

Pedestrian protection airbag for a vehicle

5 The invention relates to a pedestrian protection airbag for a vehicle comprising the features of the preamble of claim 1.

The purpose of using pedestrian protection airbags is to protect pedestrians or bicycle drivers in the event of an accident against hitting onto the windshield or other outer surfaces of the vehicle and to thereby prevent severe injuries. The pedestrian protection airbag (PPA) must cover in the inflated state a large outer surface of the vehicle, like for example the windshield and the A-pillars of the vehicle structure, onto which the pedestrian or the bicycle driver would impact for example in a frontal impact.

Because of the large surface to be covered, it is one essential problem to be solved when designing the airbag that the PPA itself must be relatively large dimensioned. Furthermore, the PPA needs to be inflated over a relatively long distance across the windshield especially in the side upwards direction with staying at the same time as close as possible to the windshield surface, to the A-pillar surfaces or other outer surfaces. This is especially problematic when the PPA is inflated under bad circumstances, like for example disadvantageous accelerations acting on the airbag, or when the PPA is hitting on external obstacles.

30 With respect to the described background it is the object of the invention to provide a pedestrian protection airbag with an improved inflation characteristic.

According to the invention, it is suggested that the pedestrian protection airbag is provided with at least one tension strap which is fixed with both ends to at least one of the fabric layers, wherein the tension strap is fixed with one
5 section to only one of the fabric layers by a tear seam, and wherein the inflation characteristic is controlled by tearing off the tear seam during the inflation. The advantage of the tension strap fixed by the tear seam is that the inflation characteristic can be controlled because the point, where the
10 tension force of the tension strap is acting on the PPA, changes during the inflation of the airbag because of tearing off the seam. This effect can also be explained by the increasing acting length of the tension strap because of tearing off the tear seam. The individual inflation characteristic can
15 be adjusted in detail by the orientation of the strap, the length of the strap and the length of the tear seam.

Furthermore, it is suggested that the tension strap is fixed by the tear seam to the fabric layer abutting on the vehicle
20 structure. The advantage of this solution is that the airbag can be pulled by the tension strap towards the outer surface of the vehicle, so that the airbag can be inflated with a reduced gap to the vehicle structure.

Another preferred embodiment of the invention can be seen in that the tension strap is fixed with a first end at a lower part of the airbag and with the tear seam to a part of the airbag which is inflated upwardly during the inflation of the airbag. The lower attachment point of the strap does not
25 change the position, whereas the upper point, where the tension force is introduced into the airbag, moves when the tear seam is tearing off. Therefore, the section of the tension strap with the tear seam is arranged at the part of the air-
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bag, which moves during the inflation, so that the changing geometry can be controlled and influenced by the movement of the point, where the tension strap introduces the force into the PPA.

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Moreover, it is suggested that the tension strap extends from a lower central section of the airbag at an angle to an upper and laterally located section of the airbag. This orientation of the tension strap enables especially a controlled inflation
10 of a large pedestrian protection airbag, which is inflated from the central section under the hood towards the windshield upwardly and sidewise as well.

The inflation characteristic can be further improved, when the
15 tension strap crosses a seam connecting both fabric layers. The seam acts in this case as a hinge, wherein the tension strap is fixed with the two ends to two parts of the airbag, which are separated by the hinge.

20 Furthermore, it is suggested that the section of the tension strap fixed by the tear seam extends up to the upper end of the strap. The advantage of the tear seam extending up to the upper end is that the inflation of the airbag can be controlled using the full length of the strap without creating
25 any peaks in the tension force.

It has been shown that a reasonable control of the inflation characteristic can be provided when the section fixed by the tear seam extends over a length of at least 0.15 m.

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Furthermore it is suggested that the tension strap is fixed with the other end to a housing of the PPA. By fixing the other end of the tension strap at the housing it is possible

to connect the tension strap in a very stable manner at the PPA, wherein the inflation of the PPA is controlled versus a vehicle fixed point.

5 Alternatively it is suggested that the tension strap is also fixed with the other end to the fabric layer. By fixing also the other end of the tension strap at the fabric layer it is possible to control the inflation of the PPA especially between two different sections of the PPA independent from the
10 fixation or orientation at or to the vehicle.

