

CONTAINER FOR CONSUMER ARTICLES WITH A SPACER CONTAINING A CUT-OUT

The present invention relates to a container for consumer articles, the container comprising a box portion and a spacer which is mounted within the box portion.

It is known to package consumer articles in containers formed from folded laminar blanks. Elongate smoking articles, such as cigarettes, cigarillos and cigars, are commonly sold in rigid box shaped containers, such as hinged lid containers having a box portion and a lid connected to the box about a hinge line extending across the rear 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.

In some cases, it may be desirable to provide containers that are larger in size than the volume occupied by the consumer articles within the container. This may result in there being empty space within the container so that the consumer articles are more likely to be displaced or shaken within the container during transport.

In order to overcome this problem, GB 2 259 687 discloses a cigarette package comprising a shaped spacer element which is inserted into the cigarette pack to take up the space difference between the foil bundle and the box enclosure. However, as a result of the presence of the shaped spacer it is more difficult for the consumer to access the cigarettes within the cigarette pack.

It would be desirable to provide an improved spacer-containing container for consumer articles that allows easy access to consumer articles despite the presence of the spacer.

This goal can be achieved by the present invention. According to a first aspect of the invention, a container for consumer articles is provided, the container comprising a box portion wherein the box portion comprises a box front wall, a box rear wall, a box bottom wall and two box side walls extending between the box front wall and the box rear wall and a spacer wherein the spacer is mounted within the box portion, the spacer is mounted essentially perpendicular to the box bottom wall, the spacer is partially projecting out at the upper end of the box front wall and the spacer comprises at least one spacer wall, the at least one spacer wall has at least one spacer cut-out and the at least one spacer cut-out is located at the upper end of the at least one spacer wall. The container further comprises an inner frame with an inner frame cut-out, wherein the inner frame is provided at the inner side of the box front wall and is partially projecting out at the upper end of the box front wall and wherein the spacer is a separate element that is mounted in the container.

The spacer cut-out at the upper end of the at least one spacer wall is located in an area projecting out at the upper end of the box front wall. For that reason this spacer cut-out will facilitate the consumer the access to the consumer articles within the container.

The container optionally further comprises a lid portion comprising a lid front wall, a lid rear wall, a lid top wall and two lid side walls extending between the lid front wall and the lid rear wall.

The terms "front", "rear", "top", "bottom", "side", "upper", "lower", "height", "width", "depth" and other terms used to describe relative positions of the components of the container according to the invention refer to the container in an upright position with the consumer articles housed in the container and with an open end of the box portion at the top and the consumer articles accessible from the upper end at the front. These terms are used in an analogous manner when referring to the spacer which will be defined further below.

As described above, the spacer used in a container according to the invention is mounted essentially perpendicular to the box bottom wall. The spacer can be glued or otherwise adhered to the box bottom wall. Alternatively or additionally, at least one spacer wall may be glued or otherwise adhered to one or more box walls each at a position where the spacer touches the respective box wall. Preferably the spacer is, however, not glued or adhered to a box wall. In that latter case, it is more preferred that the spacer has dimensions which are adapted to the inner dimensions of the box portion. For example, the spacer can have an outer depth which corresponds to the inner depth of the box portion such that the spacer rightly fits into the box portion and is kept in place for example by friction between the spacer and the box walls. Thus, adapting the spacer's outer dimensions to the box portion's inner dimensions has the advantage that the spacer can be mounted in the box portion without the need of any adhesion of the spacer to the box portion. Nevertheless, the spacer will be correctly positioned and will be kept in place even after some of the consumer articles have been removed.

The spacer is preferably mounted perpendicular to the box bottom wall. A slight deviation from a perpendicular arrangement of the spacer is acceptable as long as the removal of the consumer articles from the container is not negatively influenced.

In some embodiments, the container comprises more than one spacer, either with or without spacer cut-outs, and either of same or of different form and size.

It is preferred that the spacer is mounted in a way that the spacer is not lying flat at a neighbouring box wall but that a space results between the spacers and the surrounding box walls. Consumer articles, for example cigarettes, can be filled within the space between a spacer and a box wall or even within the spacer. Thus, the preferred arrangement of the spacer within the box portion in a way that a space results between the spacer and the box walls has the effect that the box portion is divided into smaller segments in which the possible movement of the consumer articles is limited and the consumer articles are more

effectively held within the various segments of the container even after the removal of a part of the consumer articles.

