

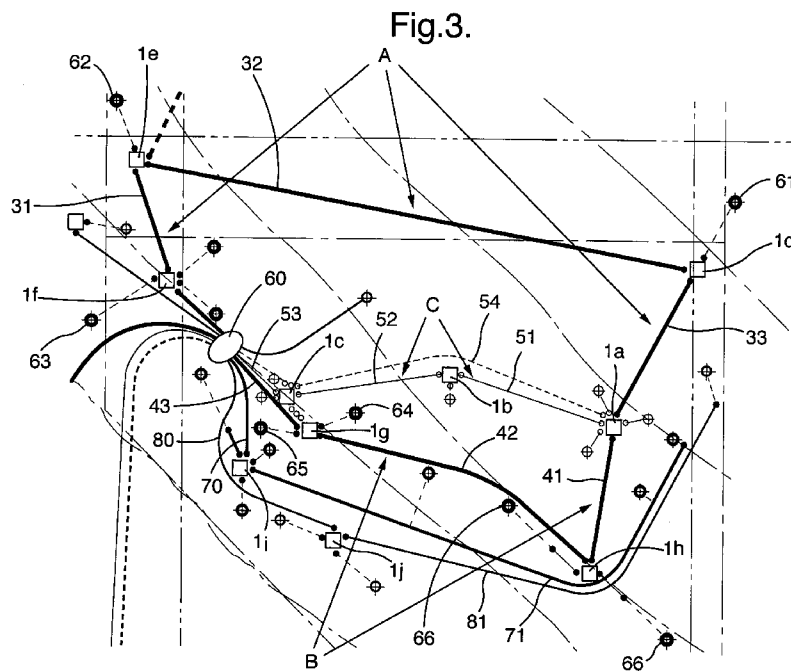


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(54) Title: ARRANGEMENT FOR DIRECTING A FLUID FLOW



(57) Abstract: An arrangement for directing a fluid flow or a tool transported in a fluid flow in an under water structure, comprising plural flow line arrangements each including at least one flow line, and at least two distribution devices to be varied between at least two positions, wherein one distribution device connects at least two flow arrangements providing for the selection of the fluid flow pattern directing the fluid through the distribution devices and the flow arrangements depending on the position of each of the distribution devices. The invention also includes method for directing a fluid flow or a tool transported in a fluid flow.

Arrangement for directing a fluid flow

The invention concerns an arrangement and a method for directing a fluid flow or a tool transported by a fluid flow in an under water structure.

Various apparatuses and method for distribution of fluid are known in the art.

5 The following publications show apparatuses for distribution of fluid;

NO 322524 discloses a manifold for connecting or dividing one of several flows of fluid. The manifold comprises a housing with a diverter system rotatably arranged in the housing.

10 US 6000430 shows a distribution valve with plural inlets for receiving inflows and outlets for an outflow mixture of fluids. Further the distribution valve has a rotatable distributing element having a mixing chamber in communication with the openings.

15 The above mentioned publications show apparatuses for distribution of fluid and do not concern an arrangement to direct fluid in flow lines as is the object of the present invention.

The object of the invention is obtained by an arrangement and a method as defined in the independent claims. Further embodiments of the invention are defined in the following dependent claims.

20 The invention in accordance with claim 1 concerns an arrangement for directing a fluid flow or a tool transported in a fluid flow in an under water structure. The tool may be transported by the pressure generated by the fluid flow or by its own driving means. The arrangement comprises plural flow line arrangements each including at least one flow line, and at least two distribution devices to be varied between at least two positions. One distribution device connects at least two flow arrangements
25 providing for the selection of the fluid flow pattern directing the fluid through the distribution devices and the flow line arrangements depending on the position of each of the distribution devices. The arrangement may be prepared for the fluid to flow in a loop shaped pattern.

30 The distribution device to determine the flow through the under water structure may be arranged with suitable components capable of providing various flow pattern by interconnecting the flow lines included in the arrangement. In one aspect of the invention the distribution device comprises a housing arranged with plural ports for inlet and outlet of a fluid flow. A selector body is arranged in the housing being
35 movable between various positions and provided for interconnecting at least two flow lines. The selector body may be provided so as to position a through passage of the selector body in line with two of the ports for communication of fluid flow

from one flow line through the distribution device and into another flow line. Further the housing may be provided with an access port to be used for maintenance or in case of emergency.