Furthermore it is suggested that the free length of the tension strap between the fixation point at one end and the beginning of the tear seam is smaller than the total length of
15 the flat PPA between those points. The advantage of the suggested solution is that the PPA is obliged in an arc shaped orientation at the beginning of the inflation with pressing the PPA onto the windshield, so that the PPA may not loose the contact with the windshield.

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In the following, the invention shall be illustrated on the basis of a preferred embodiment with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

25 Fig. 1 shows a pedestrian protection airbag prior to the folding and/or rolling;

Fig. 2 shows a cross section of the airbag in an initial phase during the inflation;

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Fig. 3 shows a cross section of the airbag in an intermediate phase during the inflation;

Fig. 4 shows a cross section of the airbag after the inflation.

Figure 1 shows a pedestrian protection airbag (PPA) 1 in the unfolded state with a central section 2 and two sidewise and upwardly extending side sections 3 and 4. The PPA 1 comprises an opening 16, to which a not shown gas generator can be connected, which inflates the PPA 1 in the event of an accident.

The PPA 1 itself comprises two fabric layers 14 and 15 shown in the figures 2,3 and 4, which are made in a one piece woven (OPW) technology in a single weaving process or which are produced separately. The two fabric layers 14 and 15 are connected at the outer rim 19 by a seam or by a connection of the warp and weft threads of the two fabric layers 14 and 15 to provide a cavity which is in a fluidic connection with the gas generator. The cavity is further subdivided by two seams 11 and 17 in three chambers 6,5 and 18 giving the PPA 1 the shape of a mattress. The seams 11 and 17 are produced in the same way like the rim 19, and do not extend up to the rim 19, so that the chambers 5,6 and 18 are in a fluidic connection to each other. The seams 11 and 17 may also be replaced by baffles with holes providing a direct fluidic connection between the chambers 5,6 and 18.

The shape of the PPA 1 is adapted to the outer surface of the vehicle structure, which is in the present case a windshield 13 shown in a section in the figures 2,3 and 4. The central section 2 is adapted to the middle lower section of the windshield 13, while the side sections 3 and 4 are extending upwardly to cover also at least a portion of the A-pillars. As the windshield 13 together with the A-pillars comprises a relatively large outer surface, the PPA 1 got also large dimen-

sions with a height of 30 to 80 cm and a width of 150 cm to 250 cm depending on the size of the vehicle. The PPA 1 is therefore one of the largest airbags in the vehicle.

5 According to the invention, the PPA 1 is provided with two symmetrically arranged tension straps 7, wherein one is described in the following by reference numbers. The tension strap 7 extends from a lower first end 8 at the central section 2 diagonally sidewise and upwards to a second end 9 at
10 the side section 4. The tension strap 7 is attached with both ends 8 and 9 via a stitching to the PPA 1, wherein the tension strap 7 is fixed over approximately the half of its length via a tear seam 10 to the fabric layer 15. The tear seam 10 extends from the end 9 up to the middle of the tension strap.
15 The tension strap 7 is arranged at an angle 12 smaller than 90 degrees to a plane 20 cutting the symmetric axis 21 of the PPA 1 perpendicularly. The tension strap 7 crosses the seam 11 of the PPA 1 and got a length of approximately 50 to 80 cm.

20 The controlling of the inflation characteristic is described in the following with respect to the figures 2,3 and 4, showing a cross section of the PPA 1 along the cutting line A-A in different phases during the inflation process. In general, it is visible that the tension strap 7 is fixed with the tear
25 seam 10 only with the fabric layer 15, which abuts on the windshield 13, so that the tear seam 10 does not disturb the inflation of the chambers 5 and 6. The tension strap 7 may also stabilize the PPA 1 itself and especially the relative movement of the chambers 5 and 6 while the inflation.

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In the figure 2 the PPA 1 is shown in an initial phase of the inflation in a cross section along the cutting line A-A from figure 1. Because of the tear seam 10 the length L1 of the

tension strap 7 between the attachment points, where the forces are introduced into the PPA 1, is shorter than the total length $L2 + L3$ over the surfaces of the chambers 5 and 6 between the attachment points. Therefore, the chambers 5 and 6 are obliged to arrange at an angle to each other using the seam 11 as a kind of a hinge. Because of this arrangement of the chambers 5 and 6 to each other the chamber 5 is pulled towards the windshield 13, so that the gap between the windshield 13 and the PPA 1 can be reduced to a minimum.

