(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization

International Bureau





(10) International Publication Number WO 2013/042015 A1

- (51) International Patent Classification: A61F 13/15 (2006.01)
- (21) International Application Number:

PCT/IB2012/054761

(22) International Filing Date:

13 September 2012 (13.09.2012)

(25) Filing Language:

Italian

(26) Publication Language:

English

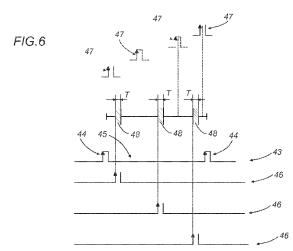
- (30) Priority Data: BO2011A000537 21 September 2011 (21.09.2011)
- (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): GDM S.P.A. [IT/IT]; Via Battindarno, 91, I-40133 Bologna (IT).
- (72) Inventors; and
- (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): PIANTONI, Matteo [IT/IT]; Via Cà Bianca, 2/E, I-24021 ALBINO (Bergamo) (IT). PEREGO, Alberto [IT/IT]; Via Paolo Lomazzo,14, I-20154 Milano (IT).
- (74) Agent: BIANCIARDI, Ezio; BUGNION S.p.A., Via di Corticella, 87, I-40128 Bologna (IT).

- (81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BN, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PA, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.
- (84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, RW, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

with international search report (Art. 21(3))

(54) Title: MACHINE FOR MAKING ABSORBENT SANITARY ARTICLES



(57) Abstract: Described is a machine for making absorbent sanitary articles, such as nappies, sanitary pads and the like, where each article (2) comprises a plurality of components (8,9) progressively positioned relative to each other and assembled along a production line (3) through a plurality of operating stations (24,25,26,27,28,29,32,35) equipped with devices for cutting and/or sealing the materials the articles (2) are made up of and at least one rejection station (39) downstream of the operating stations; the machine (1) comprises a programmable electronic controller device (42) having a shift register (40), at least one optical inspection system (36) connected to the programmable electronic controller device (42), and an operator interface (51) connected to the electronic controller (42); the programmable electronic controller device (42) generates a machine (1) sync signal (43), a trigger signal (46) for activating the optical inspection system (36) in phase with the sync signal (43) and a shift register (40) shift command (47); the optical inspection system (36) receives the trigger signal (46) and has a defined maximum response time (T) which produces at least one band of uncertainty (48); the operator sets with the operator interface (51) the instant of activating the shift register (40) shift command (47) outside the band of uncertainty (48) and between two consecutive sync signals (43) defining a machine step (45).



1

PCT/IB2012/054761

MACHINE FOR MAKING ABSORBENT SANITARY ARTICLES

Description

Technical Field

This invention relates to a machine for making absorbent sanitary articles.

More specifically, the invention relates to a machine for making absorbent sanitary articles such as nappies for children and adults, sanitary pads and the like.

Background Art

As is known, a machine for making absorbent sanitary articles has a production line along which advances a continuous web of absorbent material consisting of a layer of permeable material (of non-woven fabric) laid over a layer of impermeable material, with absorbent padding interposed between the two layers. As the continuous web advances along the production line, additional components are applied to the continuous web, such as, for example, lateral stretch bands, lateral sealing flaps, a rear stretch tape and a front band designed to engage the lateral sealing flaps.

Once these additional components have been applied to the continuous web, a continuous succession of absorbent sanitary articles is formed and a cutting device located downstream of the production line divides the continuous succession into individual absorbent articles which are then folded and packed.

Every line for the production of absorbent sanitary articles also comprises at least one rejection station, located downstream of the cutting device, which rejects the defective absorbent sanitary articles, that is to say, the absorbent articles which do not meet specified quality parameters.

Checking for defective absorbent sanitary articles is carried out by a software logic built into an electronic controller of the making machine.

The machine controller, besides generating a machine sync signal 100, is designed to assign information about the article being processed to a shift register 101, as illustrated in Figure 1. The shift register 101 is defined by a plurality of steps 102, each associated with a time position of an absorbent article being processed along the production line.

In order to identify the defective absorbent articles, the production line

2

comprises a plurality of check points for checking that the absorbent sanitary article has been made up correctly. These check points are connected to the machine controller and are designed to detect and flag any production defects in each absorbent article being made.

