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(21) International Application Number: ✓ PCT/EP99/04722 (22) International Filing Date: ✓ 3 July 1999 (03.07.99) (30) Priority Data: ✓ 98202280.8 ✓ 8 July 1998 (08.07.98) ✓ EP (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): MONTELL TECHNOLOGY COMPANY B.V. [NL/NL]; Hoeksteen 66, NL-2132 MS Hoofddorp (NL). ✓ (72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): GOVONI, Gabriele ✓ [IT/IT]; Via Pilastro, 64, I-44045 Renazzo (IT). COVEZZI, Massimo [IT/IT]; Via Renata di Francia, 40, I-44100 Ferrara (IT). ✓ (74) Agents: ZANOLI, Enrico et al.; Montell Italia S.p.A., Intellectual Property, Patents and Trademarks, P.le G. Donegani, 12, I-44100 Ferrara (IT).		(81) Designated States: AE, AU, AZ, BG, BR, CA, CN, CZ, HU, ID, IL, IN, JP, KR, KZ, MX, NO, PL, RO, RU, SG, SK, TM, TR, UA, US, VN, YU, ZA, European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE). Published With international search report. 2000 00958-9 10033 copy	

(57) Abstract

The diagram illustrates a vacuum furnace system with a closed-loop gas circulation circuit. The furnace chamber (1) is tilted at an angle (5) and contains a sample (2) within a crucible (3). The chamber is surrounded by a cooling jacket (4). A gas inlet (12) and outlet (14) are shown on the left. The gas circulation circuit includes a pump (7) at the bottom, a pressure gauge (8), a valve (9), a gas distributor (11), and a gas collector (16). The gas then flows through a filter (17), a pressure gauge (24), and a valve (21) into a gas storage tank (22). The gas is then pumped back into the furnace chamber (1) by a pump (23). The entire system is connected to a vacuum line (18) and a pressure gauge (19).