5 The claimed invention may find various fields of use. The arrangement according to the invention may be usable for the inspection, monitoring, servicing and maintenance of an under water structure comprising fluid flow lines which may be connected to subsea wells. These activities may be carried out by a fluid such as service fluid flowing in the flow lines or by a tool such as a pig having propulsion
10 or being transported in the flow line by a fluid flow. In the cases where the flow lines of the inventive arrangement is in fluid communication with a sub sea structure such as a well or equipment included in a well, the inventive arrangement may also be usable for the transport of hydro carbon during the production period.

The flow line arrangements may comprise just a flow line having one end connected
15 to a distribution device and the other end connected to another distribution device. Alternatively, one of the flow line arrangements may comprise plural flow lines and at least one distribution device, but possibly also plural distribution devices. Depending on the field of use this kind of flow line arrangement may include two
20 flow lines and one distribution device or plural distribution device and plural flow lines. The arrangement in accordance with the invention may be made up by various flow line arrangements as the one mentioned above or by one single kind of flow line arrangements.

In one embodiment the arrangement according to the invention comprises a first
25 flow line arrangement with a first distribution device and a second distribution device provided at each end of the first flow line arrangement. The arrangement is further provided with at least an additional flow line arrangement having one end connected to the first distribution device and the other end connected to the second distribution device. The additional flow line arrangement may comprise a single
30 flow line or plural flow lines interconnected by at least one distribution device. The number of additional flow line arrangements to be included in this arrangement may be varied according the field of use. One or plural of the additional flow line arrangements may be provided for the fluid to flow in a loop.

35 The arrangement may be provided by a first and a second additional flow line arrangement, each having one end connected to the first distribution device and the other end connected to the second distribution device. The selected position of the first and second distribution devices is used for determining the various flow patterns. Depending on the position of the distribution devices, the first additional
40 flow line arrangement may be connected to the first flow line arrangement or the second additional flow line arrangement may be connected to the first flow line

arrangement. Alternatively, the distribution device may be placed in a position connecting first and second additional flow line arrangement. In these three different ways of providing connection between the flow line arrangements, the arrangement is prepared for looped circulation patterns to take place.

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In one embodiment a main flow line may be provided with at least two main distribution devices and a number of loops wherein each loop comprises a flow line or configuration of a number of flow lines and distribution devices, with one end of each loop being connected to one the main distribution devices and the other end of each loop to another of the main distribution devices. The fluid flow is to be directed in a selected looped flow pattern depending on the position of each of the main distribution devices and distribution devices.

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The arrangement according to the invention, may be provided with at least one additional flow line extending from a surface or subsurface vessel and being connected to one of the distribution devices. The vessel is of a kind well known within the offshore field such as a FPSO, a semi submersible platform, a floating platform or any other kind suitable for carrying out under water activities related to the production of hydrocarbons, and service and maintenance of submerged flowlines.

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The additional flow line may be a riser or a riser connected to a flow line or flow line arrangement connected to a distribution device. The additional flow line communicates fluid or a tool to or from the under water structure. The arrangement in accordance with the invention may in one embodiment, wherein the hydrocarbons is to be transported through the under water structure, be provided with means for communication with an under water structure such as a well or an subsea structure. In this embodiment at least one of the distribution devices or a valve is arranged for communication of fluid between the flow line arrangements and the well.

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The invention also include a method for directing a fluid flow or a tool transported in a fluid flow in an under water structure wherein the tool may be a pig as mentioned above. The fluid flows in fluid line arrangement comprising a main flow line which is provided with at least two main distribution devices to be varied between at least two positions. The fluid line arrangement comprises at least two loops wherein each loop comprises a configuration of a number of flow lines and distribution devices. Each loop is arranged with one end connected to the main distribution device and the other end of each loop to another of the main distribution devices. Selecting a position of a main distribution device directs the fluid to flow in a certain flow pattern in the selected loop. Selecting another position of a main distribution device directs the fluid to flow in a fluid flow pattern including at least two of the loops.

