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Snap-on closure system and method.

A closure system (10) is disclosed including a container neck (14) extending axially from a container and a cap and spout assembly (12) for snap-on receipt onto the container neck. The cap and spout assembly includes a snap-on spout (22) having a resiliently flexible sealing ring (32) adapted for sealing receipt onto the container neck. The snap-on cap (20) includes a closure member (24) for closure of the spout and an interlocking ring (26) adapted for interlocking receipt onto the container neck over the sealing ring independent of the snap-on spout. The closure member is frangibly attached to the interlocking ring to provide tamper-evident means for the snap-on cap. The interlocking ring of the cap cooperates with the sealing ring of the spout to maintain a positive seal against the container neck regardless of the internal pressure within the container.

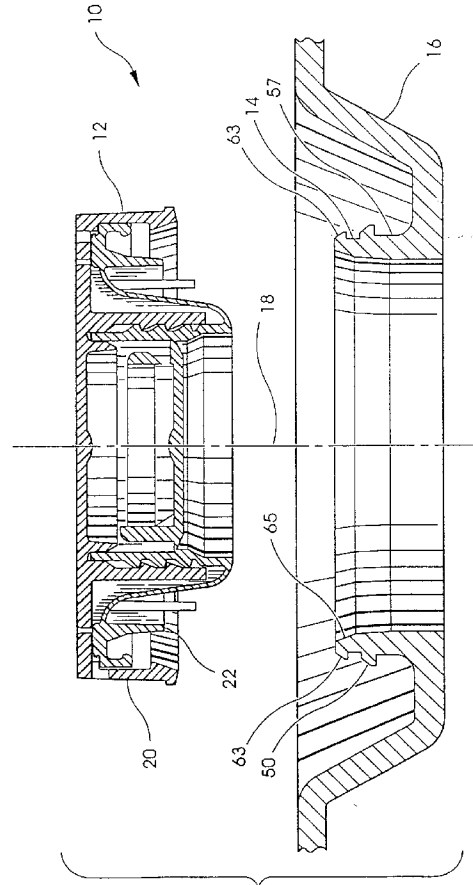


Fig. 1



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 94 30 2361

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT					
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.5)		
A	EP-A-0 417 453 (INVAT SRL) * the whole document * ---	1,2, 8-15, 22-30, 34,35	B65D47/06		
A	EP-A-0 498 954 (JACOB BERG GMBH & CO KG) * the whole document * ---	1,2, 8-15, 22-30, 34,35			
A	EP-A-0 269 499 (ETS. PIERRE REMY) * abstract; figures * -----	1,2,8, 10-15, 22-25, 27-30, 34,35			
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.5)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>B65D</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.5)	B65D
TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.5)					
B65D					
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 7 July 1994	Examiner GINO C.P.G.		
<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons ----- & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document </td> </tr> </table>				CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document	T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons ----- & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document
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CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing more than ten claims.

- All claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- Only part of the claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims and for those claims for which claims fees have been paid, namely claims:
- No claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims.

LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirement of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

- claims 1-30, 34, 35
- claims 31-33

(See sheet -B-)

- All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- Only part of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the inventions in respect of which search fees have been paid, namely claims:
- None of the further search fees has been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims, namely claims: 1-30, 34, 35



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LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirement of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. Claims 1-30, 34, 35
2. Claims 31-33

REASONS FOR LACK OF UNITY

Each claim of the present application contains a number of technical features, defining its subject matter. Two categories of features are present in the claims:

1. Features which are obvious to the man skilled in the art:

A closure system comprising a container neck, a spout with sealing means onto said container neck, a cap with closing means for said spout.

They are common to all claims but they do not represent any contribution to the prior art (see for example document EP 0417453). Hence they are not special features contributing to the fulfilment of the requirement according to Rule 30 EPC.

2. Remaining technical features:

Being not obvious to the man skilled in the art, they can be considered as special features. Analysis of the claims leads to the following special features:

- a. Claims 1-30, 34, 35: a first interlocking means onto said spout to snap onto said container neck and a second interlocking means onto said cap to snap onto said container neck.
- b. Claims 31-33: a container neck including inner and outer sealing surfaces and a spout with a sealing ring including an inner, an outer and a transverse sealing ring portions.
A restraining mean defining a pivot for said sealing ring and which increase the sealing contact

None of the technical features mentioned thereabove are common to groups a or b, nor they are the same or corresponding. Therefore no common "special technical features" nor technical relationship can be found that could link the second subject to the first one by a single inventive concept.



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LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirement of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

CONCLUSION

The grouping thereabove under the heading of the respective and distinctive special technical features acceptable a priori illustrate the number of subjects present which do not fulfil the requirement of Rule 30 EPC. Hence, Art. 82 EPC is not satisfied: the subject-matter of the application contains two subjects which are not linked by a single inventive concept.