

PANEL PARTICULARLY FOR PROVIDING EXPLOSION-RESISTANT CURTAIN WALLS

The present invention relates to a panel particularly for providing explosion-resistant curtain walls.

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Currently it is customary to erect buildings whose outer glazed walls are constituted partially or entirely by a plurality of panels which comprise one or more glass panes, which are approximately flat and mutually parallel and are supported by appropriately provided frames which are typically
10 metallic and can be fixed to the supporting structure of the building.

These frames generally comprise two metallic uprights, which are approximately mutually parallel and are connected, at their ends, by two cross-members; the two uprights and the two cross-members further comprise respectively male-female interlocking means for mating, during
15 use, respectively with the uprights and cross-members of the contiguous panels.

In particular, it is known to provide panels which are suitable to be installed in buildings which are particularly exposed to the risk of explosions, such as for example buildings for military use, banks, and
20 centers of political activity.

Current procedures for the design of known types of such panel entail sizing said panels so that they withstand, without undergoing permanent deformation, a static load which is equivalent to the stresses that occur during an explosion; this entails great thicknesses, and therefore weights,
25 for the frames and the glass panes that constitute the panels and therefore entails high costs for their production, transport and installation.

Further, the great weight of these known types of panel entails the additional drawback of applying intense mechanical stresses to the load-bearing structure of the building to which they are applied, thus requiring, in
30 some cases, the strengthening of said load-bearing structure, with a

consequent further cost increase.

Further, since said known types of panel react to the stresses applied by an explosion by deforming elastically, they transfer a substantial fraction of the energy of said explosion to the load-bearing structure of the building, which therefore can be
5 damaged.

US 3 038 568 teaches a curtain wall with improved wall attaching means for easy installation and suitable to compensate dimensional irregularities. No anti-blast capacity is mentioned.

10 The aim of the present invention is to solve the above mentioned problems, eliminating the drawbacks of the cited background art, by providing a panel for providing a curtain wall which is capable of withstanding explosive events and has a reduced weight, so as to reduce the stresses applied to the load-bearing structure of the building to which said curtain wall is applied.

15 Within this aim, an object of the invention is to provide a panel which can be transported and installed easily in a building.

Another object of the invention is to avoid transmitting, during an explosion occurring in its vicinity, intense mechanical stresses to the load-bearing structure of a building with which said invention is associated, thus limiting the damage to said
20 building.

Another object is to provide a panel which protects the internal environment of a building to which said panel is applied against an explosion which occurs outside said building.

Another object is to provide a panel which has lower production, transport and
25 installation costs with respect to the background art.

This aim and these and other objects, which will become better apparent hereinafter, are achieved by a panel, particularly for providing explosion-resistant curtain walls, according to the invention, that has the features of claim 1.

30 Further characteristics and advantages of the invention will become better apparent from the following detailed description of a particular but not exclusive

embodiment thereof, illustrated by way of non-limiting example in the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figures 1 and 2 are perspective views of two panels according to the invention, respectively before and after their application to the load-bearing structure of a building;

5 Figure 3 is an exploded perspective view of a detail of a panel according to the invention;

Figure 4 is an exploded perspective view of a detail of the first strengthening and interconnection means of the panel of Figure 3;

10 Figure 5 is an exploded perspective view of a detail of the second strengthening and guiding means of the panel of Figure 3;

Figure 6 is a perspective view of a detail of the second means of Figure 5 in a different operating condition;

Figure 7 is an exploded perspective view of a detail of a panel according to the invention and of a footing which can be associated below said panel;

15 Figures 8 and 9 are two sectional views, taken along two different and mutually parallel transverse planes, of a detail of two contiguous panels;

Figure 10 is a perspective view of a detail of two contiguous panels in the inactive condition;

20 Figure 11 is a view, similar to Figure 10, of a detail of two contiguous panels in a mutual rotational condition.

In the exemplary embodiments that follow, individual characteristics, given in relation to specific examples, may actually be interchanged with other different characteristics that exist in other exemplary embodiments.

5 Moreover, it is noted that anything found to be already known during the patenting process is understood not to be claimed and to be the subject of a disclaimer.

