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(54) **MULTIPACK**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

The invention relates to a multipack having a plurality of preferably cuboidal packs (13), in particular cigarette packs, which are partially surrounded by an outer wrapper (14) preferably made of transparent material such as film, wherein the packs (13) are to be provided, in particular in the region of base side surfaces (18) thereof, with tax markings (25), and wherein the outer wrapper (14) does not extend over regions of the packs (13) in which the tax markings (25) are to be applied to corresponding surfaces of the packs (13), in particular not or substantially not in the region of a base side (19) of the multipack (10), and in that the packs (13) are secured by securing means against falling out of the multipack (10) in the region of that side surface of the multipack (10) that is not or is substantially not enclosed by the outer wrapper (14).

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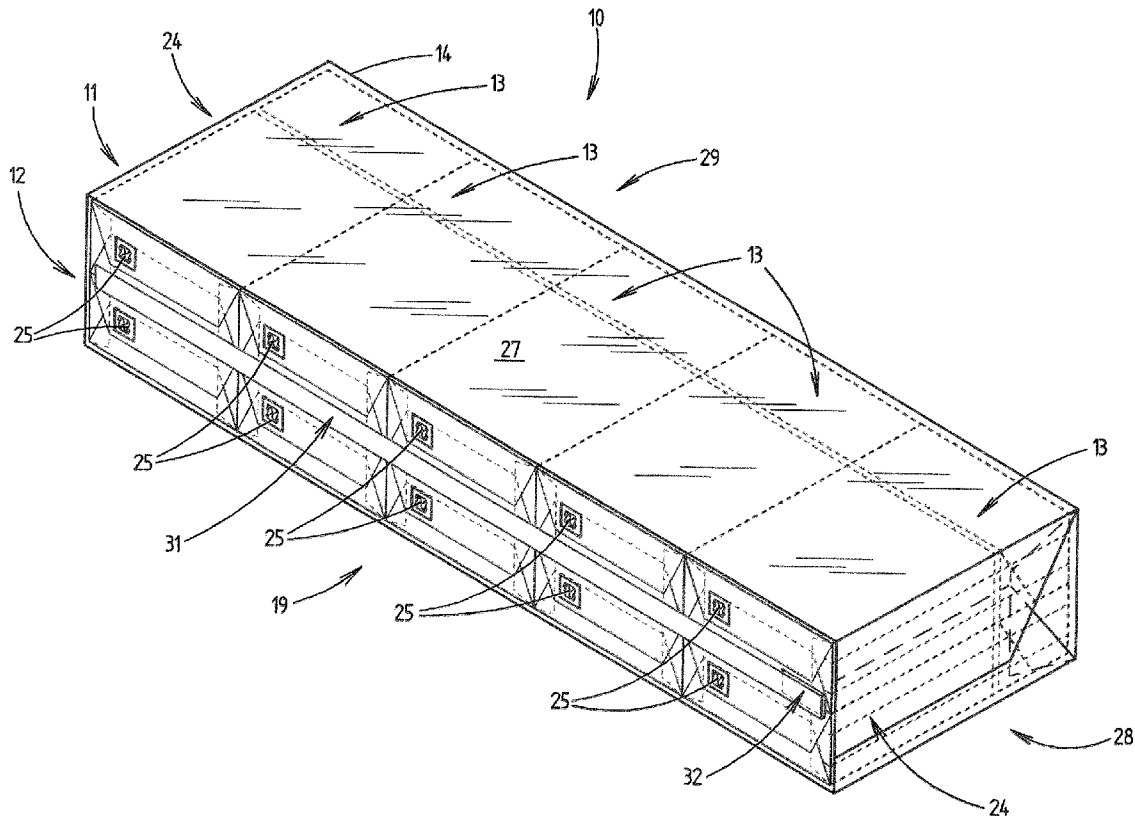
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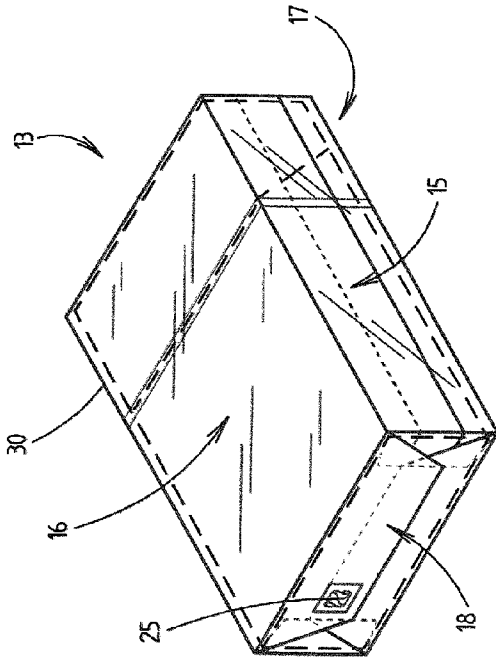