The moment a check point detects and flags a production defect to the machine controller, the latter assigns that information item to a particular step 102 of the shift register 101. The step 102 is shifted along the shift register until reaching a last position 108 corresponding to the rejection station where the defective absorbent sanitary article is rejected.

At the check points, generally speaking, there are optical inspection systems, such as photocells, or vision systems comprising, for example, commercial video cameras.

A photocell is an inspection component which generates a random signal 103 which is asynchronous relative to the machine sync signal 100. The asynchronous signal 103 of the photocell is defined as ambiguous 104 when it is concurrent with the machine sync signal 100 and unambiguous 105 when it is not concurrent with the machine sync signal 100.

If the photocell signal is unambiguous 105, relative to the machine sync signal 100, the machine controller assigns the defective article information item to a particular step 102 of the shift register 101, so that the defective absorbent sanitary article is certain to be rejected when it reaches the rejection station.

If the photocell signal is ambiguous 104, relative to the machine sync signal 100, an uncertainty window is created and the machine controller is unable to assign the defective article information item to a particular step 102 of the shift register 101. In this case, the machine controller assigns the information item to two or more steps 102 of the shift register 101 in order for the defective absorbent sanitary article to be certainly identified and rejected. Unfortunately, however, that means that absorbent sanitary articles which are not defective are rejected together with the defective article at the rejection station.

From the above, it may be inferred that every time the photocell signal is ambiguous 104 relative to the machine sync signal 100, a significant quantity of good products are rejected together with the defective products, which translates as a considerable waste of raw materials.

Unlike photocells, vision systems are stable response systems since they are controlled by a trigger pulse 106 generated by the machine controller.

From the moment the vision system receives the trigger pulse 106, it has a maximum response time to flag a defect, if any, thus defining a band of uncertainty 107 which may be concurrent with the machine sync signal 100 and hence ambiguous, as illustrated in Figure 1. Under these conditions, the machine controller is unable to determine a specific step 102 of the shift register 101 to assign the defective article information item to and, as in the case of the ambiguous photocell signal 104, assigns the information item to two or more steps 102 of the shift register 101 so that the defective absorbent sanitary article is certainly identified and rejected.

Even the use of a vision system does not solve the problem of rejecting sanitary articles which are not defective. Thus, every time the band of uncertainty 107 is ambiguous relative to the machine sync signal 100 a considerable number of good products are rejected together with the defective products.

Disclosure of the Invention

The aim of this invention is to provide a machine for making absorbent sanitary articles and which rejects only the defective product, without having to reject any products which are not defective, thus minimizing the number of products which the machine must strictly reject.

The above mentioned technical purpose and aims are achieved by a machine having the technical features described in the independent claim 1.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Further features and advantages of this invention are more apparent in the description below, with reference to a preferred, non-limiting, embodiment of a machine as illustrated in the accompanying drawings, in which:

- Figure 1 illustrates control signals and information in a prior art making machine;
- Figure 2 is a schematic front view of a making machine according to this invention;
- Figure 3 illustrates an absorbent sanitary article without production defects, made by the machine illustrated in Figure 2;
- Figure 4 shows the absorbent sanitary article of Figure 3 with some production defects;
 - Figure 5 is a block diagram representing the inspection section of the

machine of Figure 2;

- Figure 6 shows a series of control and checking signals generated by the inspection section of Figure 5;
 - Figure 7 shows a first variant of Figure 6;
 - Figure 8 shows a second variant of Figure 6.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments of the Invention

As shown in Figure 2, the numeral 1 denotes a machine for making absorbent sanitary articles 2 and comprising a substantially horizontal production line 3 along which the absorbent sanitary article 2 is made.

The article 2 has a substantially rectangular shape and comprises, in a line along its longitudinal axis A, a front portion 4, a central portion 5 and a rear portion 6, as illustrated in Figure 3.

At the central portion 5 the article 2 has a recess 7, or thigh opening, defined by two arcuate sections which are symmetrical about the axis A.

The articles 2 are composed of a plurality of components, which can be broadly divided into main components 8, or basic parts, and accessory components 9, or accessory parts.

The main components 8 include a sheet 10 of impermeable material and a sheet 11 of permeable material (non-woven fabric) used to make the outside face and the inside face of the article 2, respectively.