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The fluid may flow through a first additional flow line directing the fluid from a vessel of the kind as discussed above, to one of the main distribution devices or to one of the distribution devices and into the selected loop(s) by selecting a position of one of the main distribution devices or distribution devices. The flow of fluid may return to the vessel through the first additional flow line or another additional flow line by selecting a position of one of the main distribution device or distribution devices.

10 An example of the invention will be described in the following with reference to the figs wherein

Fig 1 is view of an example of a distribution device.

Fig 2a-2c illustrates an example of use of the distribution device as shown in fig 1.

15 Fig 3 is an illustration of an example of the arrangement of flow lines and distribution devices.

Fig 1 shows various views of a distribution device 1 comprising a housing 2 provided with ports 3 for the passage of a fluid flow. A selector body 4 is provided with a through passage 5 for the fluid to flow through. The selector body 4 is movably arranged in an inner space 8 of the housing 2. In the embodiment shown in fig 1 a rotatable axle 9 is provided connecting the selector body 4 to the housing 2 to rotate the selector body 4 between various positions connecting two of the ports 3 of the housing 2. The operation of the selector body 4 to reposition it in the inner space 8 may be carried out by operating means connected to the end 10 of the rotatable axle 9. The selector body 4 may be prepared for rotation in one direction only, or may be arranged for rotation in both directions. In the latter case, the selector body 4 must be provided for stopping in a preselected position (or in several positions) no matter the direction of rotation. Hence, suitable stopping means may be provided accordingly.

30 In the shown embodiment the housing is arranged with eight ports 3 for fluid to flow through. As the skilled person will realize, the number of ports 3 and their location around the perimeter of the housing 2 will vary according to the application wherein the distribution device 1 is to be used. The selector body 4 is given a bended shape to connect ports 3 spaced at given interval around the perimeter of the housing 2. The shape of the selector body 4 and then subsequently the angle between the centre axis of the ports 3 to be fluidly connected by the through passage 5, may of course vary depending on the field of use. An access port 6 is arranged in the housing for providing access to the inner space 8 of the housing accommodating the selector body 4. If necessary to move the selector body 4 manually, in case of emergency or by failure of the means to operate the axis 9, the

access port 4 is made available by removing closure 7. It would then be feasible to reach the selector body 4 by a suitable tool to change its position. Further, the access port is used when installation or maintenance of the selector body 4 is deemed necessary.

5 In fig 2a-2c an example of the use of the distribution device 1 in three different positions is shown. Fig 2 shows three flow lines 20, 21, 22 which may be connected in various ways by the use of the distribution device 1. In these figs, the distribution device 1 is only schematically shown and the various positions of the distribution device 1 are illustrated by the flow through the distribution device 1, shown by
10 arrows and lines D, E and F. In fig 2a the distribution device 1 is shown connecting the flow lines 21 and 22 by the selector body 4 being placed in a position for fluid to flow from flow line 21 to flow line 22 through the flow through passage 5 of the selector body 4, see line D. By rotating the selector body 4 into another position, the flow lines 20 and 21 are connected for fluid flow through the
15 distribution device 1, closing off flow line 22, as shown in fig 2b, see line E. Further rotation of the selector body 4 into a further another position, connects the flow lines 20 and 22 for fluid communication between them through the distribution device 1 and closes off the flow line 21, see line F. By rotating the selector body 4 between the three positions as shown in figs 2a-2c, three different flow patterns are
20 obtained by selecting the positions of the shown distribution device 1.

Even though only three positions of the distribution device 1 are shown in figs 2a-2c, the distribution device 1 as shown in fig 1, has a potential for assuming more than these three positions. The distribution device 1 as shown in fig 1 has eight
25 ports 3 for the inlet and outlet of fluid flow and thereby the distribution device 1 is capable of obtaining plural number of positions by rotating the selector body 4 into the desired position for the interconnection of the flow lines transporting fluid.