Fig. 2

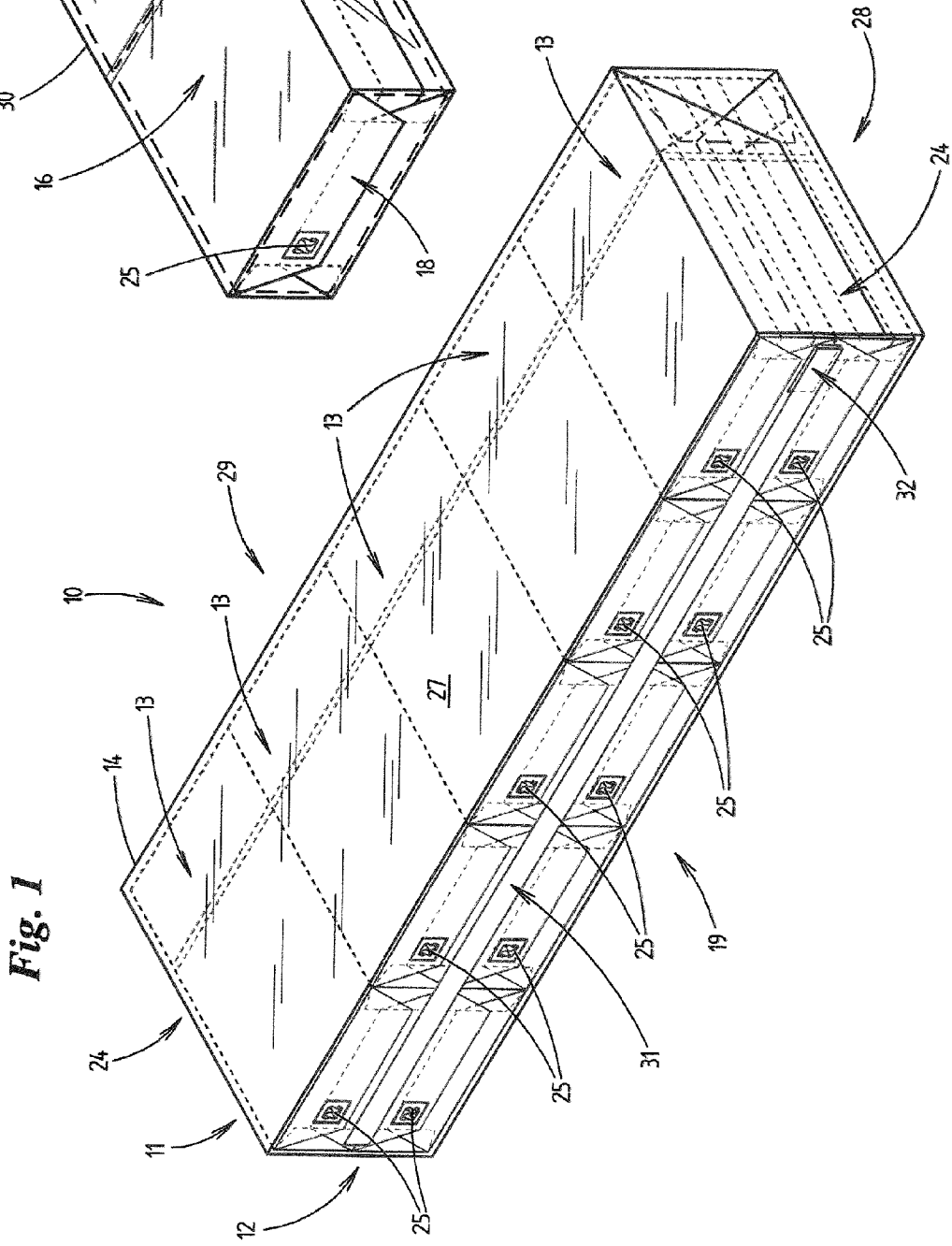


Fig. 1

Fig. 4

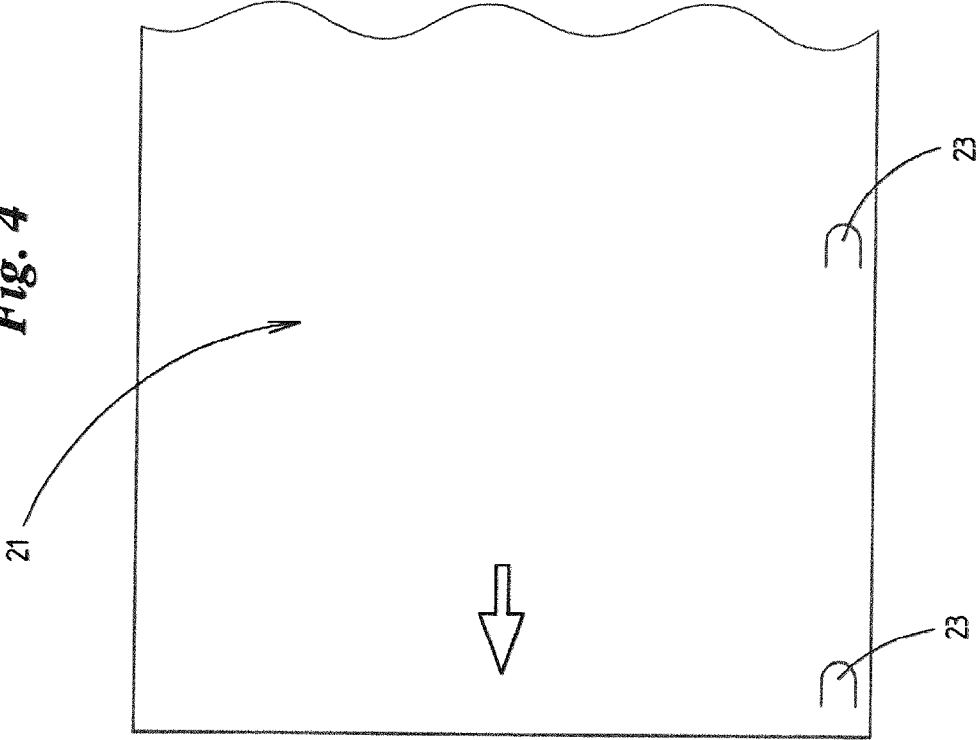


