



- (51) **International Patent Classification:**
B65D 5/38 (2006.01) *B65D 5/72* (2006.01)
B65D 85/10 (2006.01)
- (21) **International Application Number:**
PCT/EP2013/054998
- (22) **International Filing Date:**
12 March 2013 (12.03.2013)
- (25) **Filing Language:** English
- (26) **Publication Language:** English
- (30) **Priority Data:**
12168331.2 16 May 2012 (16.05.2012) EP
- (71) **Applicant:** PHILIP MORRIS PRODUCTS S.A.
[CH/CH]; Quai Jeanrenaud 3, CH-2000 Neuchâtel (CH).
- (72) **Inventors:** VALLAT, Philippe; Chemin de la Dôle 2, CH-1023 Crissier (CH). PAKSI, Daniel; Bahnhofstrasse 24, CH-4663 Aarburg (CH). BARTH, Michael; Bodenackerstrasse 8, CH-4410 Liestal (CH).
- (74) **Agent:** BRADFORD, Victoria Sophie; Reddie & Grose LLP, 16 Theobalds Road, London Greater London WC1X 8PL (GB).

(81) **Designated States** (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BN, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PA, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) **Designated States** (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, RW, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— with international search report (Art. 21(3))

(54) **Title:** CONTAINER WITH SLIDING ELEMENT FOR DISPENSING CONSUMER GOODS

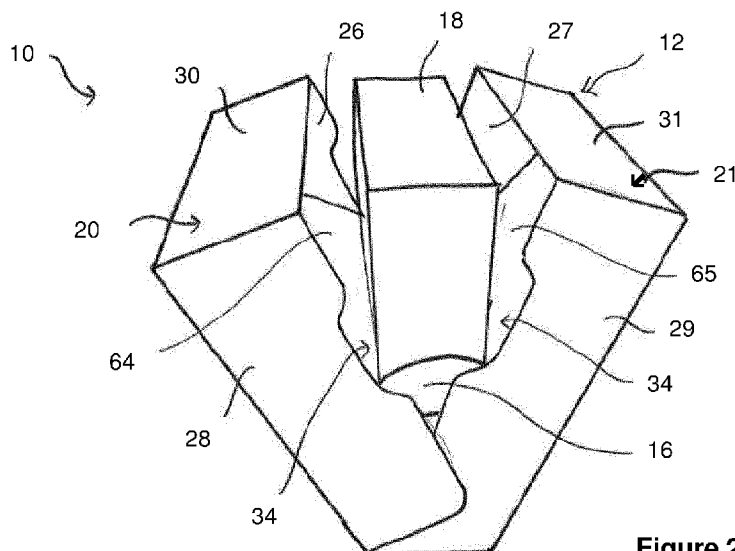


Figure 2

(57) **Abstract:** A container (10) for consumer goods comprises: an outer housing (12) comprising a first housing portion (20) pivotable about a first hinge line (A) and an opposed, second housing portion (21) pivotable about a second hinge line (B), opposed to the first hinge line, wherein the first and second housing portions are moveable relative to each other between a closed position and a removal position in which an access opening is provided between the housing portions; an inner shell (14) fixedly mounted within the outer housing (12); and a sliding element (16) for housing the consumer goods, wherein the sliding element (16) is mounted within the inner shell (14). The sliding element (16) is connected to the outer housing (12) such that movement of the first (20) and second (21) housing portions between the closed position and the removal position brings about sliding movement of the sliding element (16) relative to the inner shell (14).

CONTAINER WITH SLIDING ELEMENT FOR DISPENSING CONSUMER GOODS

The present invention relates to a novel container for consumer goods comprising a sliding element for dispensing the consumer goods from within the container. The container of
5 the present invention finds particular application as a container for housing elongate smoking articles, such as cigarettes.

It is known to package elongate smoking articles and other consumer goods in containers formed from folded laminar blanks. Elongate smoking articles, such as cigarettes and cigars, are commonly sold in hinge-lid packs having a box for housing the smoking articles
10 and a lid connected to the box about a hinge line extending across the back wall of the container. In use, the lid is pivoted about the hinge line to open the pack and so gain access to the smoking articles held in the box.

Also known are slide and shell containers with or without a hinge lid. For example, US-A-3,858,788 and US-A-3,933,299 describe hinge lid containers comprising an inner slide with a
15 hinge lid housed within an outer shell. The outer shell has the form of a sleeve surrounding the inner slide.

It has previously been proposed to provide a slide and shell container having a hinge lid which is moved to a removal position as the inner slide is pushed upwards relative to the outer shell. For example, EP-A-2,029,446 describes a hinge lid container having an inner pack
20 mounted within an outer pack, wherein a hinge lid is provided on one side of the outer pack. The inner pack and the outer pack are connected such that the hinge lid of the outer pack is moved into a removal position by displacement of the inner pack relative to the outer pack, for example, as the inner pack is pushed in an upwards direction.

In order to remove a smoking article from any of these known hinge lid containers, the
25 consumer must first open the hinge lid and then draw a smoking article from the bundle of smoking articles housed within the container. Since the smoking articles are typically all of the same length and positioned at the same height, the removal of a single smoking article from the container without also contacting the other smoking articles around it may be difficult, in particular when the container is relatively full.

It would be desirable to provide a novel container with a sliding element, which is
30 adapted to provide improved access to the consumer goods within the container when opened. In particular, it would be desirable to provide such a container that enables individual consumer goods to be conveniently extracted from the container. Additionally, it would be desirable to provide a novel container with a sliding element that provides the consumer with greater
35 flexibility to select a particular consumer good from within a group or bundle of consumer goods.

According to the invention there is provided a container for consumer goods comprising an outer housing, an inner shell and a sliding element for housing the consumer goods. The outer housing comprises a first housing portion pivotable about a first hinge line and a second

housing portion pivotable about a second hinge line, opposed to the first hinge line. The first and second housing portions are adapted to be moveable relative to each other between a closed position in which the housing portions are closed and a removal position in which the housing portions are apart and an access opening is provided between the housing portions.

5 The inner shell is fixedly mounted within the outer housing and the sliding element is mounted within the inner shell.

In the following description of the invention the term "removal position" is used to describe a position of the housing portions that allows removal of at least one of the consumer goods housed within the sliding element.

10 In containers according to the invention, the sliding element is connected to the outer housing such that movement of the first and second housing portions between the closed position and the removal position brings about sliding movement of the sliding element relative to the inner shell between a first slide position and a second slide position. In the first slide position, the sliding element is within the inner shell and the consumer goods are enclosed
15 within the outer housing. In the second slide position, the consumer goods at least partially protrude from the inner shell and are at least partially accessible through the access opening between the housing portions.

Preferably, in the second slide position, the consumer goods protrude at least partially from the sliding element. More preferably, in the second slide position, the consumer goods
20 protrude at least partially from the outer housing. Preferably, the consumer goods are lifted such that the upper ends of the consumer goods attain a height which is larger than the height of the closed container.

Containers according to the present invention comprise of at least three separate components, the outer housing, the inner shell and the sliding element. These at least three
25 separate components are mounted and connected to each other such that the separation of the housing portions of the outer housing automatically moves the sliding element to dispense the consumer goods from the access opening in the outer housing. The containers therefore use a simple opening action to provide the automatic dispensing of the consumer goods.

In addition, the construction of containers according to the invention with the three
30 components described above enables the protruding part of the consumer goods to be accessible from all sides, so that individual consumer goods can be more readily extracted from a group or bundle of consumer goods. Furthermore, this provides improved visibility of the consumer goods within the sliding element and therefore a unique way of displaying the consumer goods when the container is in a removal position. As a result of the improved
35 accessibility and visibility of the consumer goods when the container is open, the consumer may also be provided with a greater choice of which one of a plurality of consumer goods to remove from the container.

Containers according to the invention are constructed such that in the closed position of the outer housing, the consumer goods remain fully enclosed and protected within the outer housing and the inner shell. The condition and freshness of the consumer goods within the container can therefore be retained between openings of the container.

5 As described above, containers according to the invention are constructed from at least three separate components: the outer housing, the inner shell and the sliding element. The outer housing provides the outermost part of the container, which houses the inner shell and sliding element. The inner shell is fixedly mounted within the outer housing, such that there can be no relative movement of the inner shell and the outer housing. The sliding element is
10 mounted within the inner shell and is slidable relative to the inner shell and therefore also relative to the outer housing. As described in more detail below, the sliding element is connected to the outer housing such that the movement of the housing portions of the outer housing relative to each other automatically brings about the relative sliding movement of the sliding element and the inner shell. The connecting means between the sliding element and the
15 outer housing may be an integral part of the outer housing or an integral part of the sliding element. Alternatively, the connecting means may be additional material that is connected to both the outer housing and the sliding element, for example by adhesive. Providing the connecting means as a separate element allows for an increased flexibility in the placement and dimensions of the connecting means as opposed to constructing the connecting means as an
20 integral part to either the outer housing or the sliding element.