The sheets 10 and 11 are laid over each other and interposed between them there is another main component constituted by an absorbent padding 12.

The accessory components 9, which may vary in number and shape, are described below with reference to the sanitary article 2 illustrated in Figure 3.

The numeral 13 denotes two shaped flaps fixed to the inside face of the sheet 10 and extending from the front portion 4 transversely to the axis A.

The numeral 14 denotes two shaped flaps, parallel to the flaps 13, extending from the rear portion 6.

Applied to each of the flaps 14 there is a tab 15 provided with an adhesive strip 16 designed to adhere, in use, to a corresponding front strip 17 applied to the front portion 4 of the outside face of the sheet 10.

Laterally sealed to the sheet 11 of permeable material there are two strips 18 of impermeable material for thickening and expanding its longitudinal edges.

A further accessory component 9 is a stretch tape 19 applied transversely of

the axis A to the inside face of the rear portion 6 of the sheet 10.

With reference to Figure 2, the machine 1 comprises a base 20 substantially in the shape of a parallelepiped and delimited at the front by a vertical wall 21.

The wall 21 constitutes a support for a plurality of operating units. These operating units comprise cutting devices and sealing devices, as well as units for unwinding the materials making up the article 2 from respective rolls mounted on axes transversal to the wall 21.

The making machine 1 is a cyclic production machine of continuous type, that is to say, at each machine cycle, one finished absorbent sanitary article 2 is made.

At its infeed, the machine 1 comprises a unit 22 for unwinding a continuous web 23 of impermeable material which, after being cut into lengths, constitutes the sheets 10.

The continuous web 23 runs along a horizontal path P of the production line 3, in the direction indicated by the arrow F, through the operating units where the article 2 is progressively made up and completed by successively adding the basic components 8 and the accessory components 9.

At a first operating unit 24, the front strip 17 transversal to the axis A is applied in known manner, using an adhesive substance, to the front portion of the outside face of each length of the web 23 corresponding to an absorbent article 2.

At a second operating unit 25, the tape 19 of stretch material is applied transversely to the axis A in known manner, using an adhesive substance, to the rear portion of the inside face of each length of the of the web 23 corresponding to an absorbent article 2.

At a third operating unit 26, the absorbent padding 12 is applied to the central zone of each length of the web 23.

Downstream of the operating unit 26 the web 23 passes through a fourth operating unit 27 where the two front flaps 13 are made and hence applied to each length of the web 23.

Downstream of the operating unit 27, along the path P, there is a fifth operating unit 28 where the two rear flaps 14, each of which is provided with a respective grip tab 15, are made and applied to the web 23.

Downstream of the unit 28, the wall 21 supports, in proximity of its righthand end, a sixth operating unit 29 comprising a unit 30 for unwinding a web 31 of permeable material.

At a sealing station 32, the web 31 of permeable material and the web 23 of impermeable material are sealed to each other along the respective edges to make a continuous web 33 which will eventually define the articles 2. In other words, the continuous web 33 is a continuous succession of finished articles 2 complete with the basic parts 8 and the accessory parts 9.

The continuous web 33 passes through a further operating unit 34, where each length of the web 33 is cut in such a way as to make two substantially semicircular portions that will constitute the recesses 7 of the absorbent article 2.

Downstream of the operating unit 34, a cutting device 35 transversely divides the web 33 into the individual finished articles 2.

At the end of the production line 3, downstream of the cutting device 35, there is at least one rejection station 39 for rejecting absorbent articles 2 which are defective. The rejection station 39 is located downstream of the cutting device 35. That means the rejection station 39 may be located upstream or downstream of a folding station, not illustrated, where each single absorbent article 2 is folded.

The making machine 1 comprises at least one optical inspection system 36 for checking the quality of the articles 2 as they feed out of the production line 3.

The optical inspection system 36 is designed to detect and flag production defects in the finished absorbent article 2.

The optical inspection system 36 comprises at least a video camera 37 for capturing at least one image 54 of the absorbent article 2 and a unit 38 for acquiring and processing images of the absorbent article 2 and connected to the video camera 37.

In the preferred embodiment, the image capturing video camera 37 is a linear video camera. Further, the optical inspection system 36 is a vision system.