Fig. 3

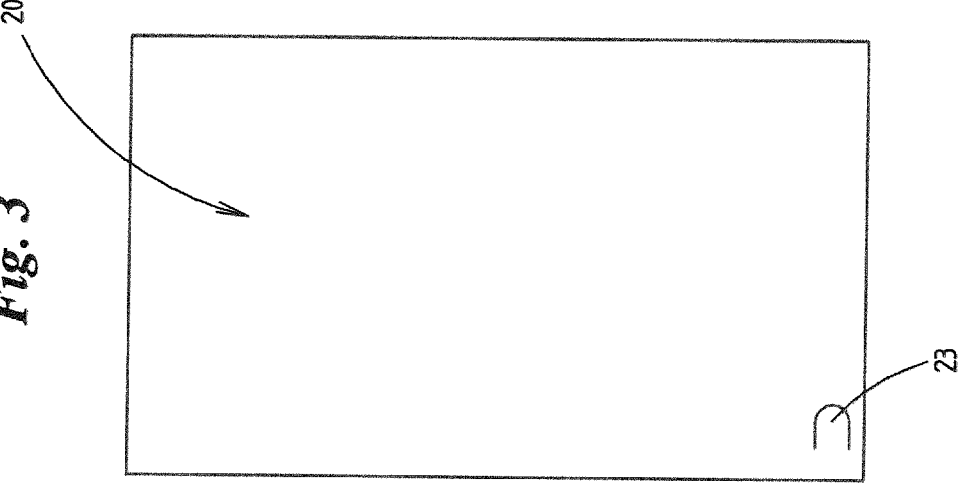
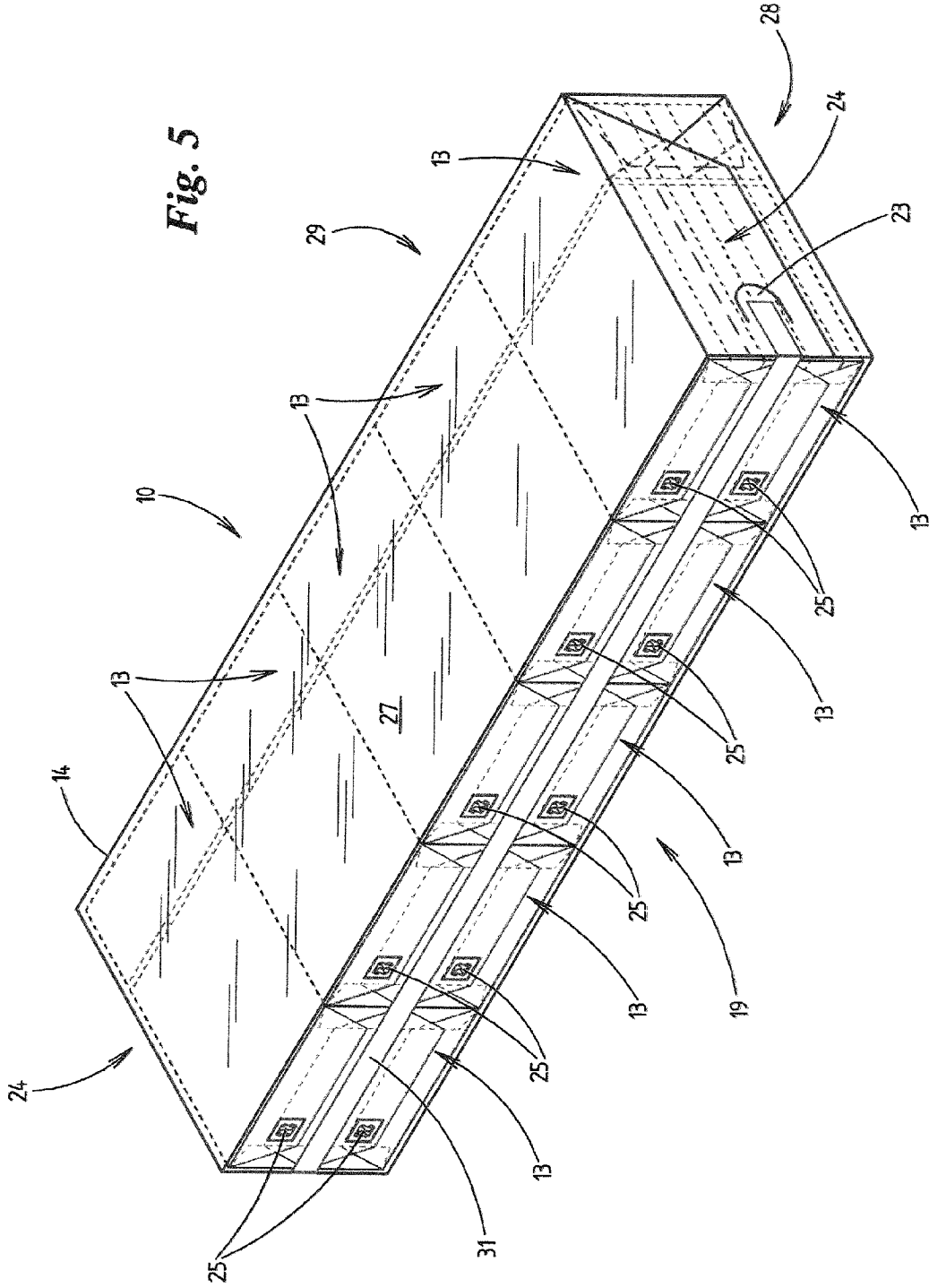


