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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **KONINKLIJKE PHILIPS ELECTRONICS N.V.** [NL/NL]; Groenewoudseweg 1, NL-5621 BA Eindhoven (NL).

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(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): **DIRKSEN, Peter** [NL/NL]; c/o Prof. Holstlaan 6, NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL). **MORTON, Robert, D.** [GB/BE]; c/o Prof. Holstlaan 6, NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL). **ZANDBERGEN, Peter** [NL/BE]; c/o Prof. Holstlaan 6, NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL). **VAN STEENWINCKEL, David** [BE/BE]; c/o Prof. Holstlaan 6, NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL). **AKSENOV, Yuri** [RU/BE]; c/o Prof. Holstlaan 6, NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL). **LAMMERS, Jeroen, H.** [NL/NL]; c/o Prof. Holstlaan 6, NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL). **VAN WINGERDEN, Johannes** [NL/NL]; c/o Prof. Holstlaan 6, NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL). **MARINIER, Laurent** [FR/BE]; c/o Prof. Holstlaan 6, NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL).

(74) Agents: **ELEVELD, Koop, J.** et al.; Prof. Holstlaan 6, NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL).

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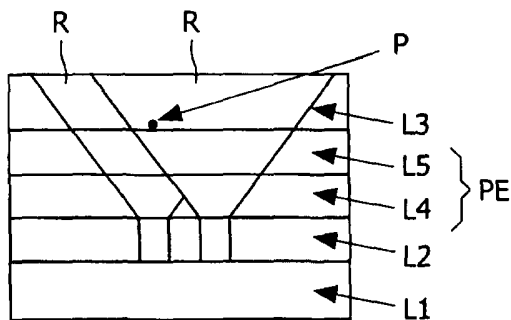
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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: REMOVABLE PELLICLE FOR IMMERSION LITHOGRAPHY



(57) Abstract: A method of irradiating to pattern a photosensitive layer such as a resist (L2) immersed in a fluid (L3), involves applying a removable transparent layer (L4, L5), projecting the radiation onto the resist through the immersion fluid and through the transparent layer, such that imperfections in the fluid are out of focus as projected on the surface, and subsequently removing the transparent layer. The transparent layer can help distance such imperfections from the focus of the radiation on the surface and so can reduce or eliminate shadowing. Hence the irradiation can be more complete, and defects reduced. It can be particularly effective for imperfections in the form of small bubbles or particles in the immersion fluid especially at the fluid/surface interface for example. The radiation can be for any purpose including inspection, processing, patterning

and so on. The removal of the transparent layer can be combined with a step of developing the resist layer.

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B. FIELDS SEARCHED

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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 practical, search terms used)
 EPO-Internal, PAJ, WPI Data, INSPEC, IBM-TDB

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	EP 0 521 296 A (HUGHES AIRCRAFT COMPANY) 7 January 1993 (1993-01-07) abstract figure 4 column 1, line 25 - line 54 column 2, line 47 - column 3, line 35 column 7, line 53 - column 8, line 18 column 10, line 5 - line 37	1,2
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° Special categories of cited documents :

A document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance *E* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date *L* 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) *O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means *P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	*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 *X* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive 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 being obvious to a person skilled in the art. *&* document member of the same patent family
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Date of the actual completion of the international search 29 November 2005	Date of mailing of the international search report 08/12/2005
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Name and mailing address of the ISA European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Authorized officer Andersen, O
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Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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E	US 2005/123863 A1 (CHANG VENCENT ET AL) 9 June 2005 (2005-06-09) abstract figures 1A-1D paragraph '0002! paragraph '0020! - paragraph '0030! -----	1, 14, 16, 19

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