More specifically, at least one video camera 37 is located at the outfeed of the production line 3. In effect, the video camera 37 located at the end of the production line 3 inspects the absorbent article 2 complete with the basic components 8 and the accessory components 9.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the video camera 37 is mounted to face the continuous web 33 of articles 2 while they are still joined to each other, upstream of the cutting device 35, so as to capture at least one image 54 of each article 2 before the latter is cut off from the continuous web 33.

As the continuous web 33 advances along the path P, the linear video

camera 37 inspects the web 33 with a field of vision spanning the full width of the web 33.

Alternatively, the video 37 might be located downstream of the cutting device 35 in order to capture at least one image 54 of a single finished article 2 after it has been cut off from the continuous web 33.

The image acquisition and processing unit 38 analyses the images and thereby assesses whether the predefined quality parameters of the absorbent article 2 fall within respective tolerance ranges. If one or more of the quality parameters are outside the respective tolerance range, the acquisition and processing unit 38 flags the presence of a production defect in the absorbent article 2.

Production defects or faults, examples of which are given below, may occur during the application and forming of the base parts 8 and accessory parts 9.

Figure 4 shows some of the components of the absorbent article 2 positioned incorrectly, as indicated by the dashed lines, compared to the correct positions indicated by the solid lines, such as for example, the incorrectly oriented front strip 17 and stretch tape 19, the incorrectly positioned the flaps 13 and 14 and the incorrectly shaped recess 7.

These production defects, once detected and flagged by the acquisition and processing unit 38 cause the finished absorbent article 2 to be rejected when it reaches the rejection station 39 of the production line 3.

Another example of a production defect which causes the article 2 to be rejected is the absence of one or more basic parts 8 and/or accessory parts 9.

In terms of logical representation, the making machine 1 is mapped by a single shift register 40, as illustrated in Figure 5.

The shift register 40 or "chain" is represented as a set of interconnected rectangular blocks. Each block 41 of the register 40 is defined as a step of the "chain".

Each step 41 of the shift register 40 corresponds to a time position of the absorbent article 2 being made up as it passes through each of the operating stations of the machine 1. More specifically, the information relating to the state of the product or of the material being processed along the production line 3 is stored in the shift register 40.

The making machine 1 is equipped with a programmable electronic machine controller device 42.

The electronic controller 42 applies a shift command 47 to the shift register

40.

The shift command 47 shifts each step 41 in a single direction until reaching the last block 41b of the "chain" corresponding to the moment the finished absorbent article 2 is at the rejection station 39.

The electronic controller 42 generates a machine sync signal 43. More specifically, the machine sync signal 43 is generated by an encoder.

The sync signal 43 has a train of control pulses 44 with a phase, a duration and a number of repetitions which depends on the process cycle of the machine 1.

More specifically, two consecutive pulses 44 of the sync signal 43 define a machine step 45 which corresponds to one position of the absorbent article 2 being made up along the production line 3.

The vision system 36 is connected to the programmable electronic controller device 42.

More specifically, the vision system 36 is activated by the programmable electronic controller device 42 which generates a trigger signal 46 of the vision system 36 in phase with the machine sync signal 43.

From the moment it receives the trigger signal 46, the vision system 36 has maximum defined response time for flagging the presence of a production defect, if any, of the article 2.

The maximum response time T of the vision system 36 creates a band of uncertainty 48, or uncertainty window, defined temporally from the instant in which the vision system 36 receives the trigger signal 46 to the instant in which the vision system flags the defect, if any.

The duration of the band of uncertainty 48 is a known time quantity, since the maximum response time T is strictly dependent on the technology implemented in the vision system 36 itself, both by the video camera 37 and by the image acquisition and processing unit 38. More specifically, based on current technology, the band of uncertainty may have a duration of up to 4 msec.

Before the end of the band of uncertainty 48, the image acquisition and processing unit 38 sends a rejection signal 49 to the electronic controller 42. After receiving the rejection signal 49, the electronic controller 42 produces a rejection information item 50 to be assigned to a particular step 41 of the shift register 40. This step, labelled 41a, is shifted to the last block 41b of the register 40 in such a way as to generate a command 55 for rejecting the finished absorbent article 2 which is at the rejection station 39.

The vision system 36 inspects one or more areas of each length of the web 33 corresponding to a complete article 2. For example, the vision system 36 inspects the front portion 4 at the front strip 17 and flaps 13, the central portion 5 at the recesses 7 and the rear portion 6 at the flaps 14.