The provision of the fixed inner shell within the outer housing provides containers according to the invention with a number of benefits compared to the containers of the prior art including only two slidably moveable components. The provision of the inner shell around the sliding element increases the rigidity and stability of the container to provide improved
25 protection to the consumer goods during storage. As described in more detail below, the inner shell can advantageously be adapted such that it does not interfere with the connection between the sliding element and the outer housing and does not affect access to the consumer goods when the sliding element is in the second slide position and the outer housing is open.

The inner shell additionally guides the movement of the sliding element and in particular,
30 is able to constrain the movement of the sliding element such that only movement in the desired direction is possible. This enables a smooth opening and closing action to be maintained, even after repeated opening of the container.

The provision of an inner shell for mounting the sliding element and guiding the movement of the sliding element also advantageously provides greater flexibility in the relative movement
35 of the housing portions of the outer housing, since the outer housing is not required to contain or guide the sliding element in any way. In particular, it is possible to provide a greater range of relative movement of the housing portions so that the housing portions can be separated further apart from each other in the removal position. This enables a larger access opening to be

provided so that access to the consumer goods is improved. In addition, a greater range of relative movement of the housing portions enables a greater range of relative movement of the sliding element and the inner shell. As a result, the sliding element can move a greater distance from the first slide position into the second slide position, such that an increased proportion of the consumer goods protrudes from the access opening. This further improves accessibility of the consumer goods when the container is opened.

The construction and function of an embodiment of the inner shell will be described in more detail below.

In order to bring about the movement of the sliding element relative to the inner shell as the housing portions of the outer housing are moved to the removal position, the sliding element is connected to the outer housing. The sliding element may be connected to either one of the first and second housing portions, or may be connected to both of the first and second housing portions. The sliding element is mounted inside the outer housing and is therefore preferably connected to an inner surface of the outer housing.

In the following description of the invention the terms "front", "back", "upper", "lower", "side", "top", "bottom" and other terms used to describe relative positions of the components of containers according to the invention refer to the container in an upright position with the access opening at the top end. When describing containers according to the present invention, these terms are used irrespective of the orientation of the container being described.

The terms "left" and "right" are used with reference to side walls of the container when the container is viewed from the front in its upright position. The term "longitudinal" refers to a direction from bottom to top or vice versa. The term "transverse" refers to a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction.

Similarly, the terms "upwards" and "downwards" are used to describe the movement of the sliding element relative to the inner shell and outer housing of the container when the container is in an upright position.

The term "hinge line" refers to a line about which a component of the container may be pivoted. A hinge line may be, for example, a fold line or a score line in a panel forming the container. Alternatively, a hinge may be formed by a label bridging a gap between two pieces of the container.

Preferably, the sliding element is connected to the outer housing by means of at least one opening flap connecting a free edge of the sliding element to a wall of the first or second housing portion, wherein the at least one opening flap is hingedly connected to the sliding element and to the corresponding housing portion.

As the outer housing is opened, the first and second housing portions are moved apart from each other and the at least one opening flap will be pulled together with the corresponding housing portion. As the opening flap is pulled with the corresponding housing portion, the sliding element will also be pulled and will be caused to slide relative to the inner shell, towards

the second slide position. The at least one opening flap is connected to both the sliding element and the outer housing along respective hinge lines, to enable the flap to bend as the housing portions are moved apart. Preferably, the at least one opening flap is sufficiently rigid that the opening flap will not bend or buckle at any position away from the hinge lines when the housing portions are pulled apart, but will transfer the pulling force to the sliding element.

The degree of movement of the housing portions away from each other will typically be limited by the at least one opening flap, which will prevent further relative movement of the housing portions beyond a certain point at which no further bending of the opening flaps along the hinge lines is possible. The distance by which the sliding element will be able to move relative to the inner shell will therefore typically be determined by the length of the at least one opening flap. The "length" of the opening flap refers to the distance between the hinge lines along which the opening flap is connected to the sliding element and the outer housing. Preferably, the at least one opening flap has a length that is at least one third and preferably at least one half of the length or height of the container.

Preferably, the hinge line along which the at least one opening flap is connected to the sliding element is positioned at or above the level of the inner shell when the sliding element is in the first slide position. This arrangement enables immediate bending of the opening flap along the hinge line as the housing portions are moved towards the removal position so that the movement of the sliding element is not constrained by the inner shell. With this arrangement, the at least one opening flap is therefore provided outside of the inner shell in the first slide position and remains outside of the inner shell as the sliding element is moved to the second slide position.

In the first slide position, the at least one opening flap therefore typically lies between the consumer goods within the sliding element and the outer housing, forming an extension of one or more of the walls of the sliding element. This arrangement further increases the rigidity of the container when the outer housing is closed and provides improved protection for the consumer goods housed within the sliding element. Preferably, the at least one opening flap extends across substantially the full width of the wall of the sliding element from which that opening flap depends.

Preferably, the at least one opening flap is integrally formed with the sliding element, from the same laminar blank. The at least one opening flap is therefore preferably pivotable relative to the remainder of the sliding element along a line of weakness, such as a fold line or a score line, provided between the opening flap and the adjacent wall of the sliding element. The integration of the at least one opening flap into the laminar blank for forming the sliding element facilitates the production and assembly of containers according to the invention and provides a more secure connection between the sliding element and the outer housing.

Preferably, the end of the opening flap is connected to the inner surface of the corresponding housing portion by means of a suitable adhesive. The position of the connection

between the opening flap and the inner surface of the corresponding housing portion may be adjusted depending on the desired extent of relative movement of the housing portions and the desired extent of movement of the sliding element. Preferably, the end of the opening flap is adhered to the inner surface of the corresponding housing portion of the outer housing at a position proximate the top wall of the outer housing. This positioning maximises the potential range of movement of the opening flap and therefore the potential range of movement of the sliding element out of the inner shell and through the access opening.

A single opening flap may be provided at one side of the sliding element, which connects the sliding element to one of the housing portions. However, more preferably, a pair of opposed opening flaps is provided to connect the sliding element to both the first and second housing portions. In such embodiments, first and second opposed opening flaps extend from opposed free edges of the sliding element to the inner surfaces of the first and second housing portions, respectively.

The sliding element of containers according to the invention is adapted to house the consumer goods. Preferably, the consumer goods are supported on a bottom wall of the sliding element. Preferably the sliding element at least partially encloses the consumer goods. The sliding element preferably has an open end, so that the consumer goods protrude from the sliding element at the end which moves through or towards the access opening in the outer housing. Most preferably, the sliding element has an open upper end so that a portion of the consumer goods protrudes through the top of the sliding element. This arrangement ensures that the consumer goods are immediately accessible to the consumer when the outer housing is opened.

In particularly preferred embodiments, the sliding element encloses only the part of the consumer goods that remains within the outer housing in the second slide position and the consumer goods therefore protrude above the upper free edges of the sliding element. The portion of the consumer goods that protrudes through the access opening in the second slide position is therefore uncovered and exposed on all sides. As set out above, this provides improved visibility of the consumer goods as well as improved access to all of the consumer goods as compared to, for example, conventional hinge-lid containers.

Alternatively, the sliding element may fully enclose the consumer goods. However, in this case, the sliding element is preferably provided with a suitable lid or opening flap such that the consumer goods can be accessed in the second slide position through the opening of the lid or opening flap.

As described above, the at least one opening flap extends from a free edge of the sliding element, which will typically be a top edge of the sliding element. Preferably, opening flaps extend from the top edges of the opposed front and back walls of the sliding element. In the closed position of the outer housing when the sliding element is in the first slide position, the

opening flaps preferably form extensions of the opposed walls of the sliding element so that the consumer goods are more enclosed when the container is closed.

The sliding element of containers according to the invention preferably houses a plurality of elongate consumer goods, most preferably a plurality of smoking articles. The plurality of consumer goods within the sliding element is preferably wrapped with a suitable inner wrapper or liner, which must be removed, at least from the protruding portion of the consumer goods, when the container is opened for the first time. Preferably, at least an upper portion of the elongate consumer goods protrudes above the upper free edges of the sliding element.

The outer housing of containers according to the present invention comprises first and second housing portions, each of which is pivotable about a hinge line provided on the outer housing. In the removal position of the outer housing, the first and second housing portions are closed together to provide a closed container. The container is opened by moving the housing portions away from each other to provide an access opening.

The first and second housing portions are provided on opposed sides of the container. Preferably, the first and second housing portions are provided at the front and back of the container.

The first and second housing portions are pivotable about first and second hinge lines, respectively, which extend across the outer housing. The position of the first and second hinge lines will depend upon what proportion of the outer housing is formed by the housing portions.

In preferred embodiments of the invention, the first and second housing portions make up the entire outer housing of the container. The first and second hinge lines are preferably provided along opposed edges of the bottom wall of the outer housing, most preferably along the front and back edges of the bottom wall.

In such embodiments, it is therefore possible to open up the entire outer housing by moving the first and second housing portions apart from each other. This advantageously provides a relatively large access opening in the removal position of the outer housing. In addition, there is advantageously a greater potential scope of relative movement of the housing portions apart from each other, which in turn provides a greater potential scope of movement of the sliding element out through the access opening. In this way, the accessibility of the consumer goods in the removal position of the outer housing is optimised.