The consumer articles are preferably elongate smoking articles, such as cigarettes, cigarillos and cigars. More preferably, the consumer articles are cigarettes. Thus, the
5 container of the invention is preferably a container for elongate smoking articles and more preferably a cigarette pack. However, containers in accordance with the present invention can also be used with a variety of consumer articles other than smoking articles, preferably rod shaped articles.

As a result of the elongate nature of the preferred smoking articles it is similarly
10 preferred that the height (corresponding to the distance between the lower end of the container, that is, the box bottom wall, and the upper end of the container, that is, if present, the lid top wall) of the container of the invention is larger than the width (corresponding to, for example, the maximum distance between the box side walls) of the container of the invention. It is then also preferred that the width of the container of the invention is larger
15 than the depth (corresponding to, for example, the maximum distance between the box front wall and the box rear wall) of the container of the invention.

The more preferred cigarette pack of the invention can either be a hinged-lid pack or a soft pack (that is, a container with a box portion made from a laminar blank of a thinner, more easily deformable material, such as, for example paper, than typically used for hinged-
20 lid packs) or a pack having a sliding mechanism for opening the container. It will be appreciated that through appropriate choices of the dimensions, the cigarette packs according to the invention may be designed for different numbers of cigarettes of conventional size, king size, super-king size, slim or super-slim cigarettes, with diameters for the cigarettes ranging from, for example, 4 millimeters to 9 millimeters.

25 The spacer used in a container according to the invention is provided as a separate element and is mounted to the container or the inner frame as discussed above. In particular the spacer is not formed integrally with the inner frame or the container. As a consequence the remaining parts of the container can be manufactured using conventional manufacturing techniques, in particular using existing machinery and conventionally used container blanks
30 and inner frame blanks.

Preferably, the spacer is made from a laminar blank. Preferably, the spacer is either bent or folded, or both bent and folded. If the spacer structure is bent, a spacer consisting of one spacer wall and having a more or less curved cross-section will result. Preferably, such a curved cross-section is semi-circular, circular, semi-ellipsoid, ellipsoid, semi-oval, oval or U-
35 shaped. If the spacer structure is folded, a spacer consisting of at least two spacer walls will result, each folding edge causing an additional spacer wall. Preferably such a spacer with at

least two spacer walls has a cross-section which is V-shaped, triangular, trapezoid or rectangular. More preferably, the cross-section of the spacers is triangular. The cross-sectional area of the spacer is defined as the area enclosed by the one or more spacer walls.

The bent spacer as described above preferably contains one spacer wall wherefrom
5 the semi-circular, circular, semi-ellipsoid, ellipsoid, semi-oval, oval or U-shaped spacer can be made by connecting overlapping end areas of the spacer wall to each other, for example by gluing. However, the desired cross-section of the spacer can also be formed by the spacer wall in combination with one or more, preferably one, of the box walls. For example, a U-shaped spacer can be introduced as such into the box portion and placed with the ends of
10 the spacer wall against one of the box walls, for example the box rear wall, in order to close the outer circumference of the spacer.

As for the bent spacer, the desired cross-section of the folded spacer can be achieved by combining the spacer walls to each other or by the spacer walls in combination with one or more, preferably one, of the box walls. In the simplest way a sheet-like structure
15 can be folded once so that a V-shaped cross-section results for the spacer. Such a V-shaped spacer with two spacer walls can be introduced as such into the box portion and placed with the ends of the spacer walls against one of the box walls, for example the box rear wall, in order to close the outer circumference of the spacer. In such a case, the resulting spacer will have triangular cross-section. Similarly, a spacer with a trapezoid or rectangular cross-
20 section can be made either from one flat or sheet-like structure which is folded three times followed by connecting, for example gluing, overlapping end areas of the spacer walls to each other or from one flat or sheet-like structure which is folded two times and then inserted into the box portion such that the missing fourth spacer wall is supplemented by one of the box walls or from two or three flat or sheet-like structures which are, optionally after folding,
25 connected to each other at overlapping end areas.

Preferred embodiments of the folded spacer comprise two, three or four spacer walls. In case of a folded spacer with two spacer walls, the spacer may yield a V-shaped cross-section of the spacer. In case of a folded spacer with three spacer walls, the spacer may yield a U-shaped or triangular cross-section of the spacer. In case of a folded spacer with
30 four spacer walls, the spacer may yield a rectangular or trapezoid cross-section of the spacer.