Fig 3 shows an example of a schematic system of submerged flow lines connected by plural distribution devices as shown in figs 1, 2a-2c. The flow lines 31, 32 and 33 comprise a first loop A and the flow lines 41, 42 and 43 comprise a second loop
30 B. The ends of first and second loops are shown connected to main distributor devices 1a and 1c. The flow lines 51 and 52 make up a main flow line C having ends connected to the same main distributor devices 1a and 1c. By the use of the main distributor devices 1a and 1c, the main flow line C is connected to loop A in one position of each of the main distributor devices 1a and 1c, and in another
35 position of each of the main distributor devices 1a and 1c main flow line C is connected to loop B. Further, altering the main distributor devices 1a and 1c into further another position provides for the connection of loop A and B. Each of the loops A, B and the main flow line C is provided by plural flow lines connected by distributor devices 1b, 1d, 1e, 1g, 1h. As the skilled person will realize, more than

the shown two loops may be connected to the main flow line C, and also each of the loops may be connected to further loops or flow lines.

The flow lines in fig 3 are shown connected to a vessel 60, such as for instance a FPSO or other marine operating vessels suitable for the operation to be carried out. The flow lines (risers) 43, 53 and 54 provide connection between vessel and the system of flow lines as shown in fig 3, and the main distributor devices 1a, 1c and 1i are used to control the closing off or providing a connection between the vessel and the system of flow lines.

The fluid to be transported in the shown flow lines may be various kind of fluid, depending on the operation mode of the flow line in use. The fluid may be hydrocarbons streaming from the wells 61-66 and into the flow lines, controlled by the associated distributor device or by some other kind of valve device. The hydrocarbons is transported via the flow lines in the chosen flow pattern and to the vessel 60. In the cases where the flow lines need to be cleaned, the fluid may be methanol, in the case of providing corrosion prevention to the inside walls of the flow line, the fluid may comprise an inhibitor. There may also be a need for inspecting or removing debris from the inside of the flow lines and to perform this inspection a tool for instance a pig may be used. The tool may be transported in the flow lines by the pressure provided by the fluid flow or may be provided with a drive of some kind.

For the cleaning and or inspection of the flow lines, the tool and or the cleaning fluid may be sent from the vessel 60 via flow line 54, in this case functioning as a service line, to the main distributor device 1a, wherefrom the cleaning fluid and or tool may be directed into loop A or B. After circulation in the loops A, B the fluid/tool is returned to the vessel in flow lines 43 or 53.

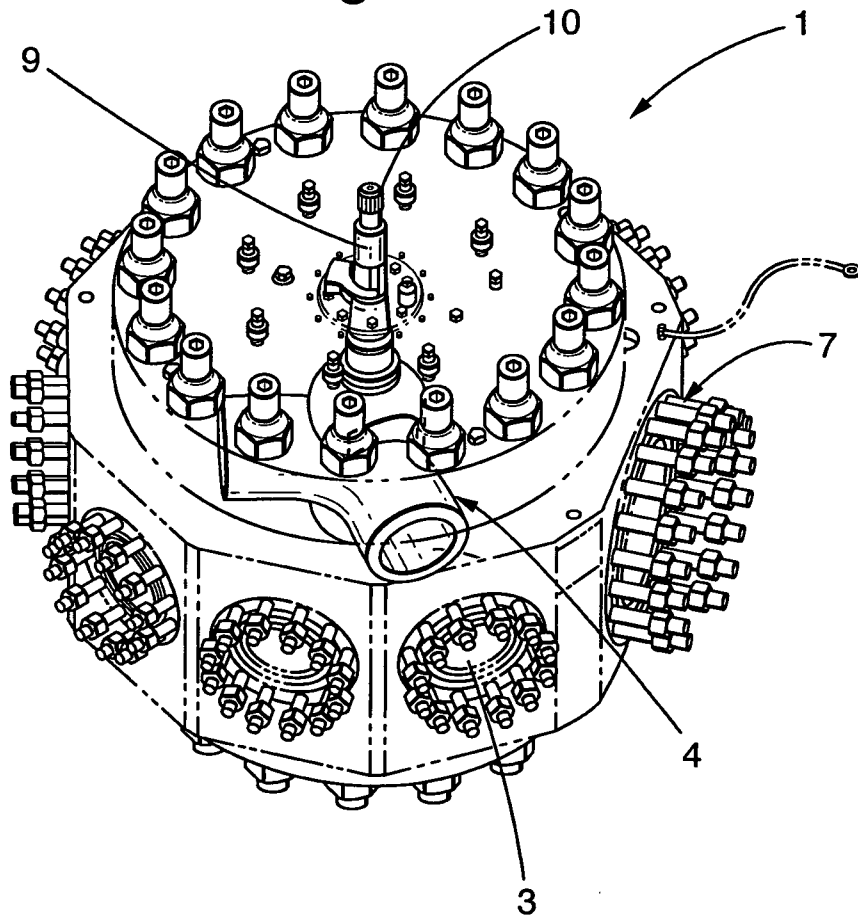
The system as shown in fig 3 also includes flow lines 70, 71, 80, 81 not configured to form loops. The flow of fluid through these flow lines is also controlled by the distributor devices 1i, 1j.