In alternative embodiments, the first and second housing portions may form a lid of the outer housing, wherein the outer housing further comprises a box that remains closed around the other components of the container. In this case, the first and second housing portions are pivotable relative to the box of the outer housing along the first and second hinge lines. The first and second hinge lines are therefore provided at an intermediate position along opposed walls of the outer housing, most preferably along the front and back walls of the outer housing.

In such embodiments, the container has a two part lid defined by the housing portions, wherein the lid opens as the housing portions are moved apart from each other. This

arrangement typically provides a more limited size access opening, which may be suitable for certain types of consumer goods.

Preferably, in the closed position of the outer housing, the second housing portion is at least partially enclosed within the first housing portion. More preferably, the top wall and side walls of the second housing portion are fully enclosed within the first housing portion in the closed position. The at least partial enclosure of the second housing portion within the first housing portion provides at least partial overlap of the walls of the housing portions. For example, where the second housing portion is fully enclosed within the first housing portion in the closed position, the walls of the first housing portion will overlie the corresponding walls of the second housing portion. This provides greater rigidity to the closed container. In addition, the overlap of the corresponding walls of the housing portion provides a more secure closure of the outer housing, with improved protection for the consumer goods.

In alternative embodiments, the first and second housing portions may close together with the free edges of the housing portions abutting each other, such that neither housing portion is inserted or received in the other housing portion. In this case, there is no overlap of the walls of the housing portions in the closed position of the outer housing, but the walls of the second housing portion extend from the corresponding walls of the first housing portions to define the walls of the closed outer housing.

Preferably, one or more cut outs are provided along the free edges of the first or second housing portions to facilitate the grasping of the housing portions in order to move them apart from each other into the removal position of the outer housing. For example, in embodiments in which the second housing portion is at least partially enclosed within the first housing portion in the closed position of the outer housing, one or more cut outs are preferably provided along the free edges of the first housing portion, to enable the second housing portion to be grasped. Preferably, a pair of substantially opposed cut outs is provided along the free side edges of the first housing portion.

As described above, the first and second housing portions of the outer housing of containers according to the present invention are moveable towards and away from each other by pivoting the housing portions about their respective first and second hinge lines. Typically, the further apart the housing portions are moved from each other, the larger the access opening that will be provided in the removal position.

In order to move the housing portions from the closed position into the removal position, the housing portions are pulled away from each other, typically in an outwards and downwards direction. For example, in the embodiment described above in which the housing portions form the entire outer housing and the hinge lines are provided at the bottom of the outer housing, the housing portions will remain in contact at the bottom end in both the closed and removal positions.

Containers according to the invention will typically include means for limiting the separation of the housing portions to define the removal position of the outer housing in which the outer housing is open to the maximum extent possible. As described above, the removal position of the outer housing may be controlled by the opening flaps connecting the sliding element to the outer housing. Alternatively or in addition, as described below, retention means may be provided to limit the relative movements of the components of the container. The consumer may choose to partially open the outer housing, such that the housing portions are separated from each other to a lesser extent than in the removal position.

The access opening provided when the outer housing is in the removal position corresponds to the space between the separated housing portions. The access opening is preferably at the top end of the container. In the removal position, the consumer goods therefore protrude through the top of the outer housing. The access opening preferably additionally extends at least part way down the sides of the outer housing, depending on the degree of separation of the housing portions in the removal position. This may further facilitate removal of the consumer goods from the container. The access opening needs to be sufficiently large to enable all of the consumer goods contained within the sliding element to be ejected through the space between the housing portions.

The outer housing of containers according to the invention is preferably formed of a single laminar blank, which includes an appropriate arrangement of fold lines and cut lines to define the first and second housing portions and the first and second hinge lines. Where the outer housing is formed from a single laminar blank, the first and second housing portions are connected to each other and will typically share a common wall, such as the bottom wall.

Preferably, in the closed position of the outer housing, the outer housing is substantially in the form of a rectangular parallelepiped. As described above, the outer housing contains the inner shell and the sliding element. Preferably, in the closed position, the outer housing fully encloses the inner shell and the sliding element, with no openings or open ends. This provides optimal protection for the consumer goods within the sliding element.

Preferably, the outer housing of containers according to the invention further comprises a locking device for locking the housing portions in the closed position. The locking device keeps the housing portions together until a positive force is applied to pull them apart from each other. This reduces the likelihood of inadvertent opening of the outer housing, so that the consumer goods are retained securely within the container between uses. Where the second housing portion is at least partially enclosed within the first housing portion in the closed position, the locking device may conveniently be provided between overlapping walls of the housing portions. The locking device may include, for example, one or more magnets, Velcro® strips, low-tack adhesives, embossed or debossed areas on at least one of the housing portions.

In certain preferred embodiments, the locking device comprises at least one locking flap provided on one of the housing portions, which is capable of engaging with the other housing position in order to retain the housing portions in the closed position. The at least one locking flap may engage with a corresponding flap provided on the other housing portion. The engagement of the flaps means that a greater force is required in order to move the housing portions apart from each other towards the removal position.

Alternatively and preferably, the other housing portion includes one or more cuts or cut outs on the surface of the outer housing. The at least one locking flap engages with the one or more cuts or cut outs when the housing portions are brought together in the closed position. In order to move the housing portions towards the removal position, a sufficient force must be applied to disengage the locking flap from the corresponding cut or cut out. Preferably, the locking flap is provided on the inner surface of a wall of one of the housing portions and the cut or cut out is provided on the outer surface of the corresponding wall of the other housing portion. The walls overlie each other when the outer housing is in the closed position, such that the locking flap engages with the cut or cut out.

Preferably, the engagement of the locking flap in the cut or cut out generates an audible sound, such as an audible click, which gives the consumer an indication that the outer housing has been securely closed.

Preferably, the outer housing is capable of being free-standing in both the open and closed positions, such that the outer housing can be stably supported on a flat surface, for example, by standing the outer housing on its bottom wall. The open container can therefore be placed on a flat surface, such as a table top, with the housing portions remaining spaced apart from each other and the consumer goods protruding through the access opening. This provides a unique way of dispensing and sharing the consumer goods within the container.

The inner shell of containers according to the invention is fixedly mounted within the outer housing such that the inner shell remains fixed in position within the container as the outer housing is moved between the closed and removal positions. Preferably, the inner shell is affixed to an inner surface of at least one wall of the outer housing using a suitable adhesive means. Particularly preferably, the inner shell is affixed to an inner surface of a wall that remains fixed in place when the housing portions are moved relative to each other. In particularly preferred embodiments, the inner shell is mounted on and affixed to the bottom wall of the outer housing.

The inner shell is adapted to allow the movement of the sliding element between the first and second slide positions. Preferably, the inner shell has at least one open end through which the sliding element can move and particularly preferably, the inner shell has an open top end.

The inner shell preferably extends only part way along the height of the outer housing, particularly preferably no more than halfway along the height of the outer housing. This ensures that the inner shell does not affect the connection between the sliding element and the outer

housing and does not restrict access to the consumer goods when the outer housing is in the removal position.

As described above, the inner shell retains the sliding element in the correct position when the outer housing is in the closed position and guides the movement of the sliding element between the first and second slide positions to maintain a smooth opening and closing action.

In the first slide position of the sliding element, the sliding element is preferably contained within the inner shell as far as possible. Preferably, the bottom wall of the sliding element is supported on the bottom wall of the inner shell. The sliding element is slidably moveable relative to the inner shell from this first slide position into the second slide position. Preferably, the inner shell fits around the sliding element such that the movement of the sliding element relative to the inner shell is constrained to a single linear movement relative to the inner shell. In order to move from the first slide position to the second slide position, the sliding element is therefore moved in a first linear direction and is moved in the opposite, linear direction to return the sliding element to the first slide position. Preferably, the sliding element is constrained to linear movement in the longitudinal direction of the container, most preferably in a vertical direction such that the sliding element moves up and down within the outer housing. Particularly preferably, the sliding element is moved in an upwards direction from the first slide position to the second slide position so that the consumer goods are elevated out of the container in the second slide position.

The extent of the movement of the sliding element out of the inner shell may depend upon the relative sizes of the inner shell and the sliding element and on the position at which the sliding element is connected to the outer housing, as described above.

Preferably, containers according to the present invention further comprise retention means to prevent movement of the sliding element beyond the second slide position, such that the sliding element cannot be removed from the inner shell. The retention means may further restrict the degree of separation of the housing portions of the outer portion, due to the connection between the sliding element and the outer housing.

In certain preferred embodiments, the retention means comprises at least one retention tab provided on the sliding element. The at least one retention tab is capable of engaging with the inner shell to prevent movement of the sliding element beyond the second slide position. The at least one retention tab may engage with a corresponding tab provided on the inside of the inner shell, wherein the engagement of the tabs prevents further movement of the sliding element out of the inner shell. Alternatively, the inner shell may include one or more cut outs on the inner surface thereof, wherein the engagement of the at least one retention tab with the one or more cut outs prevents further movement of the sliding element.