In some embodiments, the spacer is folded in a way that at least two spacer walls are lying flat on each other. This is advantageous, as such a structure increases stability of the spacer. By folding the spacer that way, even a spacer with, for example, four spacer walls
35 may be folded to a triangle, when the spacer is folded in a way that the two outer spacer walls are lying on each other. When preparing a spacer with a certain number of spacer

walls, the afore-mentioned cross-sectional shapes are to be understood to be realized even with spacers having a higher number of spacer walls, as long as the additional spacer walls are lying flat, even multiple times, on another spacer wall. This is advantageous when realizing the spacer from a material having a lower base weight in order to increase stability.

5 In some embodiments, the spacer is bent over one or more portions of the spacer, while the remaining portions of the spacer are folded at least once.

 It is preferred that the cross-section of the spacer is constant over the whole height of the spacer except for the position of one or more spacer cut-outs which are located at the upper end of one or more spacer walls.

10 The one or more spacer cut-outs may have different forms. Preferably, all spacer cut-outs of a spacer have an identical form or all spacer cut-outs have one of two different forms. A spacer cut-out may have the form of a triangle, a rectangle, a semi-circle, a semi-ellipse or a semi-oval or is V-shaped or U-shaped. In a preferred embodiment, the at least one spacer cut-out has the form of a triangle or is V-shaped.

15 With regard to the position, size, form and number of the one or more spacer cut-outs, the one or more spacer cut-outs are arranged in a way that they define at least one window through which a person is able to easily grab a consumer article out of the container.

 Preferably, each spacer wall of the spacer may have up to two spacer cut-outs, i.e. no spacer cut-out at all or one spacer cut-out or two spacer cut-outs. Each spacer wall of a
20 spacer may have cut-outs of the same form and the same number or even different forms or a different number of cut-outs.

 Preferably, in a spacer with one spacer wall, the spacer may contain two spacer cut-outs on opposing sides of the spacer. Alternatively, such a spacer may contain one spacer cut-out or three spacer cut-outs.

25 Preferably, in a spacer with two spacer walls, the spacer may contain one spacer cut-out or two spacer cut-outs.

 Preferably, in a spacer with three spacer walls, the spacer may contain one, two or three spacer cut-outs.

30 Preferably, in a spacer with four spacer walls, the spacer may contain two spacer cut-outs on opposing sides of the spacer or four spacer cut-outs on opposing sides of the spacer or three spacer cut-outs.

 The preferred embodiments of spacers may also comprise further spacer walls, as long as these further spacer walls are folded in a way that they are lying flat on another spacer wall.

35 In some embodiments, the container comprises an inner frame with an inner frame cut-out, wherein the inner frame is provided at the inner side of the box front wall and is

partially projecting out at the upper end of the box front wall and the spacer which is mounted within the box portion is partially projecting out at the upper end of the inner frame cut-out.

The height of the spacer – which is measured at a position where there is no spacer cut-out – should not exceed the inner height of the box portion of the container. Preferably, the height of the spacer corresponds to the inner height of the box portion. The height of the spacer may also be slightly smaller, for example 0.1 to 1.5 centimeters smaller, than the inner height of the box portion, wherein the one or more spacer cut-outs further reduce the height of the spacer at the position of the spacer cut-out, for example by additional 0.5 to 3.0 centimeters, more preferably 1.0 to 1.5 centimeters. In another preferred embodiment, the height of the spacer is 2 percent to 25 percent, preferably 5 percent to 20 percent and more preferably between 10 percent and 15 percent less than the inner height of the box portion of the container.

Since the preferred elongate smoking articles typically have a height which corresponds to that of the box portion, the arrangement of the spacer cut-outs has the advantage that consumer articles such as cigarettes are significantly exceeding the spacer at the position of the one or more spacer cut-outs even if the upper end of the spacer is – at a position where there is no spacer cut-out – close to the inner height of the box portion. Thus, the consumer articles located in the container can easily be gripped by the consumer without the spacer being a barrier or hindrance therefore.

The spacer defines a non-vanishing, finite volume within the container and thus divides the inner cross-section of the container into an area that is within the spacer walls and into an area that lies between the spacer wall and the container walls.