CLAIMS

- 5 1. An arrangement for directing a fluid flow or a tool transported in a fluid flow in an under water structure, comprising plural flow line arrangements each including at least one flow line, and at least two distribution devices to be varied between at least two positions, wherein one distribution device connects at least two flow arrangements providing for the selection of the fluid flow pattern directing the fluid through the distribution devices and the flow arrangements depending on the position of each of the distribution
10 devices wherein the fluid flow pattern constitutes a loop.
- 15 2. An arrangement in accordance with claim 1, wherein at least one of the flow line arrangements comprises plural flow lines and at least one distribution device.
- 20 3. An arrangement in accordance with claim 1 or 2, wherein the arrangement comprises a first flow line arrangement with a first distribution device and a second distribution device provided at each end of the first flow line arrangement, and at least an additional flow line arrangement having one end connected to the first distribution device and the other end connected to the
25 second distribution device
- 30 4. An arrangement in accordance with claim 3, wherein at least one of the additional flow line arrangements provides for the fluid to flow in a loop.
- 35 5. An arrangement in accordance with one of the preceding claims, wherein at least one additional flow line extending from a surface or subsurface vessel is connected to one of the distribution devices.
6. An arrangement in accordance with one of the preceding claims, wherein the distribution device comprises a housing arranged with plural ports for inlet and outlet of fluid flow, and in the housing a selector body movable between various positions and provided for interconnecting at least two flow lines.
7. An arrangement in accordance with claim 6, the selector body is provided to position a through passage of the selector body in line with two of the ports for communication of fluid flow through the distribution device.

8. An arrangement in accordance with claim 6 or 7, wherein the housing is provided with an access port.
- 5 9. An arrangement in accordance with one of the proceeding claims, wherein at least one of the distribution devices or a valve is arranged for communication of fluid between the flow line arrangements and a under water structure such as a well or an subsea structure.
- 10 10. An arrangement in accordance with one of the claims 6-9 wherein the distribution device is provided for stopping in at least one preselected position.
- 15 11. Method for directing a fluid flow or a tool transported in a fluid flow in an under water structure, wherein the fluid flows in flow line arrangement comprising a main flow line which is provided with at least two main distribution devices to be varied between at least two positions, and at least two loops wherein each loop comprises a configuration of a number of flow lines and distribution devices, wherein each loop is arranged with one end connected to the main distribution device and the other end of each loop to
20 another of the main distribution devices
wherein selecting the position of the main distribution devices directs the fluid to flow in a certain flow pattern including at least two of the loops or the main flow line and at least one of the loops.
- 25 12. Method in accordance with claim 11, wherein selecting a position of a main distribution device directs the fluid to flow in a certain flow pattern in the selected loop,
wherein selecting another position of a main distribution device directs the fluid to flow in a fluid flow pattern including at least two of the loops.
- 30 13. Method in accordance with claim 11 or 12, wherein fluid flows through a first additional flow line directing the fluid from a vessel (surface or subsurface) to one of the main distribution devices or distribution devices and into the selected loop(s) by selecting a position of one of the main
35 distribution devices or distribution devices.
- 40 14. Method in accordance with one of the proceeding claims 11-13, wherein directing the flow of fluid to return to the surface vessel through the first additional flow line or another additional flow line by selecting a position of the main distribution device.

Fig. 1a.



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Fig.1b.