Alternatively or in addition to the retention means for preventing the movement of the sliding element beyond the second slide position, containers according to the invention may

comprise retention means for retaining the sliding element in the second slide position until a positive force is applied to return the sliding element back to the first position. This positive force will typically be applied by pushing the housing portions back towards each other into the closed position. The retention means advantageously enable the container to be retained in an open state, with the consumer goods protruding through the access opening, even when the container is set down by the consumer, for example on a support surface such as a table. This advantageously provides a unique way to display and dispense the consumer goods from the container.

The retention means for retaining the sliding element in the second slide position preferably comprises a retention tab provided on the sliding element and a cut out provided on the inner surface of the inner shell. As the sliding element is moved into the second slide position, the retention tab on the sliding element slides into the cut out on the inner shell. In the absence of any applied force to move the sliding element back towards the first slide position, the retention tab remains within the cut out and is constrained to moving only within the cut out. The engagement of the retention tab and the cut out therefore prevents the movement of the sliding element back towards the first slide position, so that the sliding element is retained in the second slide position.

In particularly preferred embodiments of the present invention, a single retention means may be provided that performs the function of preventing the movement of the sliding element beyond the second slide position as well as the function of retaining the sliding element in the second slide position until a positive force is applied. For example, a single retention tab may be provided on the sliding element to engage with a single cut out on the inner surface of the inner shell. In this case, the engagement of the retention tab within the cut out prevents further movement of the sliding element out of the inner shell as well as preventing movement of the sliding element in the opposite direction, back to the first slide position until a force is applied.

The inner shell and the sliding element may have the same shape. This may allow smooth movement of the sliding element between the first and second slide positions. For example, both the inner shell and the sliding element may be substantially in the shape of a rectangular parallelepiped. In that case, both the inner shell and the sliding element have a substantially rectangular cross section, in both the transverse and longitudinal directions. The term "longitudinal cross section" refers to a section that is cut along the longitudinal direction, that is, top to bottom. The longitudinal cross section may be cut either substantially parallel to the front and back walls of the inner shell or sliding element or substantially parallel to the side walls of the inner shell or sliding element. The term "transverse cross section" refers to a section that is cut in the transverse direction, that is perpendicular to the longitudinal direction. Alternatively, the inner shell and the sliding element may have different shapes. This may restrict movement of the sliding element relative to the inner shell, between the first and second slide positions. This may assist in preventing the movement of the sliding element beyond the

second slide position. For example, the inner shell may be substantially in the shape of a rectangular parallelepiped and the sliding element may be substantially in the shape of a trapezoidal prism. In that case, the inner shell has a substantially rectangular cross section in the transverse and longitudinal directions, but the sliding element has a substantially trapezoid cross section in one of the longitudinal directions. Preferably, the sliding element has a substantially trapezoid longitudinal cross section cut substantially parallel to the side walls of the sliding element, and a substantially rectangular longitudinal cross section cut substantially parallel to the front and back walls of the sliding element. A trapezoid is a quadrilateral having two parallel edges and two non-parallel edges. The trapezoid may be an isosceles trapezoid. The trapezoid may be a right trapezoid. The angles between the parallel sides of the trapezoid and the non-parallel sides of the trapezoid may be selected as desired in order to create the desired friction between the sliding element and the inner shell. Preferably, the angles between the parallel sides of the trapezoid and the non-parallel sides of the trapezoid are between about 85° and about 95°, more preferably between about 88° and about 93°.

The containers of the present invention may be formed from blanks of any suitable materials including, but not limited to, cardboard, paperboard, plastic, metal, or combinations thereof. Where the container is formed of cardboard, preferably, the cardboard has a weight of between about 100 grams per square metre and about 350 grams per square metre.

Preferably, the inner shell and the sliding element are formed from one or more separate blanks to the one or more blanks used to form the outer housing. The blanks for forming the outer housing, the sliding element and the inner shell may be made from the same or different materials. Preferably, the container is formed from one or more folded laminar blanks, more preferably from one or more folded laminar cardboard blanks.

Containers according to the invention may be in the shape of a rectangular parallelepiped, with right-angled longitudinal and right-angled transverse edges. Alternatively, the container may comprise one or more rounded longitudinal edges, rounded transverse edges, bevelled longitudinal edges or bevelled transverse edges, or combinations thereof. For example, the container according to the invention may comprise, without limitation:

- One or two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall, and/or one or two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on the back wall.

- One or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall, and/or one or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the back wall.

- One longitudinal rounded edge and one longitudinal bevelled edge on the front wall, and/or one transverse rounded edge and one transverse bevelled edge on the back wall.

- One or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall and one or two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall.

- Two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on a first side wall or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the second side wall.

Where the container comprises one or more rounded edges and is made from one or more laminar blanks, preferably the blanks comprise three, four, five, six or seven scoring lines or creasing lines to form each rounded edge in the assembled container. The scoring lines or creasing lines may be either on the inside of the container or on the outside of the container.

5 Preferably, the scoring lines or creasing lines are spaced from each other by between about 0.3 mm and 4 mm.

Preferably, the spacing of the creasing lines or scoring lines is a function of the thickness of the laminar blanks. Preferably, the spacing between the creasing lines or scoring lines is between about 0.5 and about 4 times larger than the thickness of the laminar blanks.

10 Where the container comprises one or more bevelled edge, preferably the bevelled edge has a width of between about 1 mm and about 10 mm, preferably between about 2 and about 6 mm. Alternatively, the container may comprise a double bevel formed by three parallel creasing or scoring lines that are spaced such that two distinct bevels are formed on the edge of the container.

15 Where the container comprises a bevelled edge and is made from one or more laminar blanks, the bevel may be formed by two parallel creasing lines or scoring lines in the laminar blank. The creasing lines or scoring lines may be arranged symmetrically to the edge between a first wall and a second wall. Alternatively, the creasing lines or scoring lines may be arranged asymmetrically to the edge between the first wall and the second wall, such that the bevel
20 reaches further into the first wall of the container than into the second wall of the container.

Alternatively, the container may have a non-rectangular transversal cross section, for example polygonal such as triangular or hexagonal, semi-oval or semi-circular.

Containers according to the invention find particular application as packs for elongate smoking articles such as, for example, cigarettes, cigars or cigarillos. It will be appreciated that
25 through appropriate choices of the dimensions thereof, containers according to the invention may be designed for different numbers of conventional size, king size, super-king size, slim or super-slim cigarettes. Alternatively, other consumer goods may be housed inside the container.

Through an appropriate choice of the dimensions thereof, containers according to the invention may be designed to hold different total numbers of smoking articles, or different
30 arrangements of smoking articles. For example, through an appropriate choice of the dimensions thereof, containers according to the invention may be designed to hold a total of between five and thirty smoking articles.

The smoking articles may be arranged in different collations, depending on the total number of smoking articles. For example, the smoking articles may be arranged in a single row
35 of five, six, seven, eight, nine or ten. Alternatively, the smoking articles may be arranged in two or more rows. The two or more rows may contain the same number of smoking articles. For example, the smoking articles may be arranged in: two rows of five, six, seven, eight, nine or ten; three rows of five or seven; or four rows of four, five or six. Alternatively, the two or more

rows may include at least two rows containing different number of smoking articles to each other. For example, the smoking articles may be arranged in: a row of five and a row of six (5-6); a row of six and a row of seven (6-7); a row of seven and a row of eight (7-8); a middle row of five and two outer rows of six (6-5-6); a middle row of five and two outer rows of seven (7-5-7); a middle row of six and two outer rows of five (5-6-5); a middle row of six and two outer rows of seven (7-6-7); a middle row of seven and two outer rows of six (6-7-6); a middle row of nine and two outer rows of eight (8-9-8); or a middle row of six with one outer row of five and one outer row of seven (5-6-7).

Containers according to the present invention may hold smoking articles of the same type or brand, or of different types or brands. In addition, both filterless smoking articles and smoking articles with various filter tips may be contained, as well as smoking articles of differing length (for example, between about 40 mm and about 180 mm), diameter (for example, between about 4 mm and about 9 mm). In addition, the smoking articles may differ in strength of taste, resistance to draw and total particulate matter delivery. Preferably, the dimensions of the container are adapted to the length of the smoking articles, and the collation of the smoking articles. Typically, the outer dimensions of the container are between about 0.5 mm to about 5 mm larger than the dimensions of the bundle or bundles of smoking articles housed inside the container.

The length, width and depth of containers according to the invention may be such that, in the closed position of the outer housing, the resultant overall dimensions of the container are similar to the dimensions of a typical disposable hinge-lid pack of twenty cigarettes.

Preferably, containers according to the invention have a height of between about 60 mm and about 150 mm, more preferably a height of between about 70 mm and about 125 mm, wherein the height is measured from the bottom wall to the top wall of the container.

Preferably, containers according to the invention have a width of between about 12 mm and about 150 mm, more preferably a width of between about 70 mm and about 125 mm, wherein the width is measured from one side wall to the other side wall of the container.

