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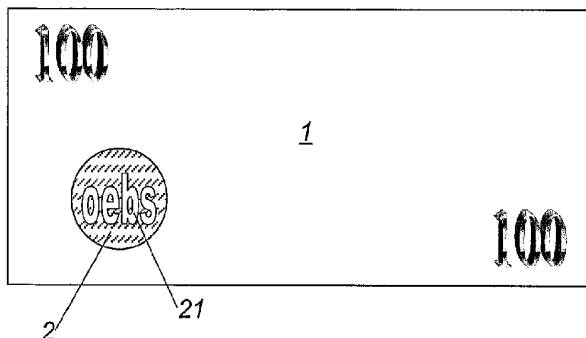
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(54) Title: METHOD FOR APPLYING A METAL ELEMENT TO A SECURITY DOCUMENT

(54) Bezeichnung: VERFAHREN ZUM AUFBRINGEN EINES METALLELEMENTES AUF EIN SICHERHEITSDOKUMENT



(57) Abstract: The invention relates to a method for applying a metal element to a security document using a stamp element, the metal element being configured from a metal layer of foil and being applied to the security document, preferably in a hot embossing process. To increase the protection against forgery, during the application of the metal element (2), the latter (2) is embossed (21) by means of a stamping surface (31) of the stamp element (3), which is configured as a line gravure printing plate (32).

(57) Zusammenfassung: Bei einem Verfahren zum Aufbringen eines Metallelementes auf ein Sicherheitsdokument mit einem Stemplelement, wobei das Metallelement aus einer Metallschicht einer Folie ausgebildet wird und auf das Sicherheitsdokument appliziert wird, vorzugsweise im Heißprägeverfahren, wird zur Erhöhung der Fälschungssicherheit vorgeschlagen, dass während des Applizierens des Metallelementes (2) mittels einer als Stichtiefdruckplatte (32) ausgebildeten Stempelfläche (31) des Stemplelementes (3) eine Prägung (21) auf das Metallelement (2) aufgebracht wird.

WO 2006/074496 A1



Zur Erklärung der Zweibuchstaben-Codes und der anderen Abkürzungen wird auf die Erklärungen ("Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations") am Anfang jeder regulären Ausgabe der PCT-Gazette verwiesen.

**A METHOD FOR APPLYING A METAL ELEMENT TO A
SECURITY DOCUMENT**

- 5 The invention relates to a method for applying a metal element to a security document using a stamp element, with the metal element being configured from a metal layer of foil and being applied to the security document, preferably in a hot embossing process.

10 It is known from WO 02/20274 A1 to apply a metal foil to a security document and to apply in a subsequent step an embossing in a line gravure printing process. The disadvantageous aspect is that especially by deformations of the security document during the line gravure printing process it may occur that there will be register imprecision. It is proposed in WO 02/20274 A1 to mask such register imprecision by colored areas.

- 15 WO 93/24332 A also describes a method with which a metal element with an adhesive layer is applied to a security document and is provided thereafter with an embossing. The respective shapes mounted on the cylinder cooperate with one and the same counter-roller however. In view of the precision of the embossing of the metal element, the same problems arise as in the state of the art discussed above.

20 A holographic article is further known from US Pat. No. 5,759,683 A in which a thin wax layer is applied to a film substrate which is covered by a vapor-deposited metal layer, which on its part is covered by a layer of lacquer such as acrylic lacquer, nitrocellulose or the like. Said layer of lacquer is covered by a further layer which preferably consists of the same material but has a lower thickness and which carries on its part a heat-sealing layer.
25 This structure is glued to a document substrate with the heat-sealing layer. Thereafter, an embossing is applied to the film substrate, with the metal layer also being deformed. The problems as described above also arise in this known article and its production.

- 30 The present invention seeks to provide a method of the kind mentioned above in which the known disadvantages are avoided and which allows achieving a high amount of security

2006206027 31 Jan 2011

2006206027 31 Jan 2011

- 2 -

against forgery.