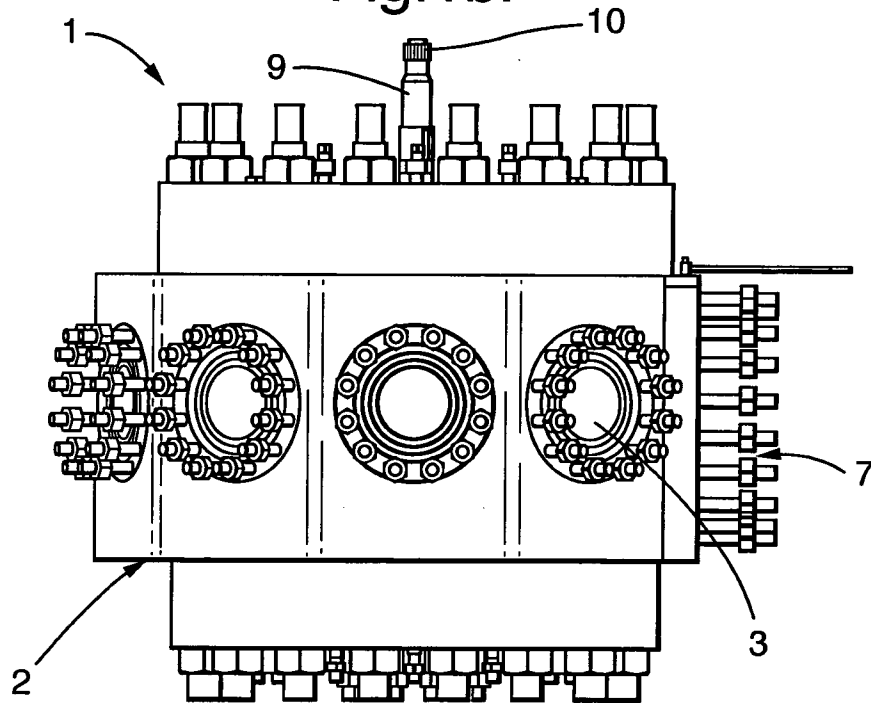


Fig.1c.

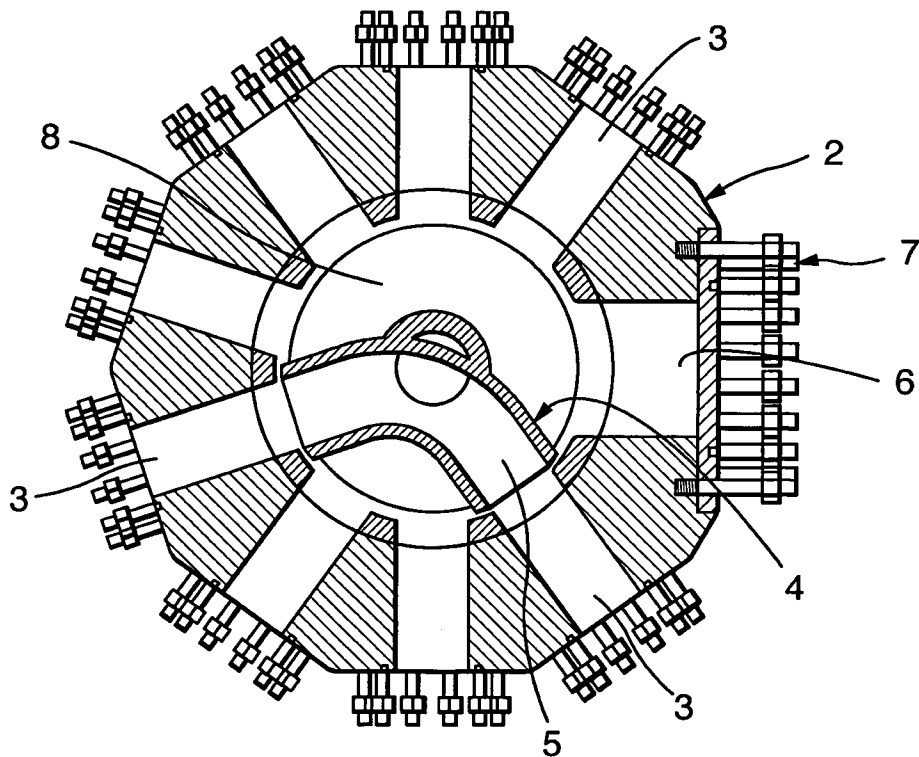


Fig.2a.