For a spacer where the spacer walls are connected to each other such that a closed circumference results, the cross-sectional area of the spacer is the area which is enclosed by the spacer wall or the spacer walls. For the spacer where the spacer wall is not connected to each other or the spacer walls are not connected to each other such that no closed circumference results, the cross-sectional area of the spacer is the area which is enclosed by the spacer wall or the spacer walls and an imaginary straight line which connects the ends of the spacer wall or the ends of the spacer walls. The cross-sectional area of the box portion is the area which is enclosed by the box front wall, the box rear wall and the two box side walls.

The spacer may be mounted in the box portion of the container in a way that the spacer divides the cross-section of the box portion into at least three sections thereof, namely in sections that are located within the box portion but not within the spacer, and in sections that are located within the spacer but not within the volume between the walls of the box portion and the spacer. Depending on the amount of consumer articles to be arranged in the box portion, consumer articles may be located only in a suitable amount of sections,

while the rest of the available sections remain free. In a preferred embodiment, consumer articles are located within the box portion but not within the spacer. In another embodiment, consumer articles are located within the spacer but not within the volume between the walls of the box portion and the spacer. Preferably the individual sections are sized such that a plurality of consumer articles can be located therein. It can be seen that the presence of three, four or even more sections gives the manufacturer a high degree of flexibility. More or less cigarettes can be packed into one container. The room within a given spacer can be packed completely or only partially or completely left free, as desired and needed by the manufacturer. Irrespective of the packing chosen, the limitation of the possible movement for the smoking articles and in particular the cigarettes by the presence of the spacers will keep these in place, even if some of the smoking articles or cigarettes have been removed.

A container is preferred wherein the cross-sectional area of the spacer is about 10 percent to about 60 percent of the cross-sectional area of the box portion. Preferably, the cross-sectional area of the spacer is about 20 percent to about 50 percent, more preferably about 25 percent to about 45 percent of the cross-sectional area of the box portion. Such a preferred container of the invention balances the volume available within the container such that the potential movement of the consumer articles is sufficiently limited to reduce the risk of potential damage, at least as long as the container is closed and no consumer articles have been withdrawn from the container.

A container is preferred wherein the outer depth of the spacer corresponds to the inner depth of the box portion, or wherein the outer width of the spacer corresponds to the inner width of the box portion, or wherein the outer depth of the spacer corresponds to the inner depth of the box portion and the outer width of the spacer corresponds to the inner width of the box portion. The advantage of all these arrangements is that the spacer will be kept automatically by friction and adjacent walls of the box portion within the box portion and cannot or only hardly move within the box portion once the consumer articles are removed. This can be further supported by gluing or otherwise fixing the spacer to one or more of the box walls.

The material for the container is preferably cardboard or paper, more preferably the material for the container is cardboard. This material for the container has a base weight of 140 grams per square meter to 250 grams per square meter, preferably 160 grams per square meter to 240 grams per square meter, more preferably 180 grams per square meter to 230 grams per square meter. All base weights mentioned in the subject application are determined according to ASTM D646 - 13 (in conjunction with ASTM D685 - 12).

The spacers can be made from any sheet or sheet-like material. Preferably, the spacer is made of a laminate, a cardboard, a paper or a foil, or a plastic. More preferably, the

spacers are made from cardboard or paper or plastic. The spacer can have a base weight of at least 120 grams per square meter, preferably 130 to 250 grams per square meter and more preferably 160 to 230 grams per square meter. The base weight of the spacer is determined according to ASTM D646 - 13 (in conjunction with ASTM D685 - 12).

According to a second aspect of the invention, a method for preparing the container for consumer articles as defined in the first aspect is provided, by carrying, not necessarily in the described order, the steps of:

- (a) providing a main blank for forming a box portion,
- (b) forming from the main blank the box portion comprising a box front wall, a box rear wall, a box bottom wall and two box side walls extending between the box front wall and the box rear wall,
- (c) providing a spacer blank for forming a spacer with at least one cut-out,
- (d) forming the spacer with the at least one spacer cut-out from the spacer blank,
- (e) introducing the spacer with the at least one spacer cut-out into the box portion of the container such that the spacer is mounted within the box portion, is mounted essentially perpendicular to the box bottom wall, and the spacer with the at least one spacer cut-out is partially projecting out at the upper end of the box front wall,
- (f) providing an inner frame blank for forming an inner frame with a cut-out,
- (g) forming the inner frame from the inner frame blank, and
- (h) mounting the inner frame at the inner side of the box front wall such that the inner frame is partially projecting out at the upper end of the box front wall (14), wherein the spacer is a separate element that is mounted in the container.