 With reference to the figures, the reference numeral 1 designates a panel particularly for providing explosion-resistant curtain walls 2, which is
10 associated with a frame 3 for supporting one or more glass panes 4 so as to form a glazing unit.

 The frame 3 is constituted by two uprights, designated respectively by the reference numerals 5a and 5b, which are preferably metallic and have an approximately rectangular transverse cross-section.

15 First seats 6 are provided axially with respect to the uprights 5a and 5b, have an approximately rectangular plan shape, and affect or extend over the uprights 5a and 5b along their entire length.

 The uprights 5a and 5b further cooperate with means for the male-female mating with uprights 5b and 5a of additional contiguous panels 1.

20 Advantageously, said male-female mating means comprise one or more grooves 7, which are formed transversely and externally with respect to a first side wall 8 of one of the two uprights 5a and 5b and in which tabs 9 are inserted which protrude approximately at right angles from the first side wall 8 of the other upright 5b or 5a, as shown in Figures 8 and 9.

25 Said one or more grooves 7 affect or extend over the entire length of the uprights 5a and 5b.

 Second seats 11 are formed on said uprights, proximate to one of their lateral ends 10 which during use is directed toward the glass panes 4 and adjacent to said one or more grooves 7; said seats affect or extend axially
30 over the entire length of the uprights 5a and 5b and advantageously have an

approximately T-shaped transverse cross-section, so as to form a first access port 12 and two first abutments 13 which affect or extend over the second seats 11 along their entire length.

The first side wall 8 is shorter than the uprights 5a and 5b, so as to
5 form first openings 16 proximate to the upper end 14 and lower end 15 of the uprights 5a and 5b.

Advantageously, the uprights 5a and 5b have a second side wall 17, which is approximately parallel to the first side wall 8 and in which first holes 18 are provided, at the first opening 16, and are arranged
10 advantageously so that they are approximately mutually aligned along an axis which lies transversely to the second side wall 17.

Second holes 19 are provided advantageously in the first side wall 8, in a region which is adjacent to the first openings 16, and are arranged advantageously but not necessarily approximately at the corners of a
15 rectangle.

Proximate to the lateral ends 10 of the uprights 5a and 5b there are suitable means of a known type for connection and sealing to the glass panes 4, which comprise for example appropriately provided gaskets 20 and one or more first layers 21 of structural sealant.

20 In the exemplary embodiments shown in the accompanying figures, there are two glass panes 4, which are arranged so as to face each other and are kept spaced by an appropriately provided spacer channel 22 and are mutually coupled by means of a second layer 23 of structural sealant; advantageously, the innermost glass pane 4 is reinforced with one or more
25 sheets of plastic material.

The uprights 5a and 5b are mutually connected, respectively at their upper ends 14 and at their lower ends 15, by at least two cross-members 24, which advantageously have a transverse cross-section which is substantially similar to the two uprights 5a and 5b respectively; the cross-members 24,
30 therefore, also comprise first seats 6, which are similar to the seats of the

uprights 5a and 5b, a first side wall 8, a second side wall 17, and means for coupling of the male-female type which are similar to the ones described in relation to the uprights 5a and 5b.

First, interconnection means for strengthening and interconnecting the uprights 5a and 5b and the cross-members 24 are further provided which
5 comprise advantageously at least one block 25, which is approximately shaped like a parallelepiped and is substantially shaped complementarily, in plan view, to one of the first seats 6 formed in the cross-members 24, so that it can be positioned, during use, partially inside one of said seats.

10 Advantageously, the block 25 can be coupled rigidly to the respective cross-member 24 by way of appropriately provided first screws 26, which pass through third holes 27 formed in the first side wall 8 and can be rotatably associated with fourth complementarily threaded holes 28 formed in the upper surface of the block 25.

15 Fifth threaded holes 30 are formed at the first holes 18 provided in the uprights 5a and 5b, on a front surface 29 of the block 25 which, during use, is directed toward the outside of the first seat 6; said holes are suitable for fixing appropriately provided second screws 31 which fix the block 25, and therefore the cross-member 24 rigidly coupled thereto, to the upright 5a or
20 5b.

Second, guiding means for strengthening and guiding the mutual position of two contiguous uprights 5a and 5b are further associated with the uprights 5a and 5b, and two panels 1 arranged one above the other are associated therewith.

