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- (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **KONINKLIJKE PHILIPS ELECTRONICS N.V.** [NL/NL];
Groenewoudseweg 1, NL-5621 BA Eindhoven (NL).

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- (72) Inventor; and
- (75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): **NGUYEN HOANG, Viet** [VN/NL]; c/o Prof. Holstlaan 6, NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL).
- (74) Agents: **ELEVELD, Koop, J.** et al.; Prof. Holstlaan 6, NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL).
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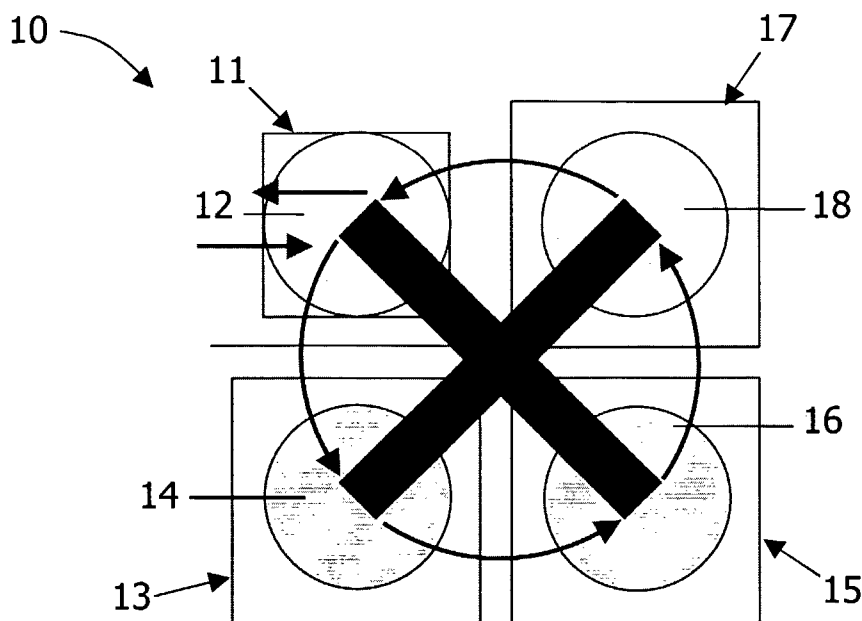
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(54) Title: FLEXIBLE RINSING STEP IN A CMP PROCESS



(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to chemical mechanical planarizing (CMP) and to an apparatus for performing such a CMP process. The method and apparatus according to the invention prevent or at least minimize the time during which a wafer is exposed to air in between two subsequent polishing steps during a CMP process by adjusting the time period of the rinsing steps such that each rinsing step ends at substantially the same time. In that way, damage such as corrosion can be avoided or at least minimized and high quality devices can be achieved.

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