In this case, the vision system 36 generates three distinct bands of uncertainty 48, each associated with the defects of the respective portion 4, 5 and 6 of the article 2.

In order to inspect the chosen areas of the article 2, the vision system 36 may use a single video camera 37 or a plurality of video cameras 37, each dedicated to an inspection area. In this specific case, three distinct video cameras 37 are used, each dedicated to inspecting the respective portion 4, 5 or 6. In an alternative embodiment, each video camera 37 is dedicated to the optical inspection of certain basic parts 8 and/or accessory parts 9 at a certain position along the production line 3.

More specifically, if the vision system 36 comprises a plurality of video cameras 37, these are activated within the same machine step 45, each generating a band of uncertainty 48.

If the vision system 36 comprises a single video camera 37, on the other hand, the camera is activated at least once within the same machine step 45, generating a respective band of uncertainty 48 associated with the corresponding activation.

Consequently, one machine step 45 defined by two consecutive sync pulses 44 has at least one band of uncertainty 48.

In order to prevent the bands of uncertainty 48 from being concurrent with the shift register 40 shift command 47, the operator sets with an operator interface 51 connected to the electronic controller 42, the instant of activating the shift register 40 shift command 47 within a machine step 45, outside the band/bands of uncertainty 48, as illustrated in Figure 6.

That way, the shift register 40 shifts either before or after the band/bands of uncertainty 48 so that the step 41a of the shift register 40 which the article 2 defective information item must be assigned to is certain.

The operator interface 51, comprising a touch screen or a screen keyboard, is normally implemented by a dedicated software program.

As illustrated in Figure 7, the operator sets with the operator interface 51 the activation of the shift register 40 shift command 47 before the band of

uncertainty 48, so that the shift register 40 shifts one step 41 before the vision system 36 is activated. After the band of uncertainty 48 has elapsed and the defect has been flagged by the vision system 36, the electronic controller 42 assigns the rejection information item 50 to the corresponding step 52 of the register 40.

Alternatively, as illustrated in Figure 8, the operator sets the activation of the shift register 40 shift command 47 after the band of uncertainty 48. In this case, the register 40 shifts one step 41 after the band of uncertainty 48 has elapsed and the electronic controller 42 assigns the rejection information item 50 to the corresponding step 53 of the register 40, after the step 52.

In both the cases of Figure 7 and Figure 8, only the defective absorbent article 2 is rejected at the rejection station 39 because the electronic controller 42 is able to assign the rejection information item 50 to a single step 52 or 53, since unlike the prior art, the shift command 47 is not concurrent with the band of uncertainty 48 of the vision system 36.

The operation of setting with the operator interface 51 the activation of the shift command 47 outside the band of uncertainty 48 is advantageous because it allows a single defective article 2 to be rejected even when the size of the absorbent articles 2 to be made is varied.

Indeed, the operator can set up the vision system 36 in such a way as to inspect certain areas of the absorbent article 2, according to the size of the article and the quality parameters to be met.

This setup operation involves setting with the operator interface 51 the trigger signals 46 of the vision system 36.

For example, in a machine 1 which makes 800 absorbent articles 2 per minute, the absorbent article 2 is 400 mm long and the operator, using the interface 51, sets the system so it inspects the areas of the article 2 at 100, 200 and 300 mm from a predetermined point 0, or origin, in order to check the basic parts 8 and/or the accessory parts 9 in those areas. Considering that the band of uncertainty 48 associated with each area inspected blacks out approximately 25 mm of the absorbent article 2, the operator can set the shift command 47 so it is activated either before or after all the bands of uncertainty 48.

Advantageously, the possibility of setting the activation of the shift register 40 shift command 47 not only guarantees that only the defective article 2 is rejected, without having to reject articles 2 which are not defective, but also allows the making machine 1 to be set up according to the size of the absorbent article 2.