Preferably, the method for preparing the container may be complemented by a step of introducing consumer articles at an appropriate time into the container. This can be at the end of the method after the spacer has been inserted into the container. It can, however, also be done while carrying out the above-described method for preparing the container. For example, for cigarettes as the consumer articles, the cigarettes might be placed onto a spacer blank. The spacer is then formed around the cigarettes and the resulting bundle introduced into the container. For that purpose, the cigarettes can be wrapped into an inner liner and then placed onto the spacer blank.

The length, width and depth of containers according to the invention may be such that, in the closed position, 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 millimeter and about 150 millimeter, more preferably a height of between about 70 millimeter and about 125 millimeter, wherein the height is measured from the top wall to the bottom wall of the container.

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

5 Preferably, containers according to the invention have a depth of between about 6 millimeter and about 100 millimeter, more preferably a depth of between about 12 millimeter and about 25 millimeter wherein the depth is measured from the front wall to the back wall of the container (comprising the hinge between box and lid).

Containers according to the invention may be shrink-wrapped or otherwise over
10 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 tear tapes. In addition, the over wrapper may be printed with images, consumer information or other data. The additional
15 outer wrapper may advantageously protect the surface of the container for example against abrasion during handling.

As well as housing a group of smoking articles, the container may further comprise other consumer articles, for example matches, lighters, extinguishing means, breath-fresheners or electronics. The other consumer articles may be attached to the outside of the
20 container, contained within the container, for example within one of the spacers, along with the smoking articles, in a separate compartment of the container or combinations thereof.

The exterior surfaces of containers and spacers according to the invention may be printed, embossed, debossed or otherwise embellished with manufacturer or brand logos, trademarks, slogans and other consumer information and indicia.

25 A preferred embodiment of the subject invention is the combination of the above-described preferred meanings. A particular preferred embodiment of the subject invention is the combination of the above-described more preferred meanings.

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

Figure 1 shows a cross-sectional view of a container according to the subject invention with the box portion, the at least one spacer with at least one spacer cut-out and several cigarettes placed in the box portion; and

Figure 2 shows an embodiment of a blank for a spacer to be used with a container according to the subject invention.

The container 10 shown in Figure 1 comprises a box portion, wherein the shown
5 cross-section of the box portion is defined by the surrounding box side walls 12, the box front wall 14 and the box rear wall 16. A spacer 20 is mounted within the container 10. The spacer 20 has a triangular cross-section and is mounted in a way in the container 10 that spacer wall 28 of the spacer 20 is lying flat on the inner side of box front wall 14. The triangular cross-section of the spacer 20 divides the volume within the box portion into three different
10 sections, where – in the present embodiment – the section within the spacer 20 is empty and the remaining two sections, i.e. the volume between spacer 20 and box walls 12, 14, 16, are filled with cigarettes 40.

Figure 2 shows a blank from which the spacer 20 as used in Figure 1 may be created. The blank is folded twice along edges 22, 24, thereby providing three spacer walls
15 26, 28, 30. In cross-sectional view, the folded blank will result in a triangular form. At the upper end of the blank, a portion of the blank is cut out from each spacer wall. Spacer walls 26 and 30 each show a triangular cut-out 32, 36, while spacer wall 28 shows a U-shaped cut-out 34. In another embodiment, spacer wall 28 may have no spacer cut-out 34, as long as the dimensions of the spacer 20 are chosen in a way that a person may easily grab a
20 cigarette 40 by facilitating the space left by spacer cut-outs 32 and 36. When preparing the spacer 20, the step of cutting out the spacer cut-outs 32, 34, 36 may be performed before folding the spacer 20. After cutting the blank and folding the spacer 20 to a triangle form of its cross-section, the spacer 20 is mounted in container 10 by placing the lower end of the spacer 20 at the box bottom wall of the container 10 and by placing spacer wall 28 flat on the
25 inner side of box front wall 14. Due to this arrangement of spacer 20 in container 10, cigarettes 40 may be easily grabbed despite the presence of the spacer 20, as the spacer cut-outs 32, 34, 36 provide a window for taking out a cigarette 40.

