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EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE
M U N I C H

Ihr Zeichen *Your Ref.*: --
Unser Zeichen *Our Ref.*: 43478-PCT

December 4, 2019

PCT Direct / informal comments

In the following, we will explain the amendments of the description of the present PCT application with respect to the priority application EP 18 210 859.7. Furthermore, we will explain the differences between the present PCT application and the prior art cited in the extended European search report transmitted with Communication dated May 21, 2019. We enclose

- (1) marked-up copy of the claims of the present PCT application in comparison with the European priority application and
- (2) copy of the extended European search report of the European priority application.

1. AMENDMENTS

In comparison with the European priority application EP 18 210 859.7, the subject-matter of dependent claims 6 and 7 has been incorporated into claim 1.

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Registergericht
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Further, an obvious error has been corrected in lines 16 to 18 on page 11 of the priority application that the “*rounded upstream end 14*” is in fact the “*rounded upstream end 28*”. This amendment should overcome the corresponding objection (item 3.4) raised in the extended European search report.

2. PATENTABILITY

In the extended European search report, the Examiner is of the opinion that claim 7 of the priority application (now introduced into claim 1) is not inventive in light of D1 in combination with documents D3 to D5. We respectfully disagree to this assessment. In more detail, the skilled person would find no hint in D1 to incorporate a Venturi element into the cylindrical element (20) of D1. D1 rather teaches away, as such cylindrical element (20) is used as filter element (page 6, line 35 to page 7, line 3 of D1). In fact, the main technical purpose of the attachable element (303, 403) seems to be the adjustment of length of the filter of the smoking article (302) (page 15, lines 27 to 32 of D1).

Furthermore, while prior art documents D3 to D5 show structures resembling a Venturi element, they do not describe any functional or structural properties of such structures in detail. Accordingly, it may be argued that the skilled person would find no hint in D3 to D5 to use such structure in the attachable unit (303, 403) of D1.

None of the further prior art documents of the extended European search report are more pertinent than D1. Particularly, D2 has a different structure and further does not disclose or suggest the new features of claim 1 of the present application.

Consequently, the new independent claims of the present application are new and inventive in light of the cited prior art documents of the extended European search report.

3. REQUESTS

It is assumed that the amended application overcomes the objections raised in the Written Opinion of the European Patent Office. Hence, it is assumed that the application is patentable and thus, a positive International Search Report is respectfully requested.



Felix Siepmann
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Enclosures

- marked-up copy of the claims of the present PCT application in comparison with the European priority application
- copy of the extended European search report of the European priority application

CLAIMS

1. Mouthpiece for attachment to a hollow tubular filter portion of an aerosol-generating article, wherein the mouthpiece comprises an inner tubular section having a minimum outer diameter which is smaller than an inner diameter of the hollow tubular filter portion of the aerosol-generating article, and wherein the mouthpiece comprises an outer tubular section having a maximum inner diameter which is larger than an outer diameter of the aerosol-generating article wherein the mouthpiece comprises a central airflow channel arranged along the longitudinal axis of the mouthpiece, wherein the airflow channel comprises a Venturi portion, wherein the Venturi portion comprises an inlet portion, an optional central portion and an outlet portion, wherein the inlet portion is configured converging in a downstream direction and the outlet portion is configured diverging in a downstream direction.

2. Mouthpiece according to claim 1, wherein the mouthpiece comprises a stop arranged connecting the inner tubular section and the outer tubular section.

3. Mouthpiece according to claim 2, wherein the stop is configured to enable a maximum insertion of the inner tubular section of the mouthpiece into the hollow tubular filter portion of the aerosol-generating article of 6 millimeters, preferably 5 millimeters, more preferably around 4 millimeters.

4. Mouthpiece according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the inner tubular section has an outer diameter of between 3 millimeters and 5 millimeters, preferably between 3.5 millimeters and 4.5 millimeters, more preferably around 4 millimeters.

5. Mouthpiece according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the outer tubular section has an inner diameter of between 5 millimeters and 8 millimeters, preferably between 5.5 millimeters and 7 millimeters, more preferably around 6.3 millimeters.

~~6. Mouthpiece according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the mouthpiece comprises a central airflow channel arranged along the longitudinal axis of the mouthpiece.~~

~~7. Mouthpiece according to claim 6, wherein the airflow channel comprises a Venturi portion, wherein the Venturi portion comprises an inlet portion, an optional central portion and an outlet portion, wherein the inlet portion is configured converging in a~~

~~downstream direction and the outlet portion is configured diverging in a downstream direction.~~

5 ~~8.6.~~ Mouthpiece according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the inner tubular section comprises an upstream end, and wherein the outer circumference of the upstream end of the inner tubular section is rounded.

10 ~~9.7.~~ Mouthpiece according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the outer tubular section comprises an upstream end, and wherein the inner circumference of the upstream end of the outer tubular section is tapered.

15 ~~10.8.~~ Mouthpiece according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the outer circumference of the inner tubular section is conical, and wherein the outer diameter of the inner tubular section increases towards a downstream direction.

~~11.9.~~ Mouthpiece according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the inner circumference of the outer tubular section is conical, and wherein the inner diameter of the outer tubular section decreases towards a downstream direction.

20 ~~12.10.~~ Mouthpiece according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the inner tubular section and the outer tubular section of the mouthpiece are configured to form a tubular slot between the inner tubular section and the outer tubular section, and wherein the tubular slot is configured to securely receive and hold the hollow tubular filter portion of the aerosol-generating article.

25 ~~13.11.~~ Mouthpiece according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the mouthpiece comprises a hinge section for attachment of the mouthpiece to an aerosol-generating device.

30 ~~14.12.~~ System comprising a mouthpiece according to any one of claims 1 to ~~13-11~~ and an aerosol-generating article, wherein the aerosol-generating article comprises a substrate portion containing aerosol-forming substrate and a hollow tubular filter portion, wherein a minimum outer diameter of the inner tubular section of the mouthpiece is smaller than an inner diameter of the hollow tubular filter portion of the aerosol-generating article,
35 and wherein a maximum inner diameter of the outer tubular section of the mouthpiece is larger than an outer diameter of the aerosol-generating article.

~~15.13.~~ Method for attaching a mouthpiece to a hollow tubular filter portion of an aerosol-generating article, wherein the method comprises:

- i. providing a mouthpiece according to any one of claims 1 to ~~1311~~,
- ii. providing the aerosol-generating article comprising a substrate portion
5 containing aerosol-forming substrate and the hollow tubular filter portion,
- iii. attaching the mouthpiece to the hollow tubular filter portion of the aerosol-generating article by inserting the inner tubular section of the mouthpiece into the hollow tubular filter portion of the aerosol-generating article.