

[0019] Preferably, said packaging element extends in one piece over at least four of the six sides of said stack

and still better over all sides of said stack. In other words, the packaging of the stack panels then is obtained by a single folded sheet; preferably this relates to a single die-cut cardboard sheet, for example, corrugated cardboard.

This embodiment allows omitting the use of shrink film. However, the invention does not exclude the use of shrink film for wrapping the packaged sets.

[0020] The removable edge portion possibly may be realized such that it, after removal, allows taking the panel out of the package and/or putting it back into it.

[0021] The package of the invention preferably is applied for packaging relatively supple panels.

[0022] The packaged panels substantially can be composed of soft synthetic material, such as soft PVC (Polyvinyl chloride). Preferably, this relates to floor panels consisting of so-called heterogeneous vinyl tiles or heterogeneous vinyl planks. Heterogeneous vinyl tiles or vinyl planks usually comprise a filled core of soft PVC, a printed decor film of PVC, a transparent wear layer, also of PVC, and a lacquer layer, for example, of polyurethane. For the fillers of the core, use can be made of chalk. Instead of for heterogeneous vinyl panels, the package of the invention can also be applied for packaging so-called homogeneous vinyl panels. Such panels consist for the major part of a decor-forming mix of soft PVC.

[0023] The packaged panels can have a thickness of 5 millimeters or less, and/or preferably have a density of more than 1500 kilograms per cubic meter. With such panels, it is advantageous to work with a packaging element which extends in one piece over at least 4 sides of the stack of panels and preferably over all sides. Such panels often have a low intrinsic rigidity, and the packaging element then contributes to an important extent to the rigidity of the packaged set of panels. With such panels, there is a high risk of puncturing a possible shrink film. The packaged set of panels of the invention may make a shrink film redundant, whereas there still is the possibility of inspecting the panels by means of the removable edge portion.

[0024] In the case of supple panels, heterogeneous or homogenous vinyl panels and/or panels of 5 millimeters or less, a removable edge portion may allow that the panel smoothly can be taken out of the package. This is in particular the case when the removal of said removable edge portion reveals at least portions of three edges of the outermost floor panel, amongst which, for example, at least a short edge.

[0025] With the intention of better showing the characteristics of the invention, herein after, as an example without any limitative character, some preferred embodiments are described, with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 in perspective represents a packaged set of panels with the characteristics of the invention; Figure 2 represents the packaged set of figure 1, wherein the removable edge portion is removed;

Figure 3, at a larger scale, represents a view on the area F3 indicated in figure 2;

Figure 4 represents a cross-section according to the line IV-IV represented in figure 3; and

Figure 5 represents a cross-section according to the line V-V represented in figure 4.

[0026] Figure 1 represents a packaged set of panels 1. The packaged set 1 comprises at least a stack 2 of a plurality of floor panels 4 situated with their flat sides 3 on top of each other. The flat side 3 of one of the outermost panels 4 of the stack 2 is at least partially covered by means of a packaging element 5. In this case, the entire decorative side 6 of the respective floor panel 4 is covered by the packaging element 5.

[0027] Figures 1 to 3 represent that the packaging element 5 is provided with a removable edge portion 7, wherein the removal of this edge portion 7 reveals an initially covered portion of the decorative side 6 of the outermost floor panel 4.

[0028] The removable edge portion 7 is connected to the remaining portions of the packaging element 5 by means of a hinge 8. The edge portion 7 is removed by pivoting it away from the stack 2 according to arrow 9. However, by means of the hinge 8, the edge portion 7 remains connected to the remaining portions of the packaging element 5. To this aim, the hinge 8 in the example is made as a thinned section of the packaging element 5.

[0029] When pivoting the removable edge portion 7 away, in the example slits 10 will be created in a direction transverse to the hinge 8. To this aim, the packaging element 5 comprises weakened, in this case perforated, line-shaped areas 11-12 along which the slits 10 are guided. A first of these line-shaped areas 11 extends in the plane of the floor panels 4 and transverse to the hinge 8, namely, here in longitudinal direction, and a second of these line-shaped areas 12 extends transverse to the plane of the floor panels 4 and transverse to the hinge 8, namely, here in the thickness direction of the packaged set of panels 1.