CLAIMS

1. A container for consumer articles, the container comprising:
a box portion, wherein the box portion comprises a box front wall, a box rear wall, a
5 box bottom wall and two box side walls extending between the box front wall and the box
rear wall, and
a spacer, wherein:
the spacer is mounted within the box portion,
the spacer is mounted essentially perpendicular to the box bottom wall,
10 the spacer is partially projecting out at the upper end of the box front wall, and
the spacer comprises at least one spacer wall,
the at least one spacer wall has at least one spacer cut-out, and
the at least one spacer cut-out is located at the upper end of the at least one spacer
wall,
15 the container, further comprising an inner frame with an inner frame cut-out, wherein
the inner frame is provided at the inner side of the box front wall and is partially
projecting out at the upper end of the box front wall, and
wherein the spacer is a separate element that is mounted in the container.
- 20 2. The container according to claim 1 wherein at least a first portion of the spacer
is bent to yield a circular, ellipsoid, oval, semi-circular, semi-ellipsoid or semi-oval or U-
shaped cross-section of the first portion of the spacer.
3. The container according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein at least a second
25 portion of the spacer is folded to provide a number of spacer walls yielding a U-shaped, V-
shaped, triangular, rectangular or trapezoid cross-section of the second portion of the
spacer.
4. The container according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the
30 spacer comprises
one spacer wall formed to create a circular, ellipsoid, oval, semi-circular, semi-
ellipsoid, semi-oval or U-shaped cross-section of the spacer, or
two spacer walls formed to create a V-shaped cross-section of the spacer, or

three spacer walls formed to create a U-shaped or triangular cross-section of the spacer, or

four spacer walls formed to create a rectangular or trapezoid cross-section of the spacer.

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5. The container according to claim 4 wherein the spacer has one spacer wall with two spacer cut-outs on opposing sides of the spacer or one spacer cut-out or three spacer cut-outs, or

two spacer walls with one spacer cut-out or two spacer cut-outs, or

10 three spacer walls with one, two or three spacer cut-outs, or

four spacer walls with two spacer cut-outs on opposing sides of the spacer or four spacer cut-outs on opposing sides of the spacer or three spacer cut-outs.

6. The container according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the at least one spacer cut-out has the form of a triangle, a rectangle, a semi-circle, a semi-ellipse, a semi-oval or is U-shaped or V-shaped.

7. The container according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the cross-sectional area of the spacer is about 10 percent to about 60 percent, preferably about 20 percent to about 50 percent, more preferably about 25 percent to about 45 percent of the cross-sectional area of the box portion.

8. The container according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the outer depth of the spacer corresponds to the inner depth of the box portion or

wherein the outer width of the spacer corresponds to the inner width of the box portion or

wherein the outer depth of the spacer corresponds to the inner depth of the box portion and the outer width of the spacer corresponds to the inner width of the box portion.

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9. The container according to any of the preceding claims wherein the consumer articles are smoking articles, preferably cigars, cigarillos or cigarettes, more preferably cigarettes.

5 10. The container according to any of the preceding claims wherein the consumer articles are located within the box portion but not within the spacer or

wherein the consumer articles are located within the spacer but not within the volume between the walls of the box portion and the spacer.

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11. A container according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the container further comprises a lid portion comprising a lid front wall, a lid rear wall and two lid side walls extending between the lid front wall and the lid rear wall.

15 12. A container according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the height of the spacer corresponds to the inner height of the box portion.

13. A method for preparing a container for consumer articles according to any of the preceding claims, comprising the steps of:

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(a) providing a main blank for forming a box portion,

(b) forming from the main blank the box portion comprising a box front wall, a box rear wall, a box bottom wall and two box side walls extending between the box front wall and the box rear wall,

(c) providing a spacer blank for forming a spacer with at least one cut-out,

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(d) forming the spacer with the at least one spacer cut-out from the spacer blank,

(e) introducing the spacer with the at least one spacer cut-out into the box portion of the container such that the spacer is mounted within the box portion, is mounted essentially perpendicular to the box bottom wall, and the spacer with the at least one spacer cut-out is partially projecting out at the upper end of the box front wall,

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(f) providing an inner frame blank for forming an inner frame with a cut-out,

(g) forming the inner frame from the inner frame blank, and

(h) mounting the inner frame at the inner side of the box front wall such that the inner frame is partially projecting out at the upper end of the box front wall,

wherein the spacer is a separate element that is mounted in the container.

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14. The method of claim 13 further comprising the step of introducing consumer articles at an appropriate time into the container.