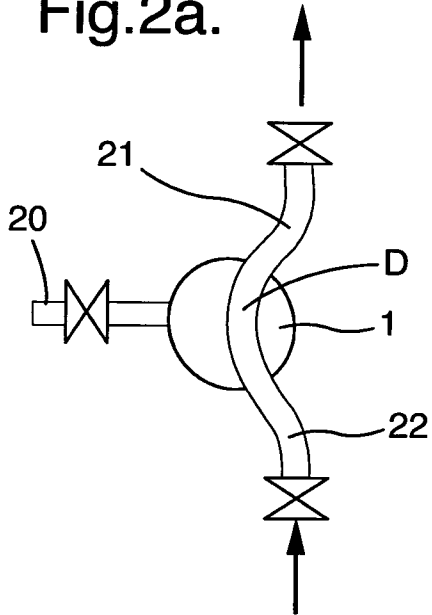


Fig.2b.

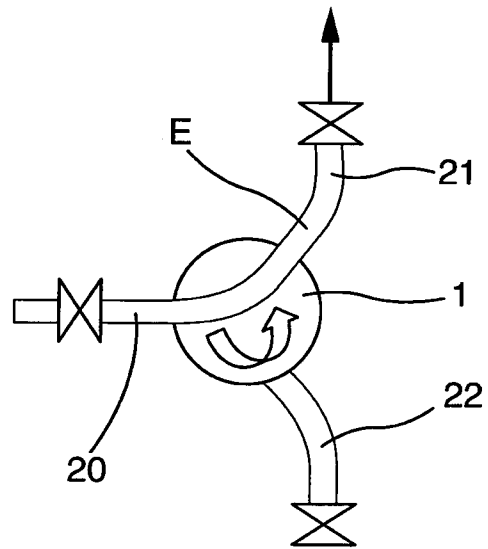


Fig.2c.