[0030] Said hinge 8 extends at an angle A of more than 5°, in this case approximately at 30°, with the short edges 13 of the stack 2 of floor panels 4, and such over the entire distance between both long edges 14.

[0031] The removable edge portion 7 is situated at a corner area of the outermost floor panel and the removal thus allows inspecting the corner and thus at least two edges 13-14 of the floor panel 4 at least partially. In this case, even portions of three edges, amongst which even one entire short edge 13, can be revealed.

[0032] In the example, the removable edge portion 7 is made in the form of a cap. Namely, it is situated like a cap over at least one corner point and in the example over only one corner point of the stack 2 of panels 4 and the remaining packaging material and thus as such forms at least one corner point of the packaged set of panels 1. To this aim, the edge portion 7 comprises at least three portions 15 which are situated perpendicular or approx-

imately perpendicular to each other. In the example, the edge portion 7 comprises components of one short edge 13 and one long edge 14 of the packaged set 1 and is free from components of the other short and long edge.

[0033] Figure 3 shows in dashed line 16 that removing the edge portion 7 allows taking panels 4 out of the packaged set 1. Even with a relatively limited minimum exposure of the long edges 14, for example, starting from a revealed length L of 5 centimeters, panels 4 with a thickness of 5 millimeters or less can be slid out of the stack 2. This is certainly the case with heterogeneous vinyl panels having a thickness of 5 millimeters or less. Moreover, the panels 4 are not hindered by a possible shrink film when they have to be put back into the packaged set 1.

[0034] Figure 3 represents that the packaged set of panels 1 of the example is made reclosable. To wit, according to arrow 17, the removable edge portion 7 can be brought back into a position in which the initially covered portion of the floor panel 4 is covered again. Herein, the slits 10 along the areas 11-12 provided for this purpose will remain present.

[0035] It is noted that a hinge 8 which encompasses an angle A larger than 5°, however, smaller than 75°, with the edge 13 to be revealed, is advantageous for reclosing a cap-shaped removable portion 7. In fact, when pivoting down the edge portion 7, thus a hindering contact with the remaining edges of the packaged set 1 is avoided beforehand.

[0036] In this case, the packaged set 1 comprises a first locking portion 18, which forms part of the removable edge portion 7, and a second locking portion 19, with which the first locking portion 18 can cooperate, such that a retaining force is realized holding the removable edge portion 7 in a position in which said initially covered portion is covered.

[0037] Herein, said first locking portion 18 is formed by an inner corner or inner edge defined by said three mutually perpendicular or approximately perpendicular portions 15. The second locking portion 19 is formed at the situated there below corner point or corner edge of the stack 2 of floor panels 4 or the packaging material situated around the latter.

[0038] In the example, the second locking portion 19 is formed as a preferably protruding nose portion 20 on the packaging material. Figures 4 and 5 represent that this nose portion 20, in the closed condition, comes into contact with said inner edge and in this manner creates a tensioning effect. This tensioning effect results in a static friction sufficient for holding the removable edge portion 7 in the closed position.

[0039] The floor panels 4 which are packaged according to the present invention preferably comprise, at least at two opposite edges, mechanical coupling means 21 or coupling parts allowing that two of such floor panels 4 can be coupled to each other, wherein a locking is obtained in a direction perpendicular to the plane of the coupled panels 4 as well as in a direction perpendicular

to the coupled edges and in the plane of the panels 4. Such coupling means 21 are known as such, for example, from WO 97/47834 and usually comprise portions 22 extending to beyond the decorative side 6. Such portions 22 are extremely damageable. This relates, for example, to coupling means 21 substantially in the form of a tongue and groove connection, wherein the tongue and/or a low-ermost groove lip extends to beyond the decorative side 6.