Fig. 5



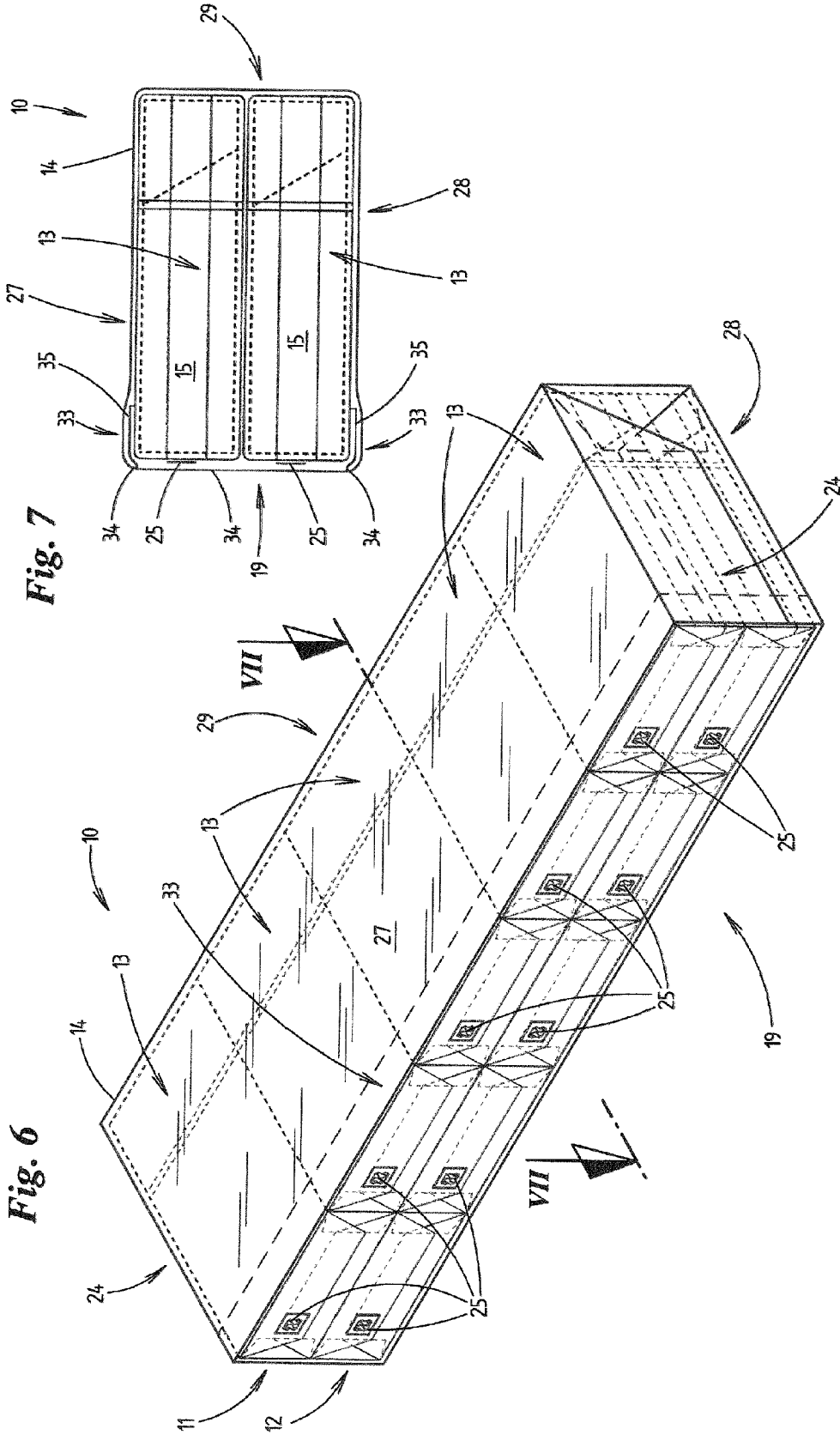
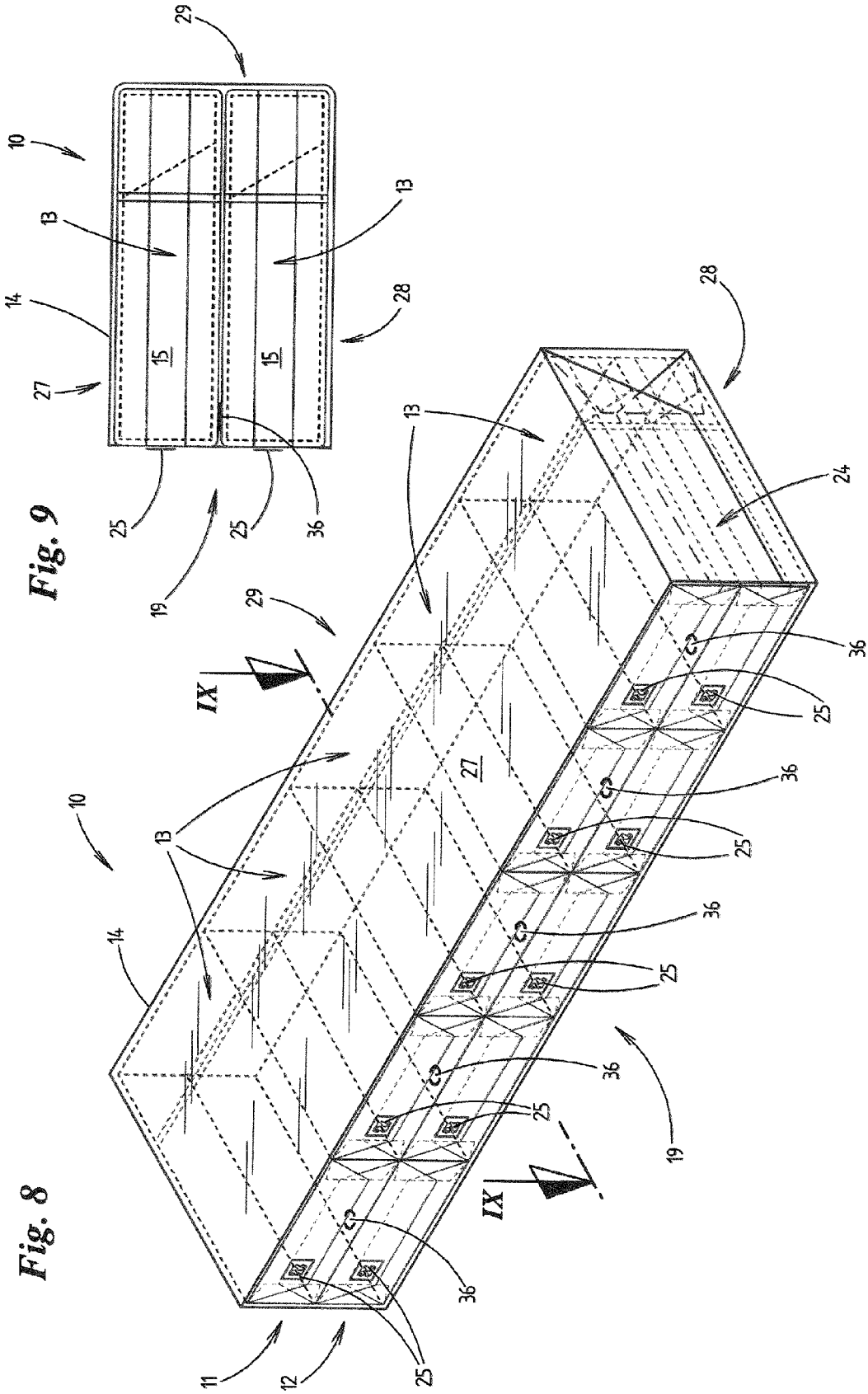