In figure 3 it is shown the same cross section of the PPA 1 in a later intermediate phase of the inflation. As the PPA 1 is inflated to a bigger volume the chambers 5 and 6 are pushed outwardly, while the chamber 5 is moved along the windshield 13 and abuts thereby with a bigger surface on the windshield 13. The movement of the PPA 1 and especially the movement of the chamber 5 versus the chamber 6 is controlled by the tear off process of the tear seam 10, wherein the angle between the chambers 5 and 6 is increasing by using the seam 11 as a hinge.

In the figure 4 the PPA 1 is shown in a final phase of the inflation, where the tear seam 10 is released in total up to the end 9, so that the PPA 1 is abutting with its full surface on the windshield 13. The tear seam 10 extends from the end 9 up to the middle of the tension strap 7, so that the tear off process and the controlling of the movement of the chamber 5 takes place until the end of the inflation process and is not interrupted with negative force peaks created by the tension strap 7.

Claims:

1. Pedestrian protection airbag (PPA) (1) for a vehicle comprising at least one chamber (5,6) designed by at least two fabric layers (14,15) with a cavity in between and a gas generator which is in a fluidic connection with the cavity of the chamber (5,6) and which generates upon activation a gas flow guided into the cavity and inflating the chamber (5,6) in a direction covering the outer surface of the vehicle, characterized in that the pedestrian protection airbag (1) is provided with at least one tension strap (7) which is fixed with at least one end (8,9) to one of the fabric layers (14,15) by a tear seam (10), wherein the inflation characteristic is controlled by tearing off the tear seam (10) during the inflation.
2. Pedestrian protection airbag (PPA) (1) according to claim 1, characterized in that the tension strap (7) is fixed by the tear seam (10) to the fabric layer (15) abutting on the vehicle structure in the inflated state.
3. Pedestrian protection airbag (PPA) (1) according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the tension strap (7) is fixed with a first end (8) at a lower part of the airbag and with the tear seam (10) to a part of the airbag, which is inflated upwardly during the inflation of the PPA (1).
4. Pedestrian protection airbag (PPA) (1) according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the tension strap (7) extends from a lower central section (2) of the PPA (1) at an angle to an upper and laterally

located section (3,4) of the PPA (1).

5. Pedestrian protection airbag (PPA) (1) according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the
5 tension strap (7) crosses a seam (11) connecting both fabric layers (14,15).

6. Pedestrian protection airbag (PPA) (1) according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the
10 section of the tension strap (7) fixed by the tear seam (10) extends up to the upper end (9) of the tension strap (7).

7. Pedestrian protection airbag (PPA) (1) according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the
15 section of the tension strap (7) fixed by the tear seam (10) extends over a length of at least 0.15 m.

8. Pedestrian protection airbag (PPA) (1) according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the
20 tension strap (7) is fixed with the other end to a housing (7) of the PPA (1).

9. Pedestrian protection airbag (PPA) (1) according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the
25 tension strap (7) is also fixed with the other end (8,9) to the fabric layer (14,15).

10. Pedestrian protection airbag (PPA) (1) according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the
30 free length (L1) of the tension strap (7) between the fixation point at one end (8,9) and the beginning of the tear seam (10) is smaller than the total length (L2+L3)

of the flat PPA (1) between those points.