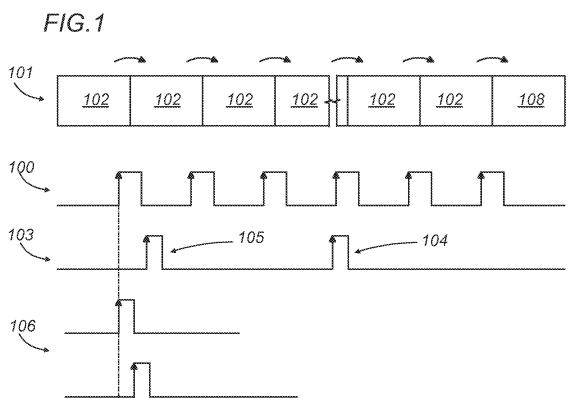
11

Setting up that way means that rejecting only the defective article 2 is possible for absorbent articles 2 of all sizes, differing in dimensions and possibly also in their accessory components 9.

Claims

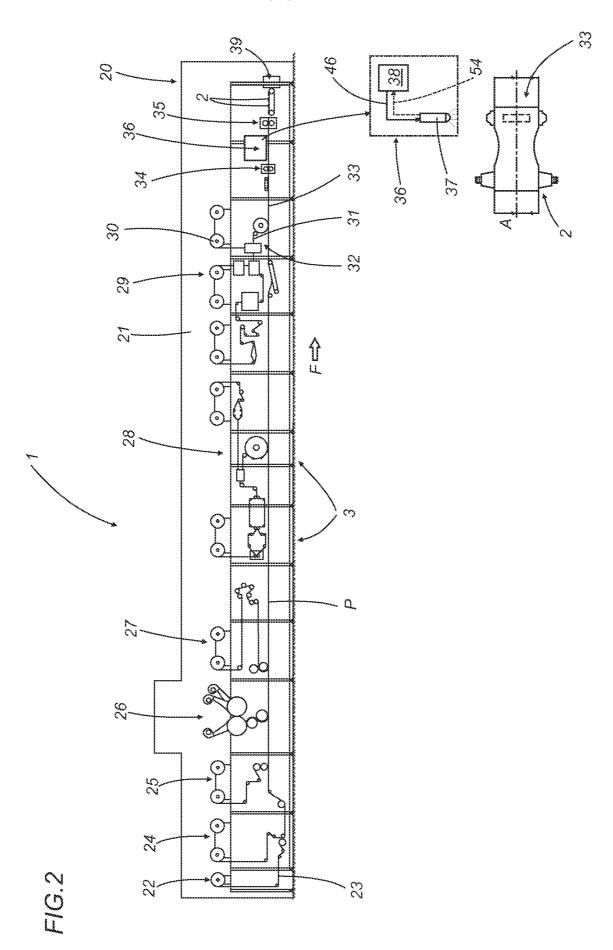
- A machine for making absorbent sanitary articles, such as nappies, sanitary 1. pads and the like, each article (2) comprising a plurality of components (8,9) progressively positioned relative to each other and assembled along a production line (3) which comprises a plurality of operating stations (24,25,26,27,28,29,32,35) equipped with devices for cutting and/or sealing the materials the articles (2) are made up of and at least one rejection station (39) downstream of the operating stations, the machine (1) comprising a programmable electronic controller device (42) comprising a shift register (40), at least one optical inspection system (36) connected to the programmable electronic controller device (42), an operator interface (51) connected to the electronic controller (42); the programmable electronic controller device (42) generating a machine (1) sync signal (43), a trigger signal (46) for activating the optical inspection system (36) in phase with the sync signal (43) and a shift register (40) shift command (47); the optical inspection system (36) receiving the trigger signal (46) and having a defined maximum response time (T) which produces at least one band of uncertainty (48), characterized in that the operator sets with the operator interface (51) the instant of activating the shift register (40) shift command (47) outside the band of uncertainty (48) and between two consecutive sync signals (43) defining a machine step (45).
- 2. The machine according to claim 1, characterized in that the operator sets with the operator interface (51) the instant of activating the shift register (40) shift command (47) before the band of uncertainty (48).
- 3. The machine according to claim 1, characterized in that the operator sets with the operator interface the instant of activating the shift register (40) shift command (47) after the band of uncertainty (48).
- 4. The machine according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the optical inspection system (36) comprises at least a video camera (37) for capturing at least one image of the absorbent article (2) and an image acquisition and processing unit (38) connected to the video camera (37).