Fig. 6

Fig. 7



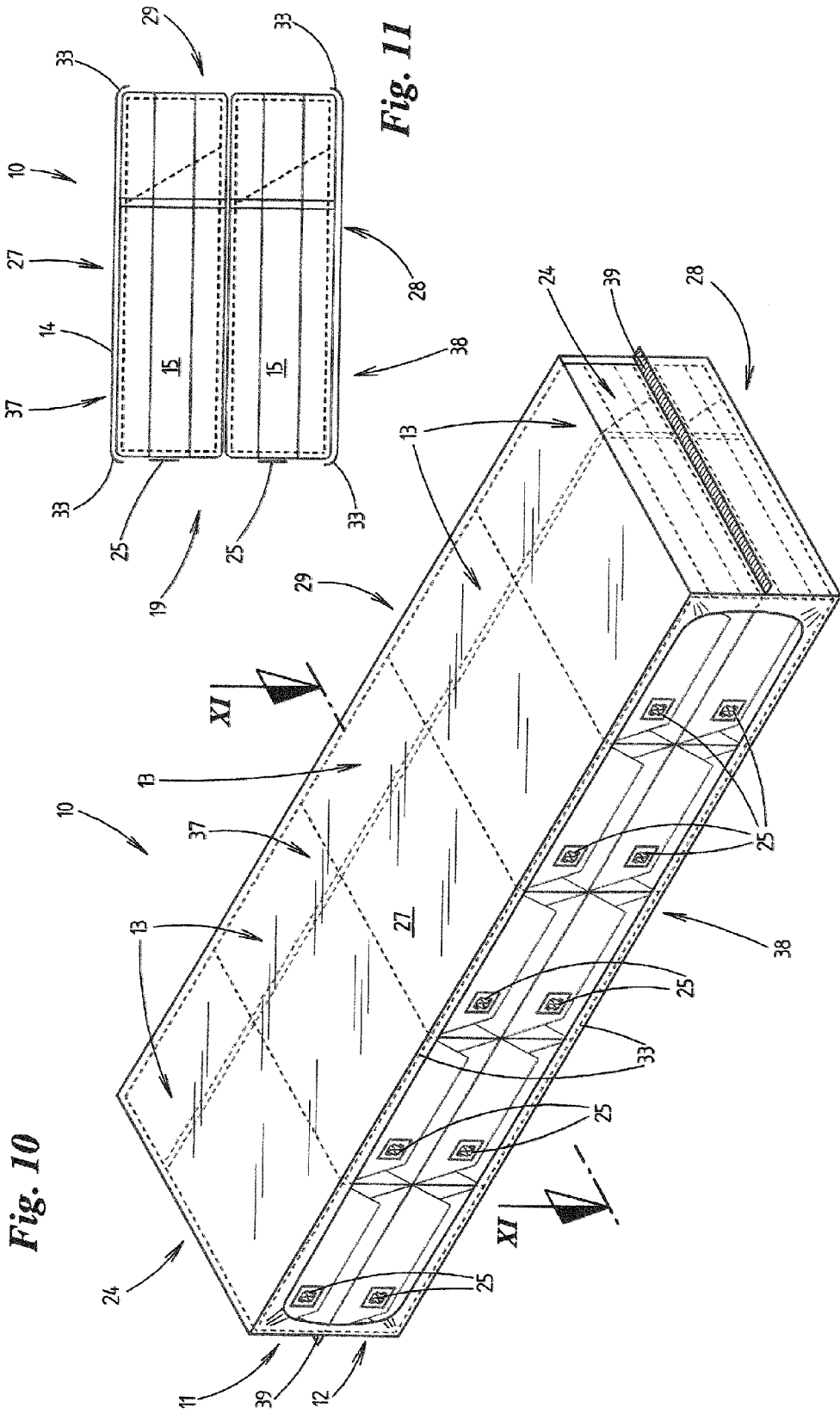


Fig. 13

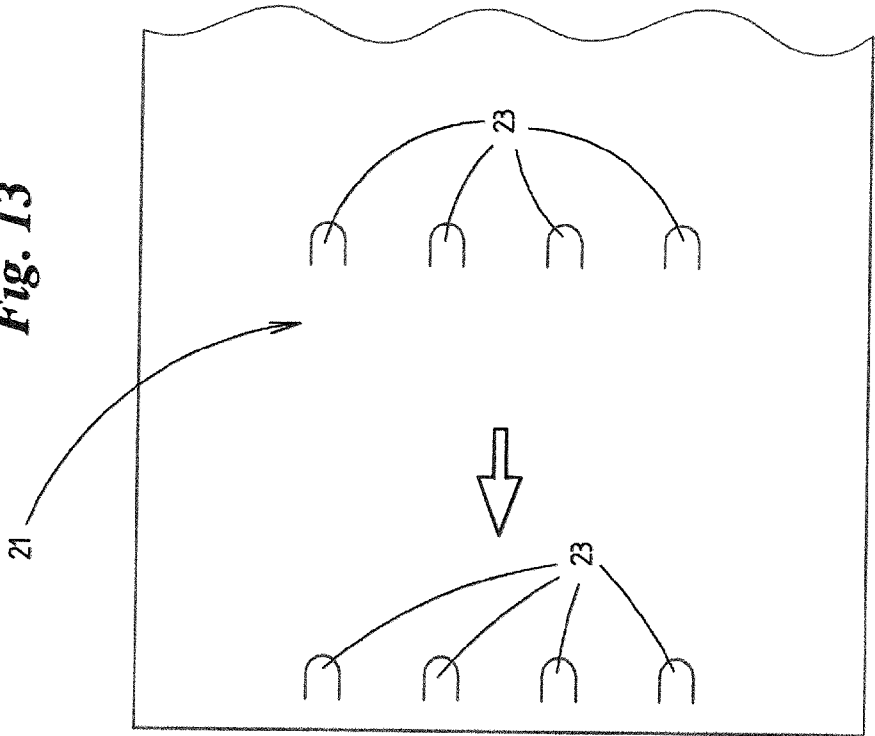


Fig. 12

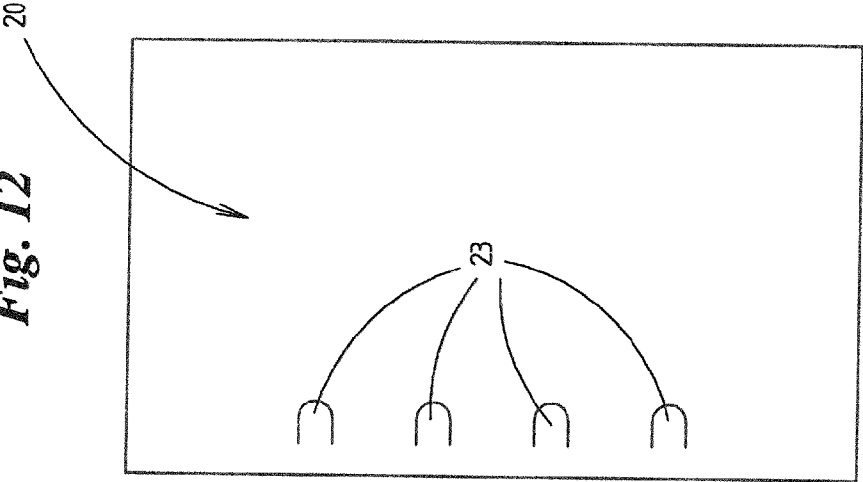
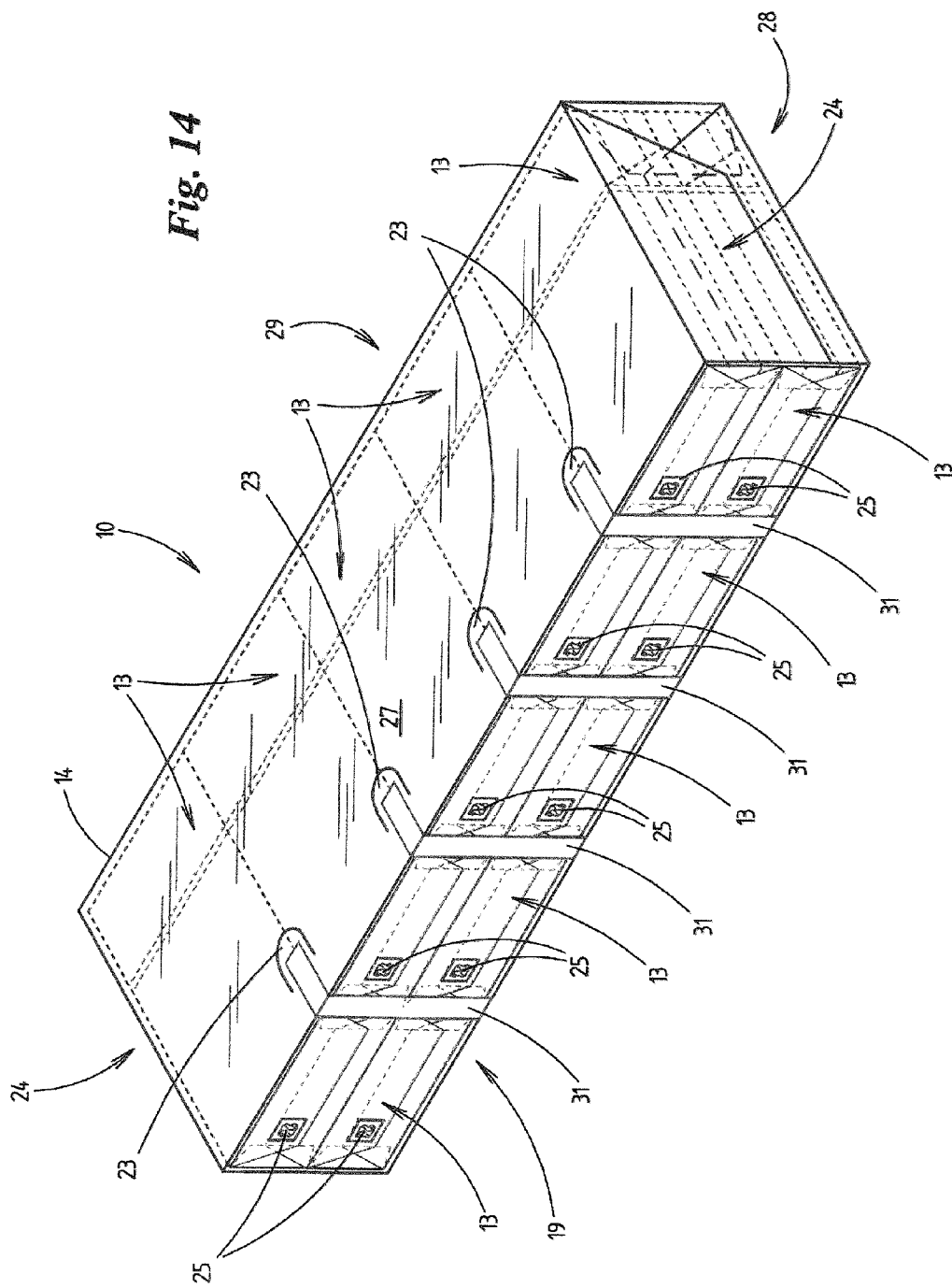


Fig. 14



MULTIPACK

[0001] The invention relates to a multipack having a plurality of preferably cuboidal packs, in particular cigarette packs, which are partially surrounded by an outer wrapper preferably made of transparent material such as film, wherein the packs are to be provided, in particular in the region of base side surfaces thereof, with tax markings, according to the preamble of claim 1.