5 This is achieved in accordance with the invention in such a way that during the application of the metal element, the latter is embossed by means of a stamping surface of the stamp element, which is configured as a line gravure printing plate.

10 The advantage in this method is that any subsequent line gravure printing process can be performed independent from the embossing of the metal element and no precautions are required for register imprecision in the position of the metal element. If a subsequent line gravure printing process is not provided, the embossing of the metal element can be achieved in an especially simple way by means of the method in accordance with the invention. The register precision of the embossing on the metal element represents an additional security feature which can be checked easily and offers a high amount of security against forgery.

15 According to one aspect the present invention provides a method for applying a metal element to a security document, with the metal element being formed from a metal layer of a foil and being applied to the security document, preferably in a hot embossing process, characterized in that an embossing is applied to the metal element during the application of
20 the same by means of a stamping surface of the stamp element, which stamping surface is configured as a line gravure printing plate.

The invention further relates to a security document with a metal element which can be produced in accordance with one of the methods described above.

25 It is known from WO 02/20274 A1, in the case of a security document with an applied metal foil, to apply an embossing in line gravure printing on the same, with register imprecision being masked by colored sections.

30 The present invention seeks to provide a security document of the kind mentioned above which avoids the known disadvantages and offers a high amount of security against

2006206027 31 Jan 2011

forgery.

This is achieved in accordance with the invention by the features of claim 2.

- 5 The register precision of the embossing on the metal element represents an additional security feature which can be checked easily and offers a high amount of security against forgery.

10 It can be provided in a further development of the invention that the embossing has a precision of less than 10 μm .

The security against forgery can be improved even further by observing this high precision which can be reproduced only with a high amount of effort.

- 15 The invention is now explained in closer detail by reference to the enclosed drawings which show embodiments, wherein:

Fig. 1 shows a top view of a security document in accordance with the invention;

- 20 Fig. 2 shows a side view of a stamp element in accordance with the invention;

Fig. 3 shows a top view of the stamp element in accordance with Fig. 2.

- 25 Fig. 1 shows a security document 1 in accordance with the invention, comprising a metal element 2, with the metal element 2 having an embossing 21 which is precise with respect to register.

- 30 The security document 1 is usually provided with a plurality of security elements which should help in recognizing a forgery of the security document 1. One of such security elements can be the applied metal element 2. As a result of the embossing 21 with precise register, an additional security feature is formed which can be checked easily. It is

2006206027 31 Jan 2011

- 4 -

especially advantageous in this respect that imprecision in the position can be recognized very precisely with the naked eye. That is why this additional security element helps in recognizing a forgery by the general public without any additional auxiliary means.

- 5 In the case of forgeries, an embossing 21 is often indicated by a print. Since such a print occurs separate from the application of the metal foil, the achievement of a precise register is technically very complex and virtually impossible. In the case of a new security document 1, the tactile embossing 21 can easily be distinguished from a print by touching. In the case of a security document 1 that is used frequently such as a banknote, the
10 embossing 21 is often difficult to detect by touching. The recognition of the register precision can also be detected easily in these security documents 1.

The embossing 21 preferably has a precision of less than 25 μm , especially less than 10 μm . This precision which is usually demanded for banknotes can only be achieved with
15 difficulty by forgers, as a result of which the embossing 21 has a high amount of security from forging. The metal element 2 can further be provided with holographic or other diffractive structures, thus further increasing the security of the security document 1.

This high precision can be achieved with line gravure printing, with which very high
20 pressures are used to form the embossing 21.

The security document 1 in accordance with the invention can be produced in a simple way such that the metal element 2 is applied to the security document 1 with a stamp element 3, with the metal element 2 being formed from the metal layer of a foil. This can occur
25 especially in a hot embossing process with a stamp element 3 shown in Figs. 2 and 3, with the embossing 21 being applied to the metal element 2 during the application of the metal element 2 by means of a stamp surface 31 of the stamp element 3 arranged as a line gravure printing plate 32. An additional process step for applying the embossing 21 as is provided for in the state of the art is not required. The embossing 21 can be arranged as a
30 blind stamping.

2006206027 31 Jan 2011

- 6 -

as a result of their color.