- 5. The machine according to claim 4, characterized in that the image capturing video camera (37) is a linear video camera.
- 6. The machine according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the optical inspection system (36) is a vision system.
- 7. The machine according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that at least one video camera (37) is located in the proximity of the outfeed end of the production line (3).
- 8. The machine according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the video camera (37) is activated at least once within a single step (45) producing a corresponding band of uncertainty (48); the operator setting with the operator interface (51) the instant of activating the shift command (47) outside the band of uncertainty (48).
- 9. The machine according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that a plurality of video cameras (37) are activated within a single step (45) each producing a corresponding band of uncertainty (48); the operator setting with the operator interface (51) the instant of activating the shift command (47) outside the bands of uncertainty (48).
- 10. A method for making absorbent sanitary articles, comprising a step of generating a machine (1) sync signal (43) through the agency of the programmable electronic controller device (42), a step of sending a trigger signal (46) to an optical inspection system (36) through the agency of the programmable electronic controller device (42), the optical inspection system (36) having a maximum response time (T) and producing a band of uncertainty (48), a step of applying shift command (47) on a shift register (40) of the programmable electronic controller device (42), characterized in that it comprises a step of setting, with an operator interface (51) connected to the programmable electronic controller device (42), the instant of activating the shift register (40) shift command (47) within a machine step (45) defined by two consecutive sync signals (43) and outside the band of uncertainty (48).