25 As shown in Figures 5 and 6, said second means comprise a male element 32, which can be associated with the lower end 15 of the uprights 5a and 5b and is constituted by a plug which has an approximately T-shaped plan configuration, so as to form a first head 33, which has an approximately rectangular plan shape and has an approximately rectangular
30 transverse cross-section and dimensions which allow it to be inserted

partially within the first seat 6 of the uprights 5a and 5b.

The first head 33 can be rigidly fixed, during use, to the respective upright 5a and 5b by way of appropriately provided third screws 34, which are inserted in the second holes 19 provided proximate to the lower end 15 of the upright 5a and 5b and can be fixed in appropriately provided sixth complementarily threaded holes 35 formed in the first head 33.

A first stem 36 protrudes from the first head 33 of the male element 32, on the opposite side with respect to the respective upright 5a and 5b; said stem has an approximately rectangular plan shape and beveled edges, and protrudes, during use, axially and externally with respect to the upright 5a and 5b with which the male element 32 is associated.

Said second guiding means comprise a female element 37, which can be associated with the upper end 14 of the uprights 5a and 5b at the first seat 6 and is constituted by a plug which has an approximately U-shaped plan configuration so as to form a first base 38, which has an approximately rectangular plan shape, an approximately rectangular transverse cross-section, and dimensions which allow to accommodate it, during use, in the first seat 6 of an upright 5a and 5b.

The first base 38 can be fixed to the respective upright 5a and 5b by way of appropriately provided fourth screws 39, which can be inserted in the second holes 19 provided in the upright 5a, 5b proximate to the upper end 14 thereof and can be fixed in appropriately provided complementarily threaded seventh holes 40, which are provided in the first base 38 and are axially aligned with the second holes 19.

Two first arms, designated by the reference numerals 41a and 41b respectively, protrude from the base 38 approximately at right angles and on the opposite side with respect to the upright 5a, 5b and are approximately shaped like a parallelepiped with beveled edges; the mutual distance between the two first arms 41a and 41b is such that the first stem 36 of a male element 32 can be accommodated between said arms with a selected

play.

Advantageously, the first arms 41a and 41b of the female element 37 are arranged, during use, approximately at the first opening 16 of the respective upright 5a and 5b.

5 By arranging two panels 1 one above the other, the first stems 36 of the male elements 32 which are associated with the uprights 5a and 5b of the panel 1 arranged above the other panel are arranged respectively in the interspace provided between the two first arms 41a and 41b of the female elements 37 of the panel 1 that is arranged below; the engagement of the
10 male elements 32 with the female elements 37 improves the solidity of the connection between the two panels 1 and further allows said panels to perform even substantial mutual translational motions and/or rotations without separating.

As shown in Figure 7, the first stem 36 of the male element 32
15 associated with an upright 5a, 5b can further be inserted in an appropriately provided complementarily shaped third seat 42, which has a substantially rectangular plan shape and is formed at a footing 43 which is suitable to withstand the first panel 1, arranged at the base of the building; the third seat 42 has such dimensions as to allow the first stem 36 to be inserted
20 axially therein and perform a selected rotation with respect to its plane of arrangement without escaping from the third seat 42.

The panel 1 further comprises third limiting means for limiting the mutual rotation of two contiguous uprights 5a and 5b of two panels 1 arranged mutually side by side.

25 Said third limiting means are constituted advantageously by springs 44, which are constituted by a lamina which is extruded or folded so as to assume an approximately U-shaped plan configuration, in which there is a second approximately flat base 45, whose dimensions are such that it can be accommodated during use within two of said mutually facing second seats
30 11 of two mutually mated uprights 5a, 5b.

The second base 45 of the springs 44 is thus arranged, during use, within one of the second seats 11 adjacent to the second side wall 17 of an upright 5a and can be fixed to the latter by means of appropriately provided first pins 46, which can be fixed in appropriately provided eighth holes, not shown in the accompanying figures, which are provided in the second side wall 17.

Two second arms, designated respectively by the reference numerals 47a and 47b, protrude from the second base 45, are substantially flat and approximately mutually parallel, and are connected to the second base 45 by means of an inclined portion which facilitates their elastic flexing in the direction for their mutual approach.