[0002] For easier handling during transport, cigarette packs are combined readily into multipacks. Such multipacks made of cigarette packs are also known as cigarette multipacks. The cigarette multipacks can be sold as such or be broken up by the retailer in order to sell the individual cigarette packs.

[0003] In many countries, it is mandatory for reasons of tax revenue or customs that tax markings be applied to the cigarette packs. The tax markings can be for example in the form of revenue stamps or (tax) seals. It is also mandatory as a rule for the tax markings to be connected fixedly to the cigarette packs in order to prevent misuse.

[0004] While in many countries, these tax markings are already applied during the production of the cigarette packs, there are also countries in which it is possible for the tax markings to be applied at a later point in time. An example which can be mentioned is the USA, in which cigarette packs are taxed differently depending on the state. The tax markings are thus only applied shortly before the packs are put onto the market in the respective state. It has therefore been usual hitherto to design multipacks containing cigarette packs in such a way that they can be opened for the application of the tax markings and then be closed again. However, such a procedure is very time-consuming and costly. Furthermore, the outer wrapper of multipacks in the prior art consists as a rule of cardboard or paper. However, for cost reasons, it would be advantageous to produce the multipack with a film outer wrapper, i.e. as what is known as a "naked wrap". However, such outer wrappers cannot be closed again after opening, for which reason the use of such an outer wrapper in countries such as the USA is ruled out.

[0005] On this basis, it is the object of the present invention to further develop multipacks of the type mentioned at the beginning, in particular with regard to more economical application of tax markings to cigarette packs that are in the multipack.

[0006] In order to achieve this object, there is provided a multipack having the features of claim 1. According thereto, a particular feature is that the outer wrapper does not extend over regions of the packs in which the tax markings are to be applied to corresponding surfaces of the packs, in particular not or substantially not in the region of a base side of the multipack, and that the packs are secured by securing means against falling out of the multipack in the region of that side surface of the multipack that is not or is substantially not enclosed by the outer wrapper.

[0007] An advantage of this procedure is that the cigarette packs are exposed for the application of the tax markings. The tax markings do not already have to be applied during wrapping in the outer wrapper. Nevertheless, the cigarette packs are held securely in the multipack, even when use is made of a (thin) film as the material for the outer wrapper.

[0008] As securing means, the packs can be connected together by a material strip made of packaging material, in particular such that the material strip covers peripheral regions of packs of adjacent rows and is fastened to the packs, preferably such that a material strip extends in the longitudi-

nal direction along the base side, specifically between two adjacent rows of packs, and covers the peripheral regions thereof and is connected to the packs or the wrappers thereof.

[0009] Furthermore, it is possible as securing means for the packs to be arranged in a plurality of rows within the multipack, and for mutually opposite packs of adjacent rows to be connected together, in particular by adhesive bonding.

[0010] It is also conceivable for a blank for the outer wrapper, as securing means, to be formed in a double layer at least in a peripheral region, preferably in a manner running around the side surface of the multipack, in the region of which the pack surfaces provided with the tax markings are located.

[0011] Furthermore, it is possible for a blank for the outer wrapper, as securing means, to extend by way of an encircling peripheral region slightly into the side surface of the multipack, in the region of which the pack surfaces to be provided with the tax markings are located.

[0012] The above-described solutions can be used on their own or in meaningful combination with one another.

[0013] Preferred further developments can furthermore be found in the dependent claims and the description.

[0014] Preferred exemplary embodiments of the invention are described in the following text on the basis of the drawing, in which:

[0015] FIG. 1 shows a three-dimensional illustration of a first exemplary embodiment of a multipack for cigarettes,

[0016] FIG. 2 shows a three-dimensional illustration of a cigarette pack,

[0017] FIG. 3 shows a blank for an outer wrapper of a multipack,

[0018] FIG. 4 shows a material web for producing blanks according to FIG. 3,

[0019] FIG. 5 shows a three-dimensional illustration of a second exemplary embodiment of a multipack for cigarettes,

[0020] FIG. 6 shows a three-dimensional illustration of a third exemplary embodiment of a multipack for cigarettes,

[0021] FIG. 7 shows a vertical section through the multipack according to FIG. 6 along section line VII-VII in FIG. 6,

[0022] FIG. 8 shows a three-dimensional illustration of a fourth exemplary embodiment of a multipack for cigarettes,

[0023] FIG. 9 shows a vertical section through the multipack according to FIG. 8 along section line IX-IX in FIG. 8,

[0024] FIG. 10 shows a three-dimensional illustration of a fifth exemplary embodiment of a multipack for cigarettes,

[0025] FIG. 11 shows a vertical section through the multipack according to FIG. 10 along section line XI-XI in FIG. 10,

[0026] FIG. 12 shows a blank for an outer wrapper of a sixth exemplary embodiment of a multipack,

[0027] FIG. 13 shows a material web for producing blanks according to FIG. 12, and

[0028] FIG. 14 shows a three-dimensional illustration of a multipack for cigarettes which is made from a blank according to FIG. 12.

[0029] The invention is explained on the basis of a multipack 10 in the form of a cigarette multipack having two rows 11, 12 of cigarette packs 13 that are arranged one above the other. An outer wrapper 14 made of a transparent plastics film, for example of polypropylene, keeps the cigarette packs 13 in the intended form. The outer wrapper 14 directly encloses the group of cigarette packs 13.

[0030] As FIG. 1 shows, the cigarette packs 13 within one row 11, 12 adjoin one another by way of narrow side surfaces 15. Cigarette packs 13 of adjacent rows 11, 12 adjoin one

another by way of large-format front side surfaces 16 and rear side surfaces 17, respectively. Within the multipack 10, all the cigarette packs 13 are arranged in the same relative position, such that all the base side surfaces 18 are located in a common plane or pack side of the multipack 10. In the present case, this is a base side 19 of the multipack 10.

[0031] The outer wrapper 14 consists of a blank 20 which is severed from a continuous material web 21. During the production of the blanks 20, a grip tab 23 can be formed by a U-shaped punch cut, said grip tab 23 serving to open the outer wrapper 14 in certain exemplary embodiments.

[0032] The blank 20 for the outer wrapper 14 can consist for example of polypropylene and is conventionally wrapped around the formation composed of cigarette packs 13. In the region of end sides 24 of the outer wrapper 14, folding tabs of the blank 20 are usually folded in the manner of an envelope and placed one above another and connected together.

