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(54) **Washing machine of domestic type with open drying circuit and associated accessory equipment for converting the drying circuit into a closed circuit with condensation of the water vapour by air**

(57) Laundry washer dryer of domestic type in which the drying circuit, comprising a suction unit (8), a chamber (11) in which the in-drawn air is heated and the washing and drying tub (2), is open to receive air for drying from the environment through a suction mouth (9), and to expel moist air through an outflow mouth (14). The drying circuit may optionally be fitted with a filter

(22) for trapping fluff and connected to the outflow mouth; with rigid or flexible hoses for conveying the moist air out of the environment in which the machine is installed; or with auxiliary equipment comprising a removable filter (26), an air/air heat exchanger (27), a condensation collecting chamber (29) and, if required, a fan (28), to convert the open drying circuit into a closed circuit

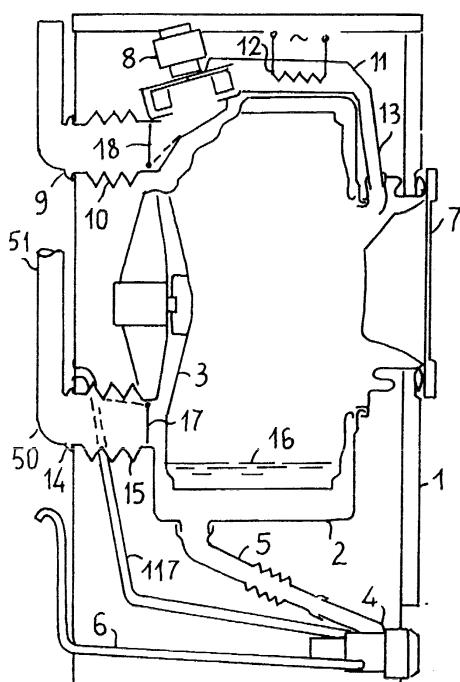


FIG. 1

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 97 20 0675

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Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
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Y	* page 2, line 35 - page 3, line 29; claims 1,5,8-11; figures 1,7 *	5-10	
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Y	GB 2 258 720 A (CREDA LTD) 17 February 1993 (1993-02-17)	7-10	
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A	US 3 937 043 A (HUGHES JOHN D ET AL) 10 February 1976 (1976-02-10) * column 4, line 65 - column 6, line 35; figure 3 *	3	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6) D06F
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X	US 4 516 331 A (YAMAUCHI TOSHIAKI ET AL) 14 May 1985 (1985-05-14) * column 6, line 46 - column 7, line 20; figures 3,7 *	12,13	
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search MUNICH		Date of completion of the search 31 October 2002	Examiner Cagnoli, M
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.

- ☐ Only part of the claims 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 claim(s):
- ☐ 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 requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

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.
- ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, the Search Division did not invite payment of any additional fee.
- ☐ 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 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 invention first mentioned in the claims, namely claims:



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**LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION
SHEET B**

Application Number
EP 97 20 0675

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

1. Claims: 1-11

Claim 1 is directed towards a washer-dryer having drying air inlet and outlet which open towards the machine exterior.

The further claims 2-11 concern further embodiments of the apparatus of claim 1.

2. Claims: 12-13

Claim 12 is directed to an accessory suitable for a washer-dryer, comprising a filter and a condenser as an independent unit.

Claim 13 defines a further embodiment of claim 12.

There are therefore no common features present in both claims 1 and 12, nor do the respective features claimed therein serve to solve the same technical problem.

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 97 20 0675

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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31-10-2002

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For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82