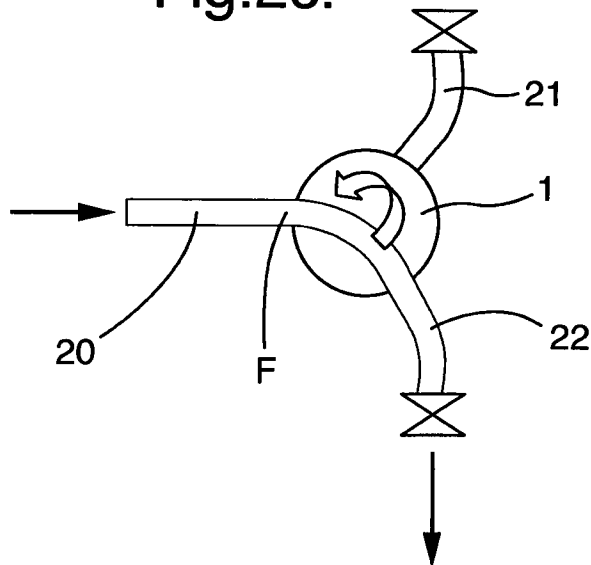
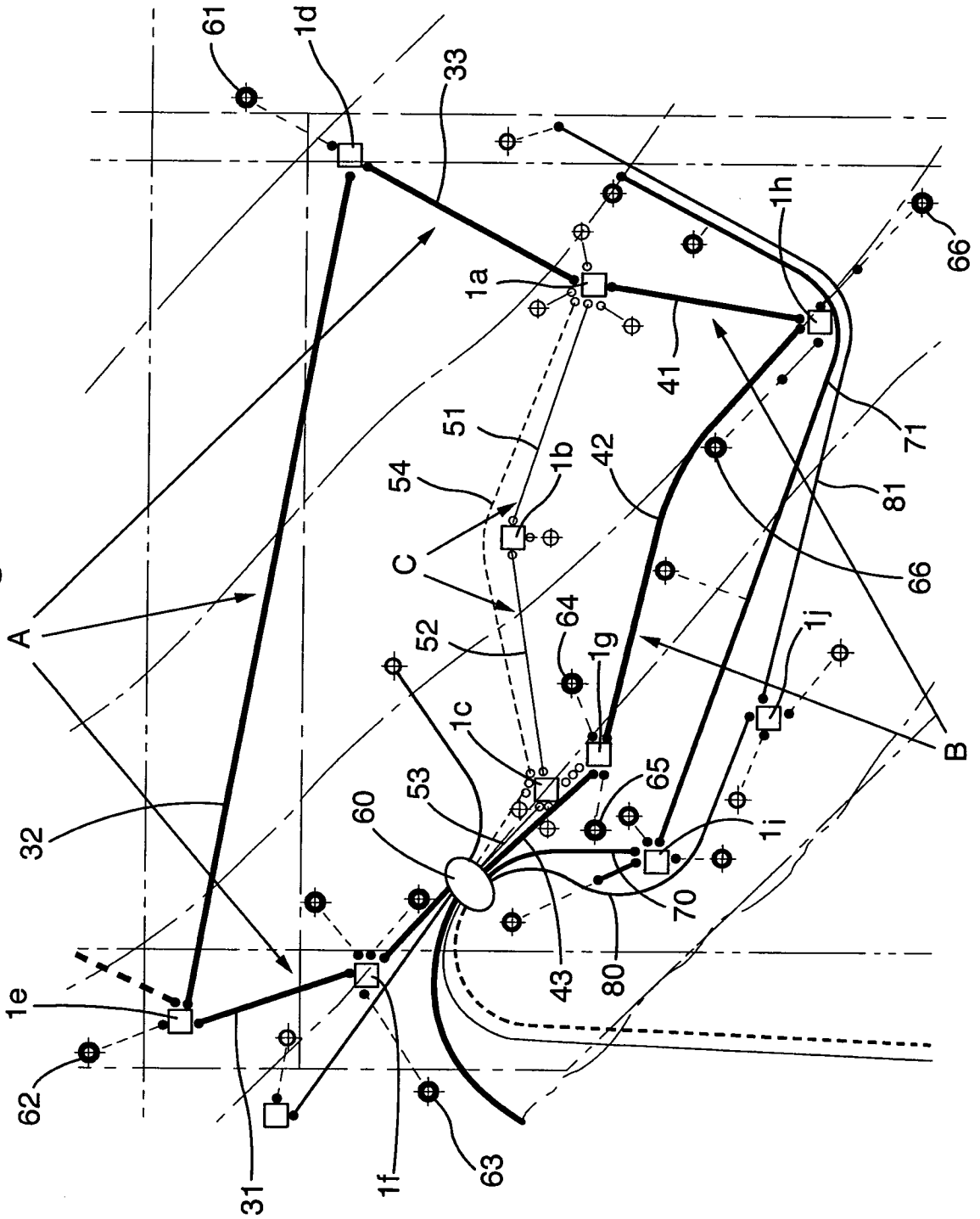


Fig.3.



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/N02009/000189

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
INV. E21B33/035 E21B43/01 E21B43/017

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)
E21B

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)
EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 4 378 848 A (MILBERGER LIONEL J) 5 April 1983 (1983-04-05) column 2, line 44 - column 5, line 20; figures 1,2,5	1-4,7,9, 11,12
Y	the whole document	5,6,8, 10,13,14
Y	----- US 2008/093081 A1 (STOISITS RICHARD F [US] ET AL) 24 April 2008 (2008-04-24) page 3, paragraph 41 - page 4, paragraph 48; figures 1,2	5,6,8, 10,13,14
Y	----- WO 2005/108833 A (DRESSER INC [US]; MANSON RONALD JAMES [US]; MCBETH RUSSELL ERIC [US]) 17 November 2005 (2005-11-17) the whole document	1-14
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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

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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

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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

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Z document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search 27 August 2009	Date of mailing of the international search report 07/09/2009
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Name and mailing address of the ISA/ European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Authorized officer Morrish, Susan
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No

PCT/N02009/000189

C(Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/NO2009/000189

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