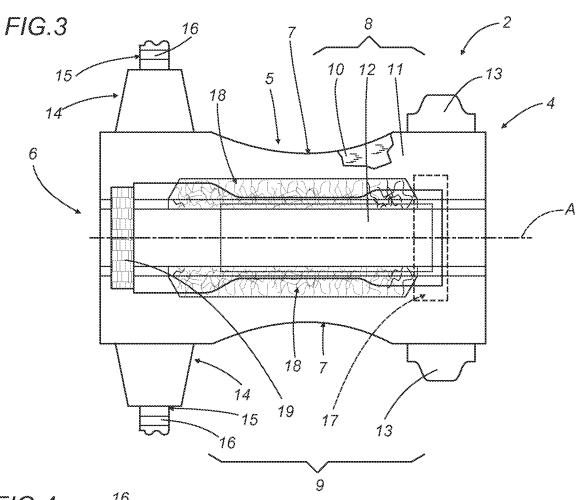


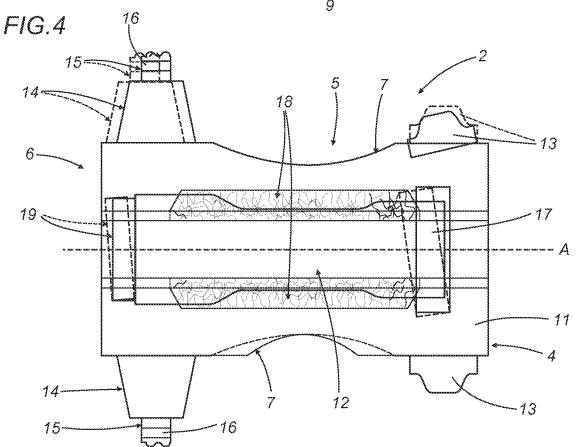
107

2/5

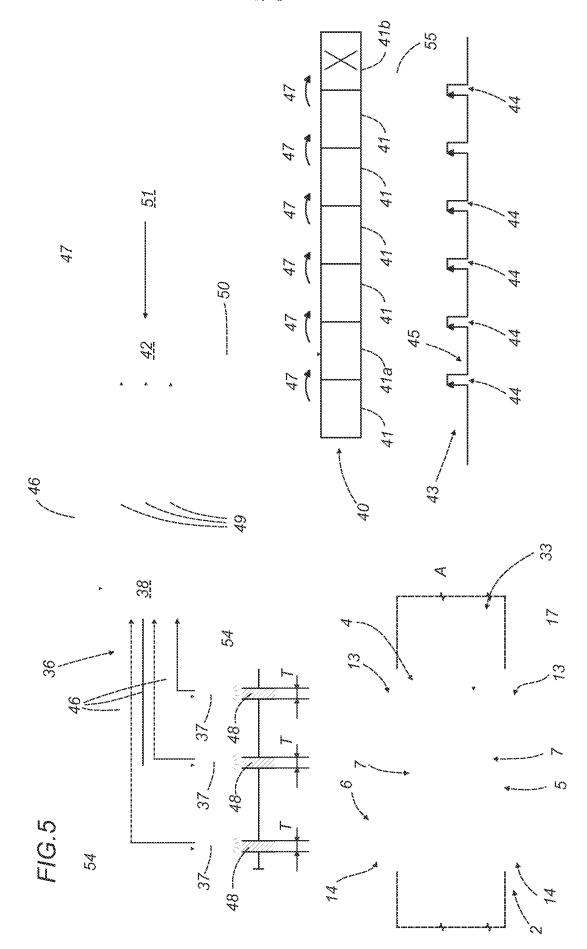


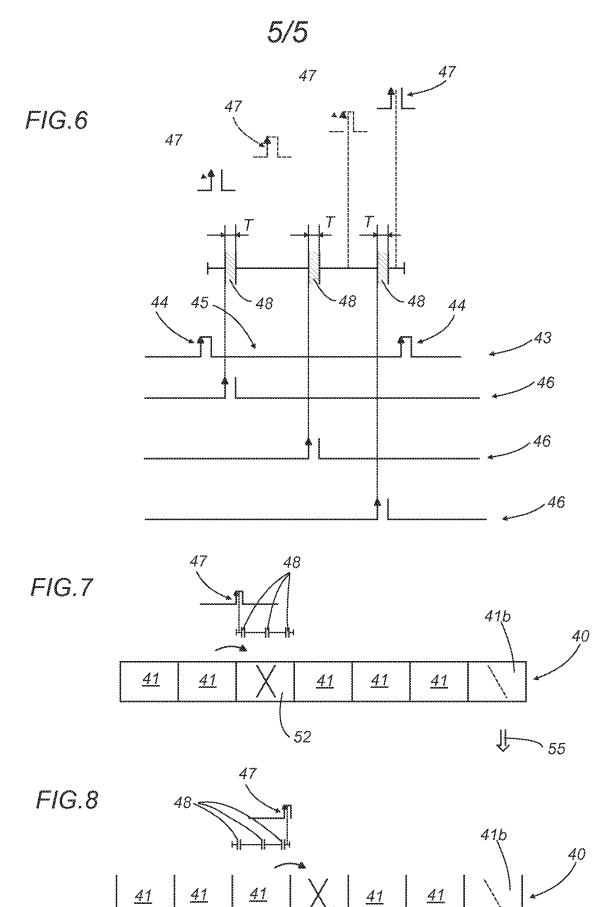












<u>41</u>

55

[\]53

52

<u>41</u>

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No PCT/IB2012/054761

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER INV. A61F13/15 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) A61F 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, WPI Data C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT Category* Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages Relevant to claim No. US 2010/305738 A1 (DEBRULER JASON L [US] 1 - 10Χ ET AL) 2 December 2010 (2010-12-02) paragraphs [0024] - [0052]; figures 1-7 Α WO 00/40195 A1 (KIMBERLY CLARK CO [US]) 1-10 13 July 2000 (2000-07-13) page 2, line 15 - page 3, line 19 page 5, lines 11-14 page 15, line 36 - page 18, line 34 page 21, line 1 - page 26, line 6 page 27, line 1 - page 28, line 32 page 30, lines 2-9; figures 1-3 US 4 837 715 A (UNGPIYAKUL TANAKON [US] ET Α 1-10 AL) 6 June 1989 (1989-06-06) column 2, lines 5-52 column 3, line 36 - column 17, line 51; figures 1-18 Х Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. See patent family annex. Special categories of cited documents "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance earlier application or patent but published on or after the international "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive filing date document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other being obvious to a person skilled in the art document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed "&" document member of the same patent family Date of the actual completion of the international search Date of mailing of the international search report 21 November 2012 07/12/2012 Authorized officer Name and mailing address of the ISA/ European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016 Joly, Florence

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No
PCT/IB2012/054761

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date		Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 2010305738	A1	02-12-2010	US US WO	2010305738 A1 2012150332 A1 2010141302 A1	02-12-2010 14-06-2012 09-12-2010
WO 0040195	A1	13-07-2000	AR AU CO US WO	023081 A1 2379600 A 5380045 A1 6856859 B1 0040195 A1	04-09-2002 24-07-2000 31-03-2004 15-02-2005 13-07-2000
US 4837715	Α	06-06-1989	CA US	1314084 C 4837715 A	02-03-1993 06-06-1989