The precision of the recesses and/or lines can be improved when the melt fins are removed which are obtained during the introduction of the recesses and/or lines into the line gravure printing plate 32. Said melt fins substantially consist of oxidized material of the line gravure printing plate 32, especially of copper oxide or zinc oxide.

A chemical aftertreatment seems to be especially suitable for removing the melt fins, which may especially comprise an acid bath, electrolytic bath or the like. It can be ensured that the copper oxide or the zinc oxide is removed by the chemical aftertreatment, but not the hard brass and/or hard brass alloy of the line gravure printing plate 32.

The chemical aftertreatment can occur especially by immersion of the line gravure printing plate 32 into an acid bath or the like which comprises phosphoric acid, acetic acid, nitric acid, arsenic acid or the like, or a combination of said acids. An acid bath seems to be especially advantageous which comprises acetic acid, phosphoric acid and nitric acid. The acid bath may especially comprise 40% by volume of acetic acid, 50% by volume of phosphoric acid and 10% by volume of nitric acid. Any undesirable removal of the basic material of the line gravure printing plate 32 can be effectively prevented with such an acid.

After the introduction of the recesses and/or lines and optionally after the removal of the melt fins there can further be a retouching and/or check of the line gravure printing plate 32 in order to enable the recognition and correction of any existing bad spots.

In a preferred embodiment of the method in accordance with the invention, the depth of the recesses and/or lines is predetermined in addition to the contour of the recesses and/or lines. This can occur for each recess and/or line individually or jointly for a group of recesses and/or lines. The predetermined values for the individual depths are independent of each other. Different depths can be achieved in the method in accordance with the invention in a simple way by regulating the output of the laser beam or by lasing several

times.

Throughout this specification and the claims which follow, unless the context requires otherwise, the word "comprise", and variations such as "comprises" or "comprising", will
5 be understood to imply the inclusion of a stated integer or step or group of integers or steps but not the exclusion of any other integer or step or group of integers or steps.

The reference in this specification to any prior publication (or information derived from it), or to any matter which is known, is not, and should not be taken as, an acknowledgement
10 or admission or any form of suggestion that that prior publication (or information derived from it) or known matter forms part of the common general knowledge in the field of endeavour to which this specification relates.

2006206027 31 Jan 2011

2006206027 26 May 2011

- 8 -

The Claims defining the invention are as follows:

1. A method for applying a metal element to a security document, with the metal element being formed from a metal layer of a foil and being applied to the security document, preferably in a hot embossing process, characterized in that an embossing is applied to the metal element during the application of the same by means of a stamping surface of the stamp element, which stamping surface is configured as a line gravure printing plate.
2. A security document with a metal element produced according to a method in accordance with claim 1, characterized in that the metal element has an embossing with precise register having a precision of less than 25 μm .
3. A security document according to claim 2, characterized in that the metal element has an embossing with precise register having a precision of less than 10 μm .
4. A method for applying a metal element to a security document substantially as herein described.
5. A security document substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying figures.

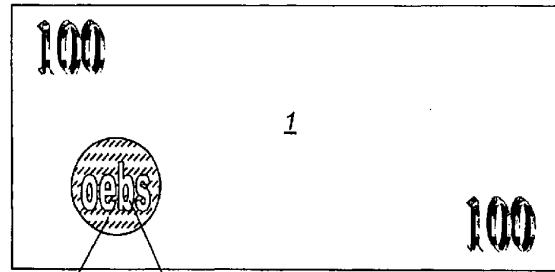


Fig. 1

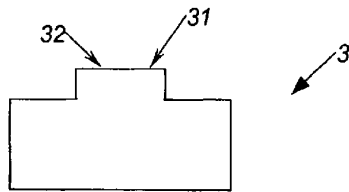


Fig. 2

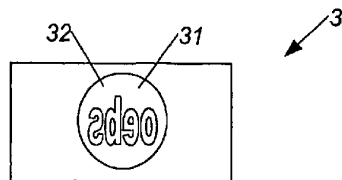


Fig. 3