[0040] Figure 4 also represents that the tensioning effect results in a better protection of the mechanical coupling means 21 at the height of the respective corners.

[0041] The present invention is in no way limited to the herein above-described embodiments; on the contrary, such packaged sets of panels can be realized according to various variants without leaving the scope of the present invention. For example, such packaging elements can also be applied for packaging wall panels, furniture panels, ceiling panels and the like.

Claims

1. Packaged set of panels, wherein this packaged set (1) comprises at least a stack (2) of a plurality of floor panels (4) situated with their flat sides (3) on top of each other, wherein a flat side (3) of at least one of the outermost floor panels (4) of the respective stack (2) is at least partially covered by a packaging element (5), **characterized in that** the respective packaging element (5) is provided with a removable edge portion (7), wherein the removal of this edge portion (7) reveals at least an initially covered portion of said flat side (3) of the outermost floor panel (4).
2. Packaged set of panels according to claim 1, **characterized in that** said edge portion (7) is connected to the remaining portions of the packaging element (5) by means of a hinge (8) and that the edge portion (7) can be removed by pivoting it away from the stack (2) along said hinge (8), and that, during such pivoting, slits (10) are created in the packaging element (5) in a direction transverse to said hinge (8), wherein the packaging element (5) comprises perforated line-shaped areas (11-12) along which the aforementioned slits are formed.
3. Packaged set of panels according to claim 2, **characterized in that** said floor panels (4) are oblong and rectangular and hereby have a pair of long edges (14) and a pair of short edges (13), wherein said hinge (8) extends at an angle (A) with said pair of short edges (13), wherein this angle (A) is larger than 5° and preferably is smaller than 75°.
4. Packaged set of panels according to claim 2 or 3, **characterized in that** said floor panels (1) are oblong and rectangular and hereby have a pair of long edges (14) and a pair of short edges (13), wherein said hinge (8) extends between said long edges (14).
5. Packaged set of panels according to any of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said edge portion (7) is situated at one edge of said outermost floor panel (4).
6. Packaged set of panels according to claim 5, **characterized in that** the removable edge portion (7) is situated at least at a corner area of said outermost floor panel (4).
7. Packaged set of panels according to any of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the removal of said removable edge portion (7) reveals at least one edge (13) of the outermost floor panel (4).
8. Packaged set of panels according to any of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the removal of said removable edge portion (7) reveals at least portions of three edges (13-14) of the outermost floor panel (4).
9. Packaged set of panels according to any of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the packaged set of panels (1) comprises locking portions (18-19), namely at least a first locking portion (18) forming part of said removable edge portion (7), and at least a second locking portion (19), which can cooperate with said first locking portion (18), in such a manner that a retaining force is realized holding said removable edge portion (7) in a position in which said initially covered portion of the floor panel (4) is covered.
10. Packaged set of panels according to claim 9, **characterized in that** said first locking portion (18) is a corner portion forming part of the removable edge portion (7) of said packaging element (5), wherein this corner portion can be provided over a corner of said stack (2).
11. Packaged set of panels according to claim 10, **characterized in that** said second locking portion (19) is formed on a corner portion of a packaging element (5).
12. Packaged set of panels according to any of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said packaging element (5) substantially consists of cardboard.
13. Packaged set of panels according to any of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said packaging element (5) extends in one piece over at least four of the six sides of said stack (2).
14. Packaged set of panels according to any of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said floor pan-

els (1) substantially are composed of soft synthetic material, such as soft PVC; herein, this preferably relates to floor panels (1) consisting of so-called heterogeneous vinyl tiles or heterogeneous vinyl planks.

15. Packaged set of panels according to any of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said floor panels (1) have a thickness of 5 millimeters or less and that they have a density of more than 1500 kilograms per cubic meter.