[0033] A special feature of the multipack 10 or of the blank 20 is that it is provided in a particular manner for the application of tax markings 25 in the region of the base side 19 of the multipack 10. The blank 20 is dimensioned such that the base side surfaces 18 of the cigarette packs 13 are at least exposed to such an extent that the tax markings 25 can be applied to the cigarette packs 13. This can take place for example as in some exemplary embodiments of the invention such that the base side 19 is completely exposed and is not covered by the blank 20 or the outer wrapper 14, or as in other cases, in which the outer wrapper 14 extends slightly, in particular by way of a preferably encircling peripheral region 33, into the base side 19 of the multipack. In such a case, the base side 19 is substantially not covered by the outer wrapper 14 within the meaning of the present invention.

[0034] According to a first exemplary embodiment of the invention according to FIGS. 1 and 2, the blank 20 or the outer wrapper 14 is formed such that it encloses the group of cigarette packs 13 as pack contents on five sides of the multipack, specifically in the region of opposite end sides 24, a large-area front side 27, a rear side 28 opposite the front side, and also a lid side 29 opposite the base side 19.

[0035] The base side 19 is not covered by the outer wrapper 14, and so the base side surfaces 18 of the cigarette packs 13 are exposed. In the region of the base side surfaces 18, tax markings 25 can be applied during the production of the multipack 10 or preferably at a later point in time.

[0036] The tax markings 25 can, as in all exemplary embodiments, be in the form of seals, labels, stamps or the like and be fastened in an appropriate manner to the cigarette packs 13.

[0037] Since cigarette packs 13 usually have a film pack wrapper 30, the tax marking 25 can be fastened to the pack wrapper 30 by sealing.

[0038] As securing means, use is made in the first exemplary embodiment of a material strip 31 which is connected to all of the cigarette packs 13. For this purpose, the material strip 31 extends in the longitudinal direction of the multipack 10, specifically in the region between the two rows 11, 12 of cigarette packs 13, the material strip 31 being dimensioned such that it covers the peripheral regions of the cigarette packs 13 of both rows 11, 12, in order that it can be connected securely thereto.

[0039] Preferably, the material strip 31 consists of a pack-aging material. It is conceivable for it to be produced both from paper or from (thin) cardboard. However, the material

strip 31 is preferably produced from a film material, as is known in the production of tear-open strips for multipacks 10.

[0040] The material strip 31 is connected fixedly to the cigarette packs 13. This can be done, depending on the material of the material strip 31, by adhesive bonding, sealing or the like.

[0041] A particular feature of the material strip 31 is that it extends along virtually the entire length of the base side 19 and is folded or folded over in the region of a free end so as to form a grip tab 32. In the region of the grip tab 32, the material strip 31 is not fully connected to the multipack 10 so that the free end, forming the grip tab 32, of the material strip 31 can be grasped and the multipack 10 can be opened.

[0042] The second exemplary embodiment according to FIGS. 3 to 5 differs from the first exemplary embodiment according to FIGS. 1 and 2 in that the material strip 31 is guided into the region of end sides 24 of the multipack. It is conceivable for the material strip to extend, as shown, into both adjacent end sides 24. However, it is also conceivable for the material strip 31 to extend only into one end side 24 and to end at a short distance from the other end side 24.

[0043] In addition, the blank 20 for the outer wrapper 14 has a punched portion in the region of the free ends of the material strip 31, said punched portion serving as a grip tab 23 for the material strip 31. By grasping the grip tab 23 in the blank 20, the corresponding free end of the material strip 31 can be grasped in order to release the multipack 10.

[0044] The material strip 31 can, as in the first exemplary embodiment, be connected to the cigarette packs 13 and/or (only) to the blank 20 in the region of the end sides 24 of the multipack 10.

[0045] The exemplary embodiment according to FIGS. 6 and 7 differs from the previous exemplary embodiments in that a material strip as securing means has been dispensed with. Instead, a peripheral region 33, surrounding the base side 19, of the outer wrapper 14 or of the blank is formed in a multi-layer manner. In the present case, this multi-layer peripheral region 33 is formed in a double layer by folding over a corresponding free periphery of the blank 20. The peripheral region 33 extends in a manner running around the base side 19 of the multipack 10 at the end sides 24, the front side 27 and the rear side 28.

[0046] A further particular feature is that a free periphery 34 of the peripheral region 33 extends slightly into the region of the base side 19, but only so far that the regions for the application of the tax markings 25 are sufficiently exposed.

[0047] The double-layer peripheral region 33 is formed in that the blank 20 or a peripheral strip 35 thereof is folded inward and so comes to lie between the cigarette packs 13 and the rest of the outer wrapper 14.

[0048] The double-layer peripheral strip 35 results in the open base side 19 of the multipack 10 being stabilized. A firm hold of the cigarette packs 13 in the outer wrapper 14 can be ensured by heat treatment of the blank 20, in particular in conjunction with the periphery 34 drawn slightly into the base side 19.

[0049] In the exemplary embodiment according to FIGS. 8 and 9, a blank 20 as in the exemplary embodiment according to FIGS. 1 and 2 is used. Accordingly, the base side 19 of the multipack 10 is completely free for the application of the tax markings 25.

[0050] In this case, adhesive bonding of the cigarette packs is used as securing means. Cigarette packs 13 of adjacent rows 11, 12, which cigarette packs adjoin one another by way

of rear side surfaces 17 and front side surfaces 16, are connected together in the region of connecting points 36.

[0051] The connecting points 36 can be formed for example by adhesive-bonding spots of an adhesive. Conceivable in particular are adhesives of the stick/no stick type, in order that the connecting points 36 lose their adhesiveness after the multipack 10 has been opened. However, preference is given to a transparent pressure-sensitive adhesive which does not impair the visual appearance.

[0052] The connecting points 36 are arranged at a short distance from the base side 19 or from the base side surfaces 18 on the rear side surfaces 17 or front side surfaces 16 of the cigarette packs 13. It is conceivable for a plurality of connecting points 36 to be used per pair of cigarette packs 13. It is considered important that the connecting points 36 hold the cigarette packs 13 together, especially in the vicinity of the outer wrapper 14 weakened by the open base side 19.

[0053] A further exemplary embodiment is illustrated in FIGS. 10 and 11. In this case, the outer wrapper 14 consists of two blanks 37, 38. The blanks 37, 38 are formed identically and are placed against the front side 27 and the rear side 28, respectively, of the pack group, brought together in the region of the end sides 24 and connected together in the manner of a fin seam 39.

[0054] The blanks 37, 38 have a slightly greater width than the front side 27 and rear side 28 of the multipack 10, such that peripheral regions 33 extend into the base side 19 and the lid side 29. The peripheral regions 33 extend in this case in a manner running around the base side 19 and lid side 29, like the periphery 34 in the exemplary embodiment according to FIGS. 6 and 7.

[0055] The blanks 37, 38 for the outer wrapper 14 are elongated or stretched preferably before the pack group is wrapped, so that they subsequently tightly enclose or envelop the cigarette packs 13. In this case, the encircling peripheral regions 33 or the packaging method used for the outer wrapper 14 is used as securing means.