Preferably, containers according to the invention have a depth of between about 6 mm and about 150 mm, more preferably a depth of between about 12 mm and about 25 mm wherein the depth is measured from the front wall to the back wall of the container.

Preferably, the ratio of the height of the container to the depth of the container is in between about 0.3 to 1 and about 10 to 1, more preferably between about 2 to 1 and about 8 to 1, most preferably between about 3 to 1 and 5 to 1.

Preferably, the ratio of the width of the container to the depth of the container is in between about 0.3 to 1 and about 10 to 1, more preferably between about 2 to 1 and about 8 to 1, most preferably between about 2 to 1 and 3 to 1.

The interior surfaces or exterior surfaces of containers or both interior and exterior surfaces of containers according to the invention may be printed, embossed, debossed or

otherwise embellished with manufacturer or brand logos, trade marks, slogans and other consumer information and indicia.

The consumer goods within the containers according to the invention may be individually wrapped, or the plurality of consumer goods may be wrapped together.

5 Once filled, containers according to the invention may be shrink wrapped or otherwise over wrapped with a transparent polymeric film of, for example, high or low density polyethylene, polypropylene, oriented polypropylene, polyvinylidene chloride, cellulose film, or combinations thereof in a conventional manner. Where containers according to the invention are over wrapped, the over wrapper may include one or more a tear tapes. In addition, the over
10 wrapper may be printed with images, consumer information or other data.

Where a tear tape is provided, the tear tape preferably extends substantially vertically or longitudinally around the container, unlike in conventional packs where the tear tape typically extends substantially horizontally around the container. The provision of a vertical arrangement of the tear tape ensures that the outer wrapper is fully removed before the consumer attempts to
15 open the outer housing by separating the housing portions from each other. This ensures that no part of the outer wrapper is retained on the container which might otherwise affect the opening mechanism.

Where the container comprises smoking articles, the container may further comprise waste compartments (for example for ash or butts) or other consumer goods, for example
20 matches, lighters, extinguishing means, breath-fresheners or electronics. The other consumer goods may be attached to the outside of the container, contained within the container along with the smoking articles, in a separate compartment of the container or combinations thereof.

The invention further is directed to a method of accessing consumer goods from a container according to the invention, as described above, the method comprising the steps of
25 moving the first and second housing portions of the outer housing away from each other, from the closed position to the removal position, thereby simultaneously moving the sliding element from the first slide position to the second slide position such that the consumer goods are at least partially protruding from the inner shell and are at least partially accessible through the access opening; and moving the first and second housing portions of the outer housing towards
30 each other from the removal position to the closed position, thereby simultaneously moving the sliding element from the second slide position to the first slide position, such that unused consumer goods are returned to the inside of the container.

The invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

35 Figure 1 shows a perspective view of a container according to the present invention with the outer housing in a closed position;

Figure 2 shows a perspective back view of the container of Figure 1 with the outer housing in a removal position;

Figure 3 shows a perspective view of the container of Figures 1 and 2 in a partially dismantled state, with the sliding element detached from the outer housing; and

Figures 4a, b and c show laminar blanks suitable for forming the outer housing, inner shell and sliding element of the container of Figures 1 to 3.

5 The reference numerals used in Figures 1 to 3 correspond to those used in Figures 4a, b and c, such that each panel of the blanks has been labelled with the reference numeral used to refer to the wall, flap or tab formed by that panel in the assembled container, and vice versa. In Figures 4a, b and c the dashed lines within the blanks indicate fold lines, whilst the solid lines indicate cut lines.

10 The container 10 shown in Figures 1 to 3 is rectangular parallelepipedal in shape and comprises an outer housing 12, an inner shell 14 and a sliding element 16. The sliding element 16 contains a wrapped bundle of cigarettes 18.

The outer housing 12 comprises a front housing portion 20 and a back housing portion 21 connected to opposed front and back edges of a bottom wall 22 of the outer housing. The front 20 and back 21 housing portions have substantially the same shape and dimensions as each other. The outer housing 12 may be assembled from the single laminar blank 112 shown in Figure 4a.

The front housing portion 20 comprises a front wall 24, a left side wall 26, a right side wall 28 and a top wall 30. The back face of the first housing portion 20 is open. The front housing portion 20 is connected to the bottom wall 22 along the front edge A of the bottom wall 22 and is pivotable about this edge. The back housing portion 21 comprises a back wall 32, a left side wall 27, a right side wall 29 and a top wall 31. The front face of the second housing portion 21 is open. The back housing portion 21 is connected to the bottom wall 22 along the back edge B of the bottom wall 22 and is pivotable about this edge.

25 As can be seen from Figure 2, each housing portion 20, 21 comprises a pair of opposed cut outs 34 extending from opposed free edges of the side walls of that housing portion. The cut outs 34 in the first housing portion 20 facilitate the grasping of the second housing portion 21 to move the housing portions apart from each other.

The first 20 and second 21 housing portions of the outer housing 12 are pivotable relative to each other between the closed position shown in Figure 1 and the removal position shown in Figure 2. In the closed position, the second housing portion 21 is enclosed within the first housing portion 20, such that the top wall 30 and the side walls 26, 28 of the first housing portion 20 overlie the corresponding top wall 31 and side walls 27, 29 of the second housing portion 21.

35 In order to move the outer housing 12 into the removal position shown in Figure 2, the housing portions 20, 21 are pulled apart from each other such that each housing portion pivots away from the other and moves in an outwards and downwards direction. The bottom wall 22 of the outer housing remains fixed in place. As shown in Figure 2, in the removal position of the

outer housing 12, the housing portions 20, 21 are separated from each other to provide an access opening through which the smoking articles can be removed. The access opening extends across the top end of the container 10 and part way down the sides of the container.

The outer housing 12 incorporates a locking device comprising a locking flap 36 defined in an inner panel of the top wall 30 of the first housing portion 20 and a cut line 38 extending across an outer panel of the top wall 31 of the second housing portion 21. In the closed position of the outer housing 12, the locking flap 36 is received in the cut line 38 to retain the second housing portion 21 in place within the first housing portion 20 until a positive force is applied to separate the housing portions and release the locking flap 36 from the cut line 38.

The inner shell 14 is mounted within the outer housing 12 and comprises a sleeve bottom wall 40, a sleeve front wall 42, a sleeve back wall 44, a sleeve left side wall 46 and a sleeve right side wall 48. The top end of the inner shell 14 is open. The inner shell 14 may be assembled from the single laminar blank 114 shown in Figure 4b.

The sleeve bottom wall 40 is affixed to the bottom wall 22 of the outer housing 12. The inner shell 14 has a height corresponding to approximately one half of the height of the outer housing 12. The outer transverse cross section of the inner shell 14 corresponds to the inner transverse cross section of the outer housing 12 so that in the closed position of the outer housing 12, the walls of the outer housing 12 overlie the corresponding walls of the inner shell 14.

The inner shell 14 incorporates a cut out 50 in an inner panel of the sleeve right side wall 48, the purpose of which is described below. The inner shell 14 also incorporates an engagement tab 49 connected to the sleeve back wall 44, the purpose of which is also described below.

The sliding element 16 is mounted within the inner shell 14 and is slidably moveable relative to the inner shell in a vertical direction. The sliding element 16 comprises a slide bottom wall 52, a slide front wall 54, a slide back wall 56, a slide left side wall 58 and a slide right side wall 60. The top end of the sliding element 16 is open. The sliding element 16 has a height corresponding approximately to that of the inner shell 14. The outer transverse cross section of the sliding element 16 corresponds to the inner transverse cross section of the inner shell 14 so that the front, back and side walls of the sliding element 16 slide against the corresponding walls of the inner shell 14 as the sliding element is moved relative to the inner shell. The sliding element 16 may be assembled from the single laminar blank 116 shown in Figure 4c.

The sliding element 16 incorporates a retention tab 62 towards the lower end of the slide right side wall 60. The retention tab 62 is pivotable about a hinge line extending substantially horizontally across the slide right side wall. As the sliding element 16 is moved upwards and out of the inner shell 14, the retention tab 62 slides into the cut out 50 in the sleeve right side wall 48 and is folded downwards about the hinge line. Any further movement of the sliding

element 16 in an upwards direction is prevented through the engagement of the retention tab 62 with the upper edge of the cut out 50.

The sliding element 16 also includes an engagement tab 53 connected to the slide bottom wall 52. As the sliding element 16 is moved upwards and out of the inner shell 14, the engagement tab 53 engages with engagement tab 49 on the inner shell 14, thereby preventing any further movement of sliding element 16 in an upwards direction relative to inner shell 14. The engagement tab 53, and cooperating engagement tab 49 on the inner shell 14, may be provided on any side of the sliding element 16 and inner shell 14. Alternatively, more than one engagement tab on sliding element 16, and corresponding engagement tab on inner shell 14, may be provided.

The retention tab 62 and cut out 50 may be provided in addition to, or as an alternative to, the engagement tabs 53 and 49.