Patentansprüche

1. Verpackter Satz von Paneelen, wobei dieser Satz (1) mindestens einen Stapel (2) von mehreren Fußbodenpaneelen (4) umfasst, die mit ihren flachen Seiten (3) aufeinander angeordnet sind, wobei eine flache Seite (3) von mindestens einem der äußersten Fußbodenpaneel (4) des betreffenden Stapels (2) mindestens teilweise durch ein Verpackungselement (5) abgedeckt ist, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** das betreffende Verpackungselement (5) mit einem entfernbaren Randteil (7) versehen ist, wobei das Entfernen dieses Randteils (7) mindestens einen ursprünglich abgedeckten Teil der besagten flachen Seite (3) des äußersten Fußbodenpaneels (4) freilegt.
2. Verpackter Satz von Paneelen nach Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** besagter Randteil (7) mittels eines Scharniers (8) mit den restlichen Teilen des Verpackungselements (5) verbunden ist und dass der Randteil (7) entfernt werden kann, indem er entlang besagtem Scharnier (8) von dem Stapel (2) weg geschwenkt wird, und dass während solchen Schwenkens Risse (10) in dem Verpackungselement (5) in einer Richtung quer zu besagtem Scharnier (8) erzeugt werden, wobei das Verpackungselement (5) perforierte linienförmige Gebiete (11-12) umfasst, entlang derer die vorgenannten Risse gebildet werden.
3. Verpackter Satz von Paneelen nach Anspruch 2, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** besagte Fußbodenpaneel (4) länglich und rechteckig sind und hierbei ein Paar lange Kanten (14) und ein Paar kurze Kanten (13) aufweisen, wobei besagtes Scharnier (8) sich in einem Winkel (A) zu besagtem Paar kurzer Kanten (13) erstreckt, wobei dieser Winkel (A) größer als 5° ist und bevorzugt kleiner als 75° ist.
4. Verpackter Satz von Paneelen nach Anspruch 2 oder 3, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** besagte Fußbodenpaneel (1) länglich und rechteckig sind und hierbei ein Paar lange Kanten (14) und ein Paar kurze Kanten (13) aufweisen, wobei besagtes

Scharnier (8) sich zwischen besagten langen Kanten (14) erstreckt.

5. Verpackter Satz von Paneelen nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** besagter Randteil (7) sich an einer Kante besagten äußersten Fußbodenpaneels (4) befindet.
6. Verpackter Satz von Paneelen nach Anspruch 5, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** der entfernbare Randteil (7) sich mindestens an einem Eckbereich des besagten äußersten Fußbodenpaneels (4) befindet.
7. Verpackter Satz von Paneelen nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** das Entfernen des vorgenannten entfernbaren Randteils (7) mindestens eine Kante (13) des äußersten Fußbodenpaneels (4) freilegt.
8. Verpackter Satz von Paneelen nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** das Entfernen des vorgenannten entfernbaren Randteils (7) mindestens Teile von drei Kanten (13-14) des äußersten Fußbodenpaneels (4) freilegt.
9. Verpackter Satz von Paneelen nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** der verpackte Satz von Paneelen (1) Verriegelungsteile (18-19) umfasst, nämlich mindestens einen ersten Verriegelungsteil (18), der Teil des besagten entfernbaren Randteils (7) bildet, und mindestens einen zweiten Verriegelungsteil (19), der mit besagtem ersten Verriegelungsteil (18) zusammenwirken kann, derart, dass eine Haltekraft verwirklicht wird, die besagten entfernbaren Randteil (7) in einer Position hält, worin besagter ursprünglich abgedeckter Teil des Fußbodenpaneels (4) abgedeckt ist.
10. Verpackter Satz von Paneelen nach Anspruch 9, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** besagter erster Verriegelungsteil (18) ein Eckteil ist, der Teil des entfernbaren Randteils (7) besagten Verpackungselements (4) ist, wobei dieser Eckteil über einer Ecke des besagten Stapels (2) angebracht werden kann.
11. Verpackter Satz von Paneelen nach Anspruch 10, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** besagter zweiter Verriegelungsteil (19) an einem Eckteil eines Verpackungselements (5) gebildet ist.
12. Verpackter Satz von Paneelen nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** besagtes Verpackungselement (5) im Wesentlichen aus Karton besteht.
13. Verpackter Satz von Paneelen nach einem der vor-

hergehenden Ansprüche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** besagtes Verpackungselement (5) sich einstückig über mindestens vier der sechs Seiten besagten Stapels (2) erstreckt.