[0056] A sixth exemplary embodiment is shown in FIGS. 12 to 14. In contrast to the exemplary embodiment according to FIGS. 3 to 5, a plurality of material strips 31 rather than a single material strip 31 are provided to secure the packs 10. In addition, the material strips 31 do not extend in the longitudinal direction of the base side 19 but in each case transversely thereto. The material strips 31 extend in each case from the front side 27 of the multipack 10 via the base side 19 to the rear side 28. The material strips 31 are in each case arranged, or their widths dimensioned, such that they cover peripheral regions of in each case two packs 13 in two adjacent regions 11, 12 and thus secure the position of the packs 13. In a manner corresponding to the formation of the packs 13 in the multipack 10, four material strips 31 are required in the present case.

[0057] In order to remove the packs 13, the corresponding blank 20 has a number of grip tabs 23 corresponding to the number of material strips 31. These grip tabs 23 are arranged in that region of the blank 20 that subsequently forms the front side 27 of the multipack 10. The grip tabs 23 are arranged at an appropriate distance from a free periphery of the blank 20, so that the grip tabs 23 are arranged at a distance from a pack edge of the multipack 10 at the transition from the front side 27 to the base side 18.

[0058] The position and dimensions of the material strips 31 can be adapted to the position and size of the tax markings 25. The arrangement of the grip tabs 23 in the region of the

front side 27 of the multipack 10 also has the advantage that the grip tabs 23 do not lie in the region of folding tabs of the outer wrapper 14 that are to be sealed, as in the exemplary embodiment according to FIGS. 3 to 5.

[0059] Preferably, the material strips 31 are connected to the outer wrapper 14 and the packs 13. However, it is also conceivable for the material strips 31 to be connected only to the outer wrapper 14 or to the packs 13.

[0060] The multipack 10 is opened by partially tearing open the multipack 10 in the region of one of the grip tabs 23 and pulling off a material strip 31.

[0061] In all of the preceding exemplary embodiments, the invention was explained with the example of a multipack 10 in which the tax markings 25 are to be applied in the region of the base side 19. It goes without saying that the solutions described can also of course be used in a correspondingly adapted manner when the side surfaces, to be provided with the tax markings 25, of the cigarette packs 13 are located in the region of other sides of the multipack 10 than in the region of the base side 19.

LIST OF REFERENCE SIGNS

- [0062] 10 Multipack
- [0063] 11 Row
- [0064] 12 Row
- [0065] 13 Pack
- [0066] 14 Outer wrapper
- [0067] 15 Narrow side surface
- [0068] 16 Front side surface
- [0069] 17 Rear side surface
- [0070] 18 Base side surface
- [0071] 19 Base side
- [0072] 20 Blank
- [0073] 21 Material web
- [0074] 23 Grip tab
- [0075] 24 End side
- [0076] 25 Tax marking
- [0077] 27 Front side
- [0078] 28 Rear side
- [0079] 29 Lid side
- [0080] 30 Pack wrapper
- [0081] 31 Material strip
- [0082] 32 Grip tab
- [0083] 33 Peripheral region
- [0084] 34 Periphery
- [0085] 35 Peripheral strip
- [0086] 36 Connecting point
- [0087] 37 Blank
- [0088] 38 Blank
- [0089] 39 Fin seam

1. A multipack having a plurality of cuboidal packs (13), in particular cigarette packs, which are partially surrounded by an outer wrapper (14) made of transparent material such as film, wherein the packs (13) are to be provided, in the region of base side surfaces (18) thereof, with tax markings (25), wherein the outer wrapper (14) does not extend over regions of the packs (13) in which the tax markings (25) are to be applied to corresponding surfaces of the packs (13), in particular not or substantially not in the region of a base side (19) of the multipack (10), and wherein the packs (13) are secured by securing means against falling out of the multipack (10) in the region of a side surface of the multipack (10) that is not or is substantially not enclosed by the outer wrapper (14).

2. The multipack as claimed in claim 1, wherein the packs (13) are connected together by a material strip (31) made of packaging material as securing means, such that the material strip (31) covers peripheral regions of packs (13) of adjacent rows (11, 12) of packs (13) within the multipack (10) and is fastened to the packs (13) such that the material strip (31) extends in the longitudinal direction along the base side (19), specifically between two of the adjacent rows (11, 12) of packs (13), and covers the peripheral regions thereof and is connected to the packs (13) or the wrappers (30) thereof.

3. The multipack as claimed in claim 2, wherein the material strip (31) extends along virtually an entire length of the base side (19) and ends at a short distance from adjacent end sides (24) of the multipack (10), and in that one end of the material strip (31) is folded through 180° on itself in order to form a grip tab (32) for removing the material strip (31).

4. The multipack as claimed in claim 2, wherein the material strip (31) extends into the region of an end side (24) of the multipack (10), adjoining the base side (19), of the multipack (10) and is connected there to the outer wrapper (14), and in that a grip tab (23) formed by punching is formed in the material of the outer wrapper (14) in the region of one end of the material strip (31) in the region of the end side (24), in order to remove the material strip (31).

5. The multipack as claimed in claim 2, wherein the material strip (31) is connected to the packs (31) or to the wrappers (30) thereof and/or to the outer wrapper (14) by adhesive bonding or sealing.

6. The multipack as claimed in claim 1, wherein the packs (13) are arranged in a plurality of rows (11, 12) within the multipack (10), and in that mutually opposite packs (13) of adjacent rows (11, 12) are connected together as securing means, in particular by adhesive bonding.

7. The multipack as claimed in claim 1, wherein a blank (20) for the outer wrapper (14), as securing means, is formed in a double layer at least in a peripheral region (33), in a

manner running around a side surface of the multipack (10), in the region of which the pack surfaces to be provided with the tax markings (25) are located.

8. The multipack as claimed in claim 7, wherein a peripheral strip (35) of the outer wrapper (14) is folded inwardly through 180° toward the packs (13) in order to form the double-layer peripheral region (33).

9. The multipack as claimed in claim 7, wherein the double-layer peripheral regions (33) of the outer wrapper (14) extend slightly into the region of the side surface of the multipack (10), in the region of which the pack surfaces to be provided with the tax markings (25) are located, and are placed against the packs (13) there by shrinking.

10. The multipack as claimed in claim 1, wherein a blank (20) for the outer wrapper (14), as securing means, extends by way of an encircling peripheral region (33) slightly into the side surface of the multipack (10), in the region of which the pack surfaces to be provided with the tax markings (25) are located.

11. The multipack as claimed in claim 10, wherein the outer wrapper (14) extends in the region of a front side (27) and a rear side (28), opposite the front side (27), of the multipack (10) and also in the region of opposite end sides (24), which connect the front side (27) and the rear side (28) together, of the multipack (10), and in that the side surface of the multipack (10), in the region of which the pack surfaces to be provided with the tax markings (25) are located, and also an opposite side surface are not covered by the outer wrapper (14) except for in the encircling peripheral regions.

12. The multipack as claimed in claim 8, wherein the double-layer peripheral regions (33) of the outer wrapper (14) extend slightly into the region of the side surface of the multipack (10), in the region of which the pack surfaces to be provided with the tax markings (25) are located, and are placed against the packs (13) there by shrinking.

* * * * *