In this second slide position, the retention tab 62 is folded downwards, as described above and the folded retention tab 62 is hooked over the lower edge of the cut out 50. This hooking of the retention tab 62 prevents the sliding element 16 from moving in a downwards direction until a positive downwards force is applied to release the retention tab 62 from the cut out 50. The sliding element 16 is therefore retained in an elevated position and will not be able to slide back into the inner shell 14 of its own accord. Once a positive force is applied to unhook the retention tab 62 from the cut out 50, the sliding element 16 moves back into the inner shell 14 and the retention tab 62 is folded back upwards to the original position.

The sliding element 16 further incorporates a front opening flap 64 extending from the top edge of the slide front wall 54, wherein the front opening flap 64 is pivotable about a fold line extending along that edge. Similarly, a back opening flap 65 extends from the top edge of the slide back wall 56, wherein the back opening flap 65 is pivotable about a fold line extending along that edge. The front 64 and back 65 opening flaps extend across the full width of the sliding element 16.

A front connection tab 66 extends from the top edge of the front opening flap 64 and similarly, a back connection tab 67 extends from the top edge of the back opening flap 65. The front 66 and back 67 connection tabs are pivotable about the top edges of the corresponding opening flaps about fold lines extending across those edges.

In the assembled container 10, the front connection tab 66 is adhered to the inner surface of the front wall 24 of the front housing portion 20, adjacent to the top edge of the front wall 24. Similarly, the back connection tab 67 is adhered to the inner surface of the back wall 32 of the back housing portion 21. The front 64 and back 65 opening flaps therefore connect the sliding element 16 and the housing portions 20, 21 and each opening flap is pivotable relative to both the sliding element 16 and the housing portion to which it is connected. In Figure 3, the container is shown with the connections tabs 66, 67 detached from the outer housing, for the purposes of illustration only.

In the closed position of the outer housing 12, as shown in Figure 1, the sliding element 16 is in a first slide position, fully inserted within the inner shell 14, with the slide bottom wall 52 supported on the bottom wall 22 of the outer housing. In this first slide position, the opening flaps 64, 65 lie between the bundle of smoking articles 18 and the outer housing 12, forming extensions of the slide front wall 54 and the slide back wall 56, respectively.

As the housing portions 20, 21 are moved apart from each other to move the outer housing towards the removal position shown in Figure 2, the opening flaps 64, 65 are also pulled outwards due to the connection between the opening flaps and the housing portions. This brings about an upwards movement of the sliding element 16, out of the inner shell 14.

In the removal position of the outer housing 12, as shown in Figure 2, the sliding element 16 is in a second slide position. In this second slide position, the sliding element 16 is partially elevated from the inner shell 14 such that the bundle of smoking articles 18 protrudes through the access opening formed between the housing portions 20, 21. In this position, the wrapper can be removed from the bundle and one or more of the smoking articles removed.

In the second slide position, the retention tab 62 of the sliding element 16 is engaged with the cut out 50 on the inner surface of the inner shell 14. Any further upwards movement of the sliding element 16 relative to the inner shell 14 is prevented due to the abutment of the free edge of the retention tab 62 with the edge of the cut out 50. This in turn prevents any further movement of the housing portions 20, 21 apart from each other. The engagement of the retention tab 62 with the cut out 50 additionally retains the sliding element in the second slide position until a positive force is applied to push the housing portions 20, 21 back to the closed position.

In order to close the container 10, the housing portions 20, 21 are pushed back towards each other. This brings about the downwards movement of the sliding element 16, back into the inner shell 14.

In Figure 4c described above, the slide left side wall 58 and the slide right side wall 60 are rectangular, to match the rectangular shapes of the sleeve left side wall 46 and the sleeve right side wall 48 respectively on the inner shell 14. However, in an alternative embodiment which is not illustrated, the slide left side wall 58 and the slide right side wall 60 are trapezoid. In that embodiment, the upper edge and the lower edge of the slide left side wall 58 remain parallel to one another, but the front edge and the back edge of the slide left side wall 58 are non-parallel. Similarly, the upper edge and the lower edge of the slide right side wall 60 remain parallel to one another, but the front edge and the back edge of the slide right side wall 60 are non parallel. The angle between the upper or lower edge of the slide side walls 58, 60 and the front or back edge of the slide side walls 58, 60 may be between about 85° and about 95°, more preferably between about 88° and about 93°. The two slide side walls 58, 60 are preferably the same shape and, preferably, the lower edge of the slide side walls 58, 60 is longer than the upper edge of the slide side walls 58, 60. When the laminar blank 116 is assembled, the sliding

element 16 has the shape of a trapezoidal prism. The sliding element 16 has a trapezoid longitudinal cross section cut substantially parallel to the slide side walls 58, 60. This trapezoid shape provides friction between the sliding element 16 and the inner shell 14 when the sliding element 16 is moved relative to the inner shell 14. This restricts movement of the sliding element 16 relative to the inner shell 14, and may make any other retention means (for example, retention tab 62 and cut out 50, or engagement tabs 53, 49) unnecessary. The particular angles between the upper or lower edges of the slide side walls and the front or back edges of the slide side walls may be selected as desired in order to create the desired friction between the sliding element 16 and the inner shell 14. In a further alternative arrangement, the slide front wall 54 and the slide back wall 56 are trapezoid, but the slide left side wall 58 and the slide right side wall 60 are rectangular. In that case, the sliding element 16 has a trapezoid longitudinal cross section cut substantially parallel to the slide front wall 54 and the slide back wall 56.

As set out above, the container 10 may be assembled from the laminar blanks shown in Figures 4a, 4b and 4c. The sliding element 16 is first assembled from the laminar blank 116 shown in Figure 4c and the wrapped bundle of smoking articles 18 is inserted into the sliding element 16 through the open end. The inner shell 14 is then be assembled from the laminar blank 114 shown in Figure 4b and the filled sliding element inserted into the inner shell 14 through the open end. The outer housing 12 is assembled from the laminar blank 112 shown in Figure 4a. The inner shell 14 and sliding element 16 are then mounted within the assembled outer housing 12 and the bottom wall 40 of the inner shell 14 is adhered to the bottom wall panel 22 of the outer housing 12 using a suitable adhesive. The front 66 and back 67 connection tabs are finally adhered to the inner surfaces of the corresponding housing portions 20, 21, as described above. The housing portions 20, 21 are closed together and the container 10 may be overwrapped in the conventional manner with a transparent outer wrapper.

CLAIMS

1. A container for consumer goods comprising:

an outer housing comprising a first housing portion pivotable about a first hinge line and
5 an opposed, second housing portion pivotable about a second hinge line, wherein the first and
second housing portions are moveable relative to each other between a closed position in which
the housing portions are closed and a removal position in which the housing portions are apart
and an access opening is provided between the housing portions;

an inner shell fixedly mounted within the outer housing; and

10 a sliding element for housing the consumer goods, wherein the sliding element is
mounted within the inner shell,

wherein the sliding element is connected to the outer housing such that movement of the
first and second housing portions between the closed position and the removal position brings
about sliding movement of the sliding element relative to the inner shell between a first slide
15 position in which the sliding element is within the inner shell and the consumer goods are
enclosed within the outer housing, and a second slide position in which the consumer goods at
least partially protrude from the inner shell and are at least partially accessible through the
access opening between the housing portions.

20 2. A container according to claim 1 wherein the sliding element is connected to the outer
housing by means of at least one opening flap connecting a free edge of the sliding element to
a wall of the first or second housing portion, wherein the at least one opening flap is hinged
connected to the sliding element and to the corresponding housing portion.

25 3. A container according to claim 2 wherein the at least one opening flap is integrally
formed with the sliding element.

4. A container according to claim 2 or 3 wherein the at least one opening flap is adhered to
an inner surface of the corresponding housing portion, proximate the top wall of the outer
30 housing.

5. A container according to any of claims 2 to 4 wherein the sliding element is connected to
the outer housing by means of first and second opposed opening flaps extending from opposed
free edges of the sliding element and connected to the first and second housing portions,
35 respectively.

6. A container according to any preceding claim wherein the sliding element is adapted such that in the second slide position, the protruding portion of the consumer goods is exposed on all sides.

5 7. A container according to any preceding claim wherein the first and second hinge lines about which the first and second housing portions are pivotable extend across opposed edges of the bottom wall of the outer housing.

8. A container according to any preceding claim wherein in the closed position of the outer
10 housing, the second housing portion is at least partially enclosed within the first housing portion.

9. A container according to any preceding claim wherein the inner shell is affixed to the bottom wall of the outer housing.

15 10. A container according to any preceding claim further comprising retention means for preventing removal of the sliding element from the inner shell.

11. A container according to any preceding claim further comprising retention means for retaining the sliding element in the second slide position.

20

12. A container according to any preceding claim further comprising locking means for retaining the outer housing in the closed position.

13. A container according to any preceding claim wherein a longitudinal cross sectional
25 shape of the inner shell is substantially rectangular and a longitudinal cross sectional shape of the sliding element, mounted within the inner shell, is substantially trapezoid.

14. A container according to any preceding claim wherein a plurality of smoking articles are housed within the sliding element.