14. Verpackter Satz von Paneelen nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** besagte Fußbodenpaneele (1) im Wesentlichen aus weichem Kunststoff, wie etwa Weich-PVC, aufgebaut sind; hierin betrifft dies bevorzugt Fußbodenpaneele (1) bestehend aus sogenannten heterogenen Vinylfliesen oder heterogenen Vinylplanken.
15. Verpackter Satz von Paneelen nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** besagte Fußbodenpaneele (1) eine Dicke von 5 Millimetern oder weniger aufweisen und dass sie eine Dichte von mehr als 1500 Kilogramm pro Kubikmeter haben.

Revendications

1. Jeu emballé de panneaux, dans lequel ce jeu emballé (1) comprend au moins une pile (2) de plusieurs panneaux de sol (4) disposés avec leurs côtés plats (3) les uns par-dessus les autres, dans lequel un côté plat (3) d'au moins un des panneaux de sol (4) de la pile respective (2), situés le plus à l'extérieur est recouvert au moins en partie d'un élément d'emballage (5), **caractérisé en ce que** l'élément d'emballage respectif (5) est muni d'une portion marginale amovible (7), le retrait de cette portion marginale (7) révélant au moins une portion initialement recouverte dudit côté plat (3) du panneau de sol (4) situé le plus à l'extérieur.
2. Jeu emballé de panneaux selon la revendication 1, **caractérisé en ce que** ladite portion marginale (7) est reliée aux portions restantes de l'élément d'emballage (5) au moyen d'une charnière (8) et **en ce que** la portion marginale (7) peut être éliminée en la retirant de la pile (2) par pivotement le long de ladite charnière (8), et **en ce que**, au cours dudit pivotement, des fentes (10) sont créées dans l'élément d'emballage (5) dans une direction transversale par rapport à ladite charnière (8), l'élément d'emballage (5) comprenant des zones configurées en forme de lignes perforées (11-12) le long desquelles sont formées les fentes susmentionnées.
3. Jeu emballé de panneaux selon la revendication 2, **caractérisé en ce que** lesdits panneaux de sol (4) sont de forme oblongue et rectangulaire et possèdent en l'occurrence une paire de grands côtés (14) et une paire de petits côtés (13), ladite charnière (8) s'étendant en formant un angle (A) avec ladite paire

de petits côtés (13), cet angle (A) étant supérieur à 5° et étant de préférence inférieur à 75°.

4. Jeu emballé de panneaux selon la revendication 2 ou 3, **caractérisé en ce que** lesdits panneaux de sol (4) sont de forme oblongue et rectangulaire et possèdent en l'occurrence une paire de grands côtés (14) et une paire de petits côtés (13), ladite charnière (8) s'étendant entre lesdits grands côtés (14).
5. Jeu emballé de panneaux selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, **caractérisé en ce que** ladite portion marginale (7) est située à un bord dudit panneau de sol (4) situé le plus à l'extérieur.
6. Jeu emballé de panneaux selon la revendication 5, **caractérisé en ce que** la portion marginale amovible (7) est située au moins dans une zone de coin dudit panneau de sol (4) situé le plus à l'extérieur.
7. Jeu emballé de panneaux selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, **caractérisé en ce que** le retrait de ladite portion marginale amovible (7) révèle au moins un bord (13) du panneau de sol (4) situé le plus à l'extérieur.
8. Jeu emballé de panneaux selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, **caractérisé en ce que** le retrait de ladite portion marginale amovible (7) révèle au moins des portions de trois bords (13-14) du panneau de sol (4) situé le plus à l'extérieur.
9. Jeu emballé de panneaux selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, **caractérisé en ce que** le jeu emballé de panneaux (1) comprend des portions de verrouillage (18-19), plus précisément au moins une première portion de verrouillage (18) faisant partie de ladite portion marginale amovible (7) et au moins une deuxième portion de verrouillage (19) qui peut coopérer avec ladite première portion de verrouillage (18) de manière telle que l'on obtient une force de retenue qui maintient ladite portion marginale amovible (7) dans une position dans laquelle ladite portion initialement recouverte du panneau de sol (4) est recouverte.
10. Jeu emballé de panneaux selon la revendication 9, **caractérisé en ce que** ladite première portion de verrouillage (18) est une portion de coin qui fait partie de la portion marginale amovible (7) dudit élément d'emballage (5), cette portion de coin pouvant être prévue par-dessus un coin de ladite pile (2).
11. Jeu emballé de panneaux selon la revendication 10, **caractérisé en ce que** ladite deuxième portion de verrouillage (19) est formée sur une portion de coin d'un élément d'emballage (5).