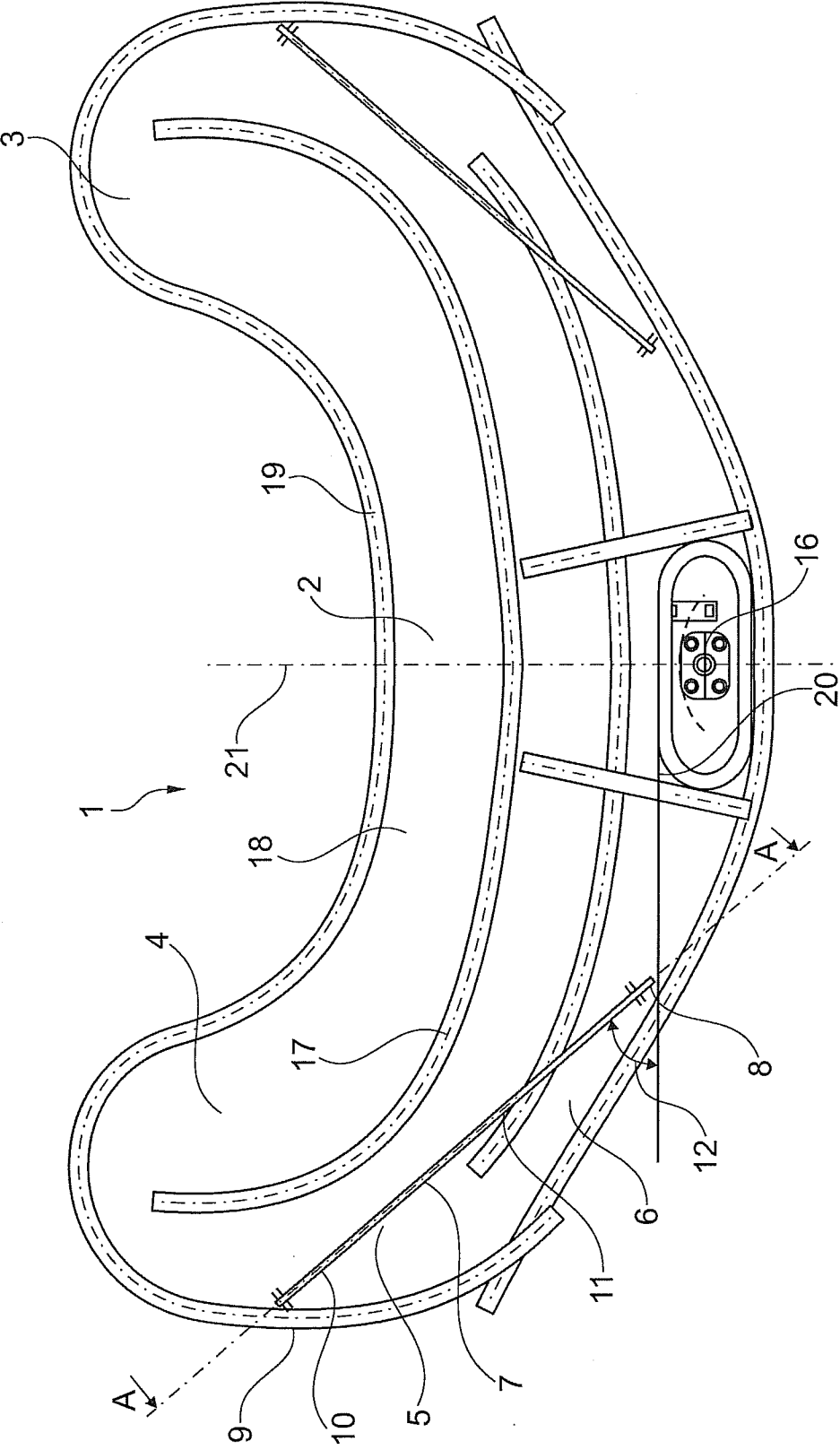


Fig. 1

2/2

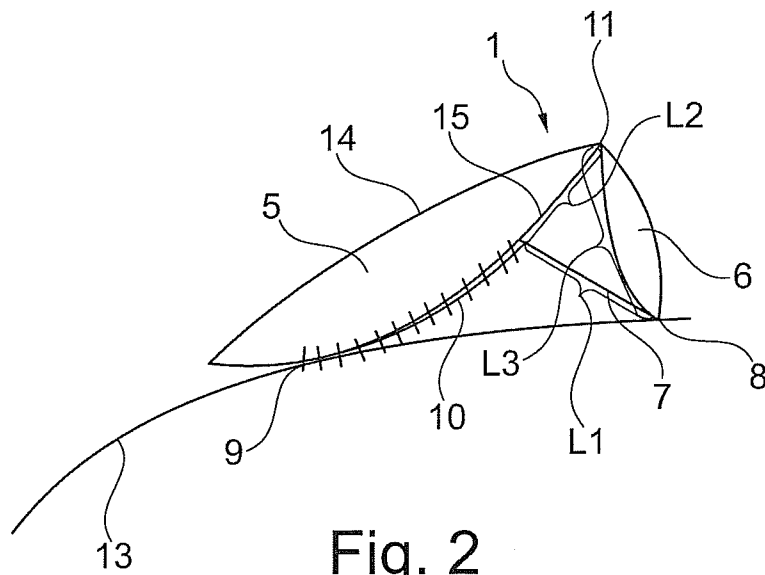


Fig. 2

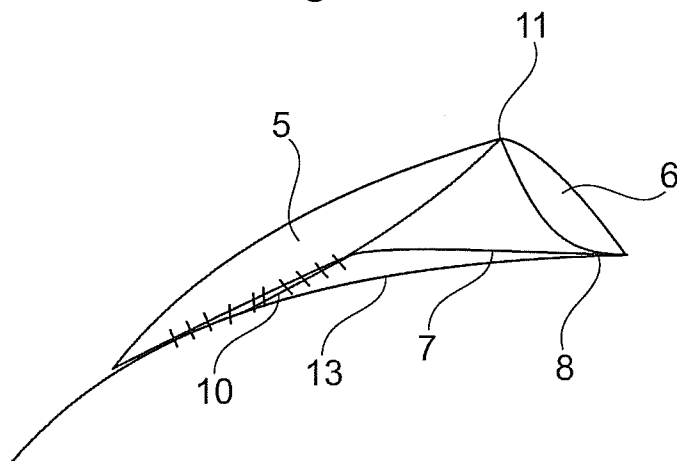


Fig. 3

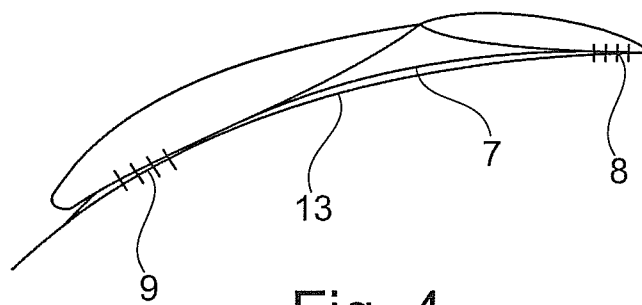


Fig. 4

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/SE2012/050159

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC: see extra sheet

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)

IPC: B60R

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

SE, DK, FI, NO classes as above

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

EPO-Internal, PAJ, WPI data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	JP 2006219046 A (MAZDA MOTOR), 24 August 2006 (2006-08-24); paragraphs [0043]-[0065]; figures 8,17 --	1, 3-10
Y	DE 102007023816 A1 (AUTOLIV DEV), 27 November 2008 (2008-11-27); abstract; paragraphs [0029]-[0030]; figures 1,7 --	1, 3-10
Y	WO 2008063103 A1 (AUTOLIV DEV ET AL), 29 May 2008 (2008-05-29); abstract; page 7, line 18 - line 23; figure 1 --	1, 3-10
A	EP 1992526 A2 (TAKATA CORP), 19 November 2008 (2008-11-19); whole document --	1-10



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



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Date of the actual completion of the international search

14-05-2012

Date of mailing of the international search report

15-05-2012

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	JP 2007076542 A (NIHON PLAST CO LTD), 29 March 2007 (2007-03-29); whole document --	1-10
A	EP 1577172 A2 (TAKATA PETRI GMBH ULM), 21 September 2005 (2005-09-21); paragraphs [0125]-[0126], [0139]; figures 10,17a,17b --	1-10
A	JP 2007238098 A (TAKATA CORP), 20 September 2007 (2007-09-20); (abstract) Retrieved from: PAJ database; Original document: whole document -- -----	1-10

Continuation of: second sheet

International Patent Classification (IPC)

B60R 21/36 (2011.01)

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Cited literature, if any, will be enclosed in paper form.

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International application No.
PCT/SE2012/050159

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