30

15. A method of accessing consumer goods from a container according to any preceding claim, the method comprising the steps of:

moving the first and second housing portions of the outer housing away from each other, from the closed position to the removal position, thereby simultaneously moving the sliding
35 element from the first slide position to the second slide position such that the consumer goods are at least partially protruding from inner shell and are at least partially accessible through the access opening; and

moving the first and second housing portions of the outer housing towards each other from the removal position to the closed position, thereby simultaneously moving the sliding element from the second slide position to the first slide position, such that unused consumer goods are returned to the inside of the container.

1/3

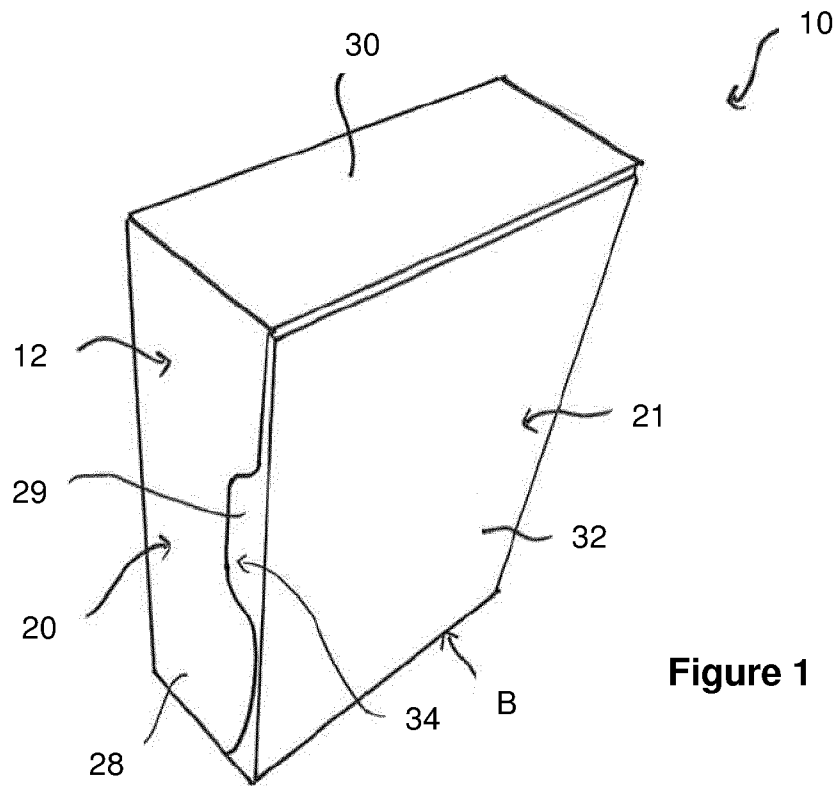


Figure 1

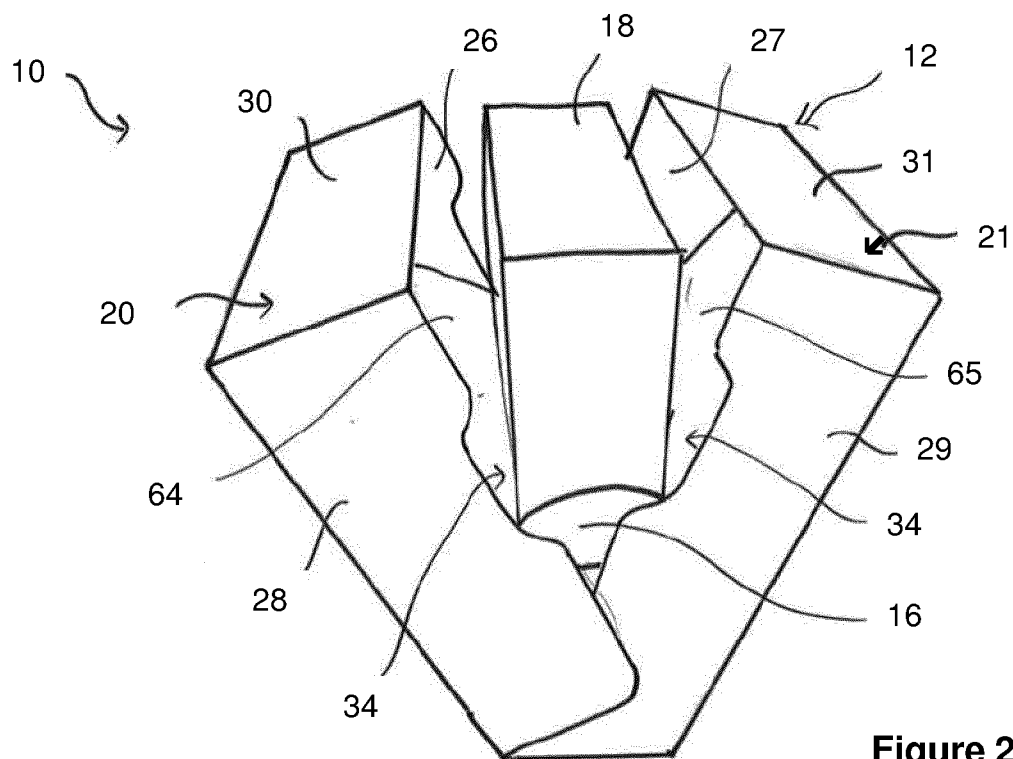


Figure 2

2/3

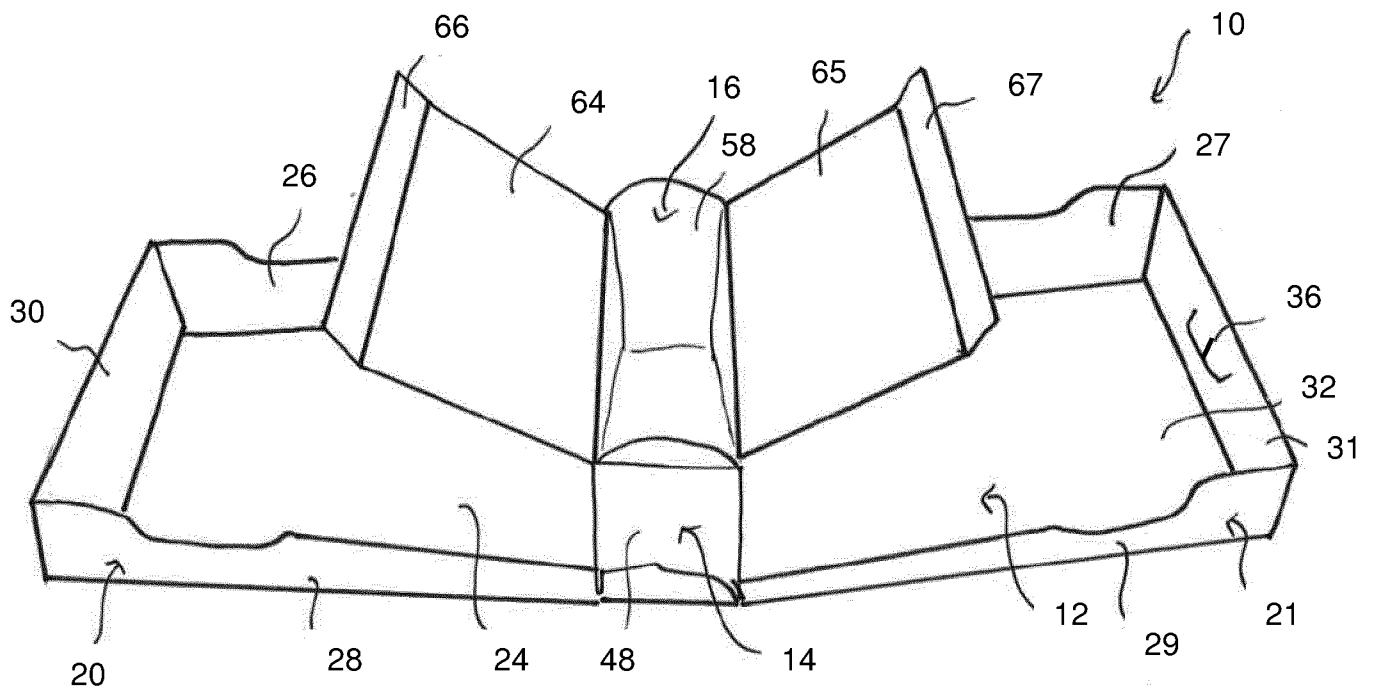


Figure 3

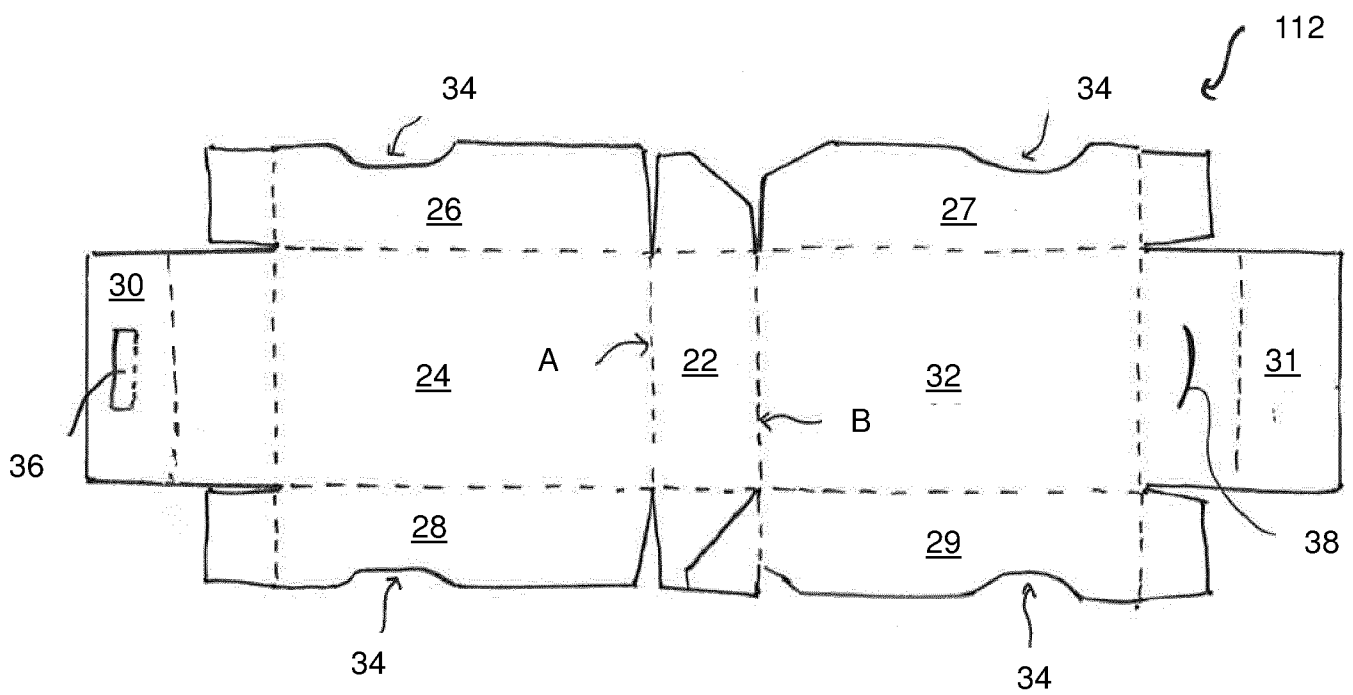


Figure 4a

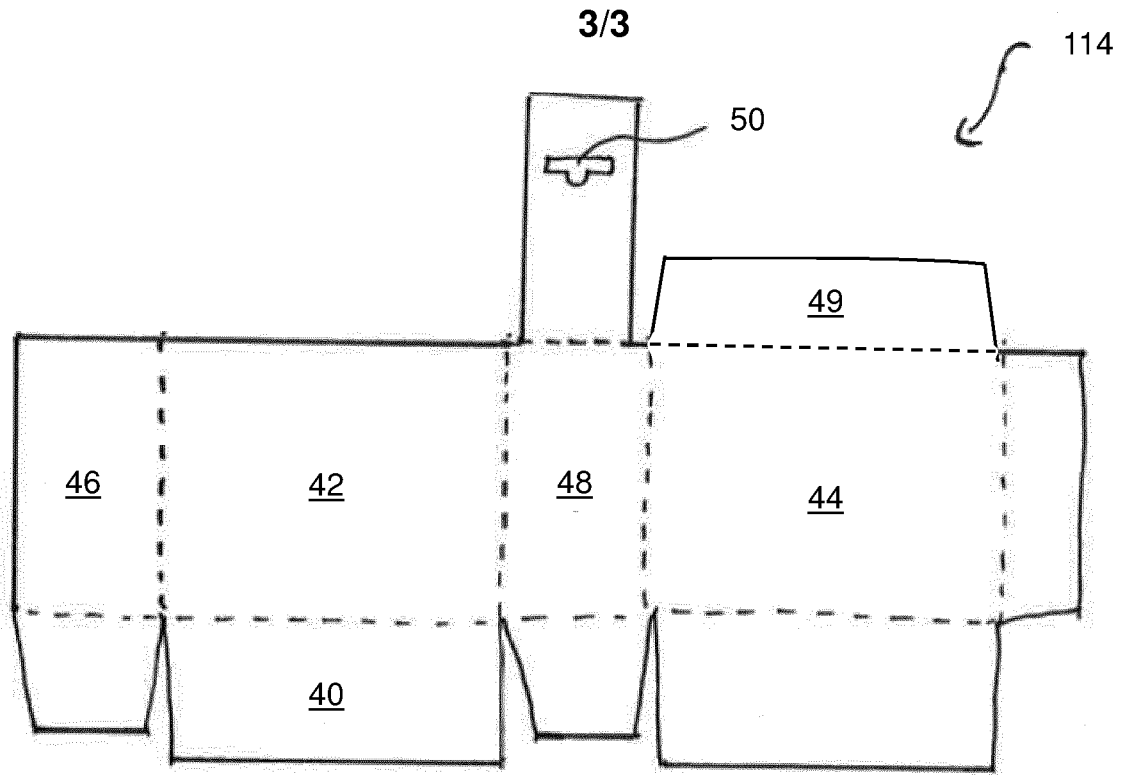


Figure 4b

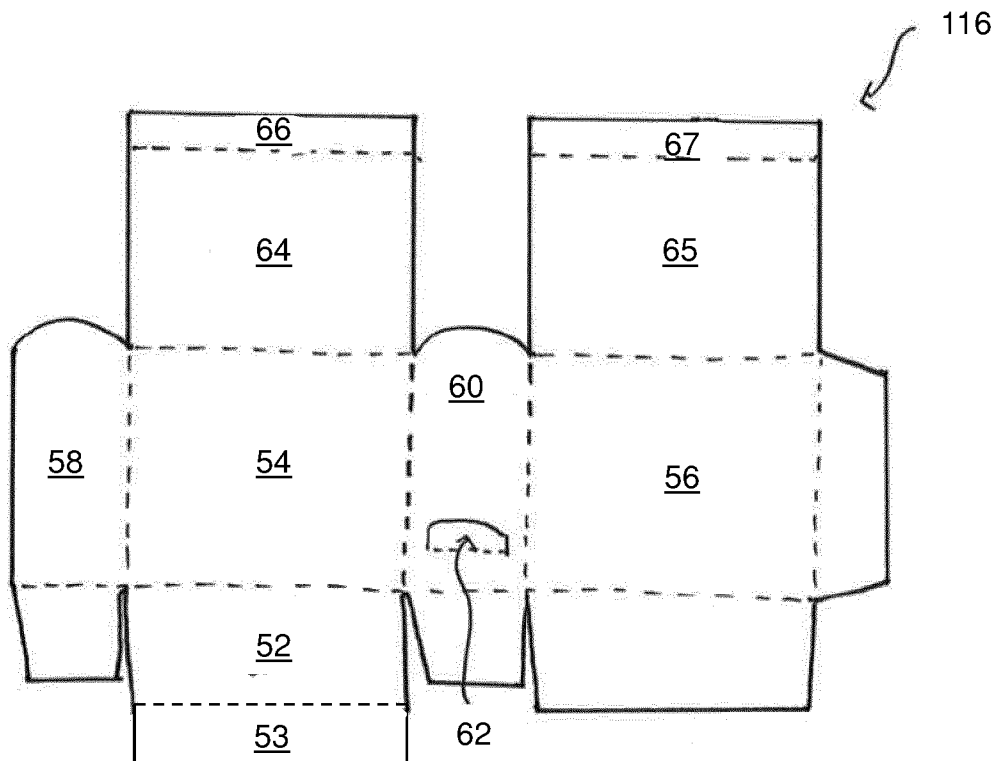


Figure 4c

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/EP2013/054998

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
INV. B65D5/38 B65D85/10 B65D5/72
ADD.

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)
B65D

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 practicable, search terms used)

EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 4 588 081 A (NEWSOME REGINALD W [US] ET AL) 13 May 1986 (1986-05-13) column 2, line 37 - column 5, line 33; figures 9, 10 -----	1-15
A	US 647 582 A (SAYERS THOMAS [GB]) 17 April 1900 (1900-04-17) page 1, lines 52-97; figure 1 -----	1-15
A	DE 43 15 345 A1 (SCHWIEGER BERND [DE]) 1 December 1994 (1994-12-01) column 4, line 3 - column 5, line 65; figure 1 -----	1-15



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

* 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 application or patent 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

Date of the actual completion of the international search

11 July 2013

Date of mailing of the international search report

19/07/2013

Name and mailing address of the ISA/

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040,
Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Cazacu, Corneliu

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/EP2013/054998

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 4588081	A	13-05-1986	DE 3679572 D1 11-07-1991 EP 0193365 A2 03-09-1986 US 4588081 A 13-05-1986
US 647582	A	17-04-1900	NONE
DE 4315345	A1	01-12-1994	AU 6563294 A 12-12-1994 DE 4315345 A1 01-12-1994 WO 9426625 A1 24-11-1994