12. Jeu emballé de panneaux selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, **caractérisé en ce que** ledit élément d'emballage (5) est constitué de manière essentielle de carton. 5
13. Jeu emballé de panneaux selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, **caractérisé en ce que** ledit élément d'emballage (5) s'étend en une seule pièce par-dessus au moins quatre des six côtés de ladite pile (2). 10
14. Jeu emballé de panneaux selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, **caractérisé en ce que** lesdits panneaux de sol (1) sont composés essentiellement d'une matière synthétique souple telle que du PVC souple ; en l'occurrence, ce terme concerne de préférence des panneaux de sol (1) qui sont constitués par ce que l'on appelle des carreaux hétérogènes en vinyle ou des planches hétérogènes en vinyle. 15
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15. Jeu emballé de panneaux selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, **caractérisé en ce que** lesdits panneaux de sol (1) possèdent une épaisseur de 5 mm ou moins et **en ce qu'ils** possèdent une densité supérieure à 1500 kg par mètre cube. 25

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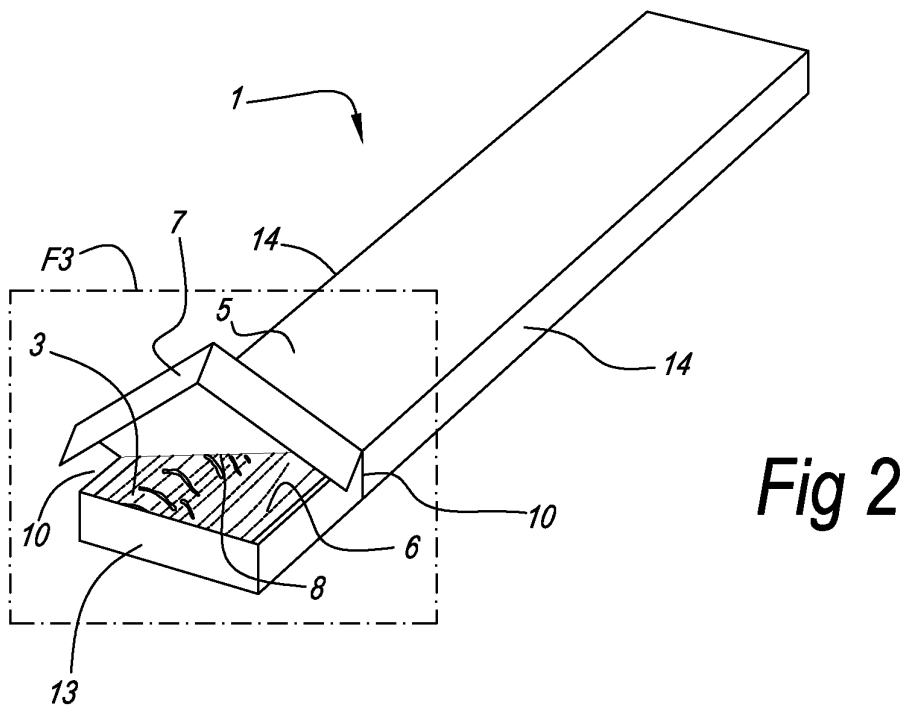
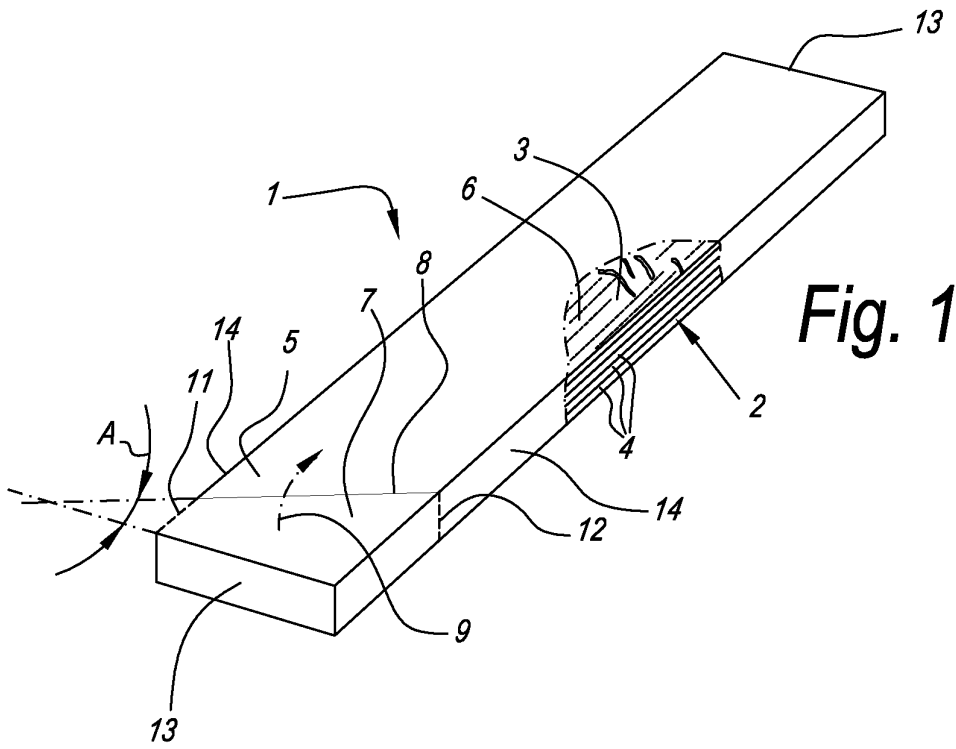
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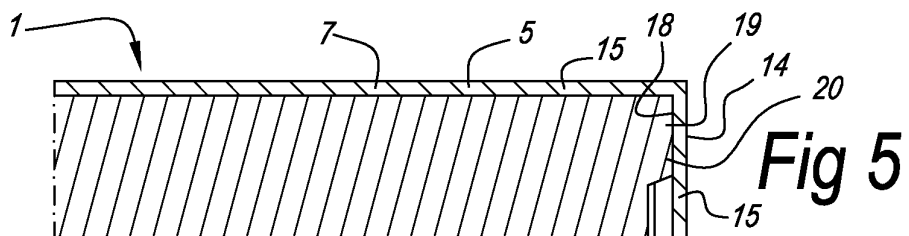
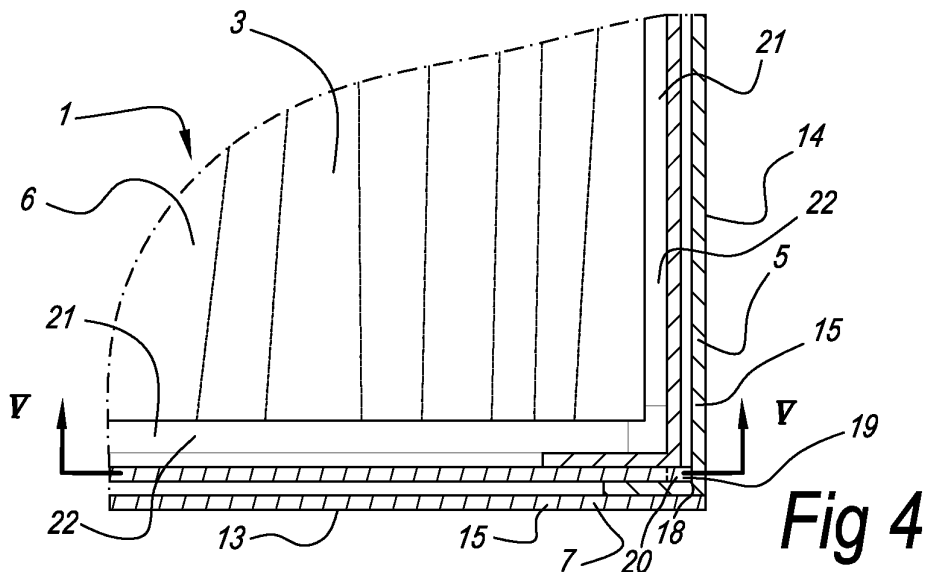
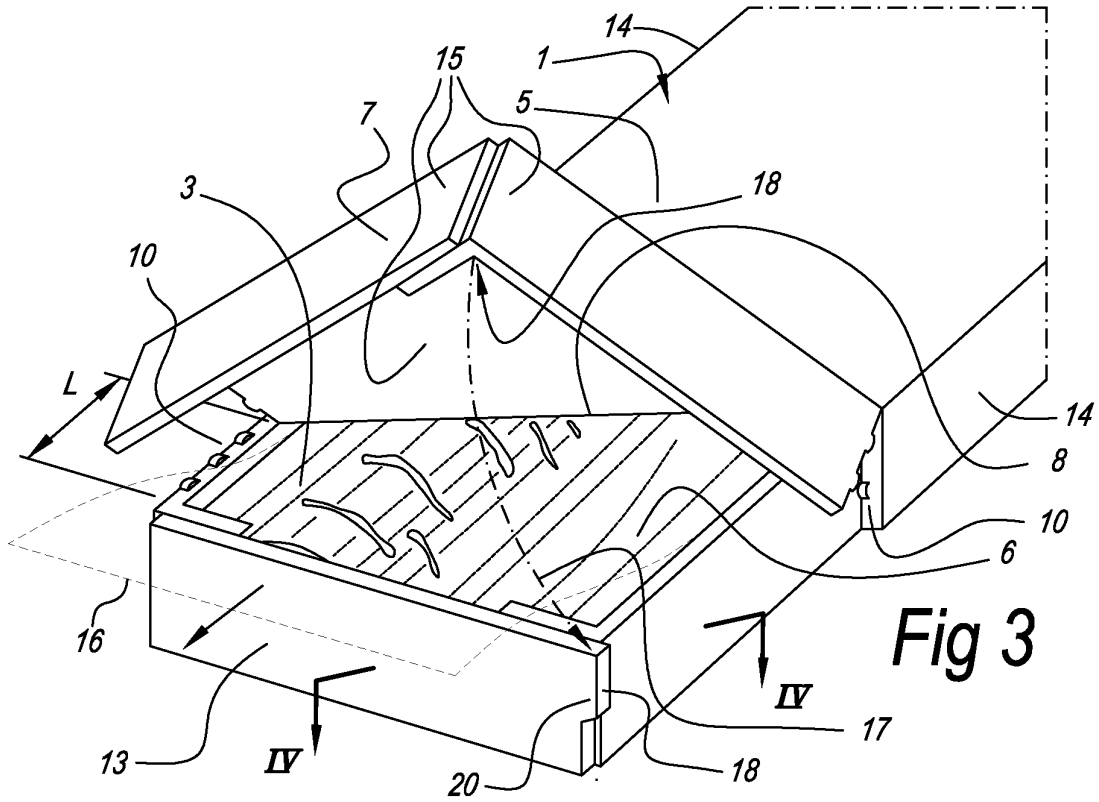
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REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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