The two second arms 47a and 47b are shorter than the sum of the distance formed by the space between two of said mutually facing second seats 11 of two mutually mated uprights 5a and 5b.

The free ends of the two second arms 47a and 47b, which are arranged approximately halfway along the depth of the respective second seat 11, are folded toward the outside of the spring 44 and toward the second base 45, forming respectively two hooks, designated by the reference numerals 48a and 48b, which are inclined and can be positioned, during use, within the second seat 11 of an adjacent upright 5a.

The hooks 48a, 48b can engage, during use, respectively the first abutments 13 of the respective second seat 11, so as to prevent their escape from said seat through the first access port 12 thereof.

Advantageously, the panel 1 further comprises fixing means for fixing it to the load-bearing structure 49 of a building, which comprise advantageously a support 50, which is approximately shaped like a parallelepiped and axially to which there are two fourth seats 51, which advantageously have an approximately T-shaped transverse cross-section, so as to form a second access port 52 and two second longitudinal abutments 53a and 53b which affect the fourth seats 51 along their entire

length.

Advantageously, second openings 54 are provided in axial alignment with the second access ports 52, on the opposite side with respect to them, and affect the entire support 50; appropriately provided second pins 55, 5 which can be fixed to the load-bearing structure 49 of a building, can be inserted in the second openings 54.

At least one bracket 56 is slidingly associable with each one of the fourth seats 51 and advantageously has an approximately T-shaped plan configuration so as to form a second head 57, which is substantially shaped 10 like a parallelepiped and can be associated slidingly with the fourth seat 51; a ninth internally threaded hole 58 is provided approximately axially with respect to the second heads 57.

A second substantially plate-like stem 59 protrudes approximately at right angles from the second head 57 and can be inserted within the first seat 15 6 of an upright 5a, 5b through an appropriately provided third opening, which is not shown in the accompanying figures and is formed in the uprights 5a, 5b proximate to their upper end 14.

The second stem 59 can be fixed to the respective upright 5a, 5b by means of fifth screws 60, which can be associated with appropriately 20 provided tenth holes 61 formed in the first side wall 8 of the upright 5a, 5b and can be fixed in complementarily threaded eleventh holes 62 which are provided in the second stem 59.

Advantageously, the axial position of the brackets 56 with respect to the support 50 is adjustable by way of suitable adjustment means, which are 25 constituted advantageously by sixth screws 63, the threaded stem of which cooperates with the complementarily threaded ninth holes 58 which are associated axially with the second heads 57 and with the interposition of a perforated plate 64, which is suitable to abut against the upper transverse edge of the fourth seats 51 in order to prevent the downward escape of the 30 second heads 57.

Operation is therefore as follows: with reference to the accompanying figures, a plurality of supports 50 are fixed to the load-bearing structure 49 of a building, rigidly coupling thereto the second pins 55 associated with the supports 50.

5 The brackets 56 are then fixed to the uprights 5a and 5b of the panels 1 and are then inserted in the fourth seats 51 of the supports 50.

 The vertical position of the panels 1 with respect to the load-bearing structure 49 of the building can be adjusted easily by changing the degree of insertion of the sixth screws 63 in the ninth holes 58 of the second heads 57
10 of the brackets 56; in this manner it is in fact possible to adjust the longitudinal position of the second heads 57 with respect to the fourth seats 51 of the supports 50.

 A plurality of panels 1 are thus arranged mutually side by side to constitute multiple mutually superimposed rows, so as to obtain a curtain
15 wall.

 The male elements 32 of the various panels 1 engage the contiguous female elements 37 of the underlying panels 1; the male elements 32 of the first row from the bottom are inserted in the third seats 42 of the footings 43, which in turn are fixed to the load-bearing structure 49 of the building.

20 The contiguous uprights 5a and 5b of the various panels 1 arranged laterally side by side are interconnected by a plurality of springs 44, which are inserted with their second base 45 and with their hooks 48a, 48b respectively in the second seats 11 of each pair of contiguous uprights 5a and 5b.

25 If an explosion occurs in the vicinity of said curtain wall, the shock wave generated by said explosion is transmitted to the panels 1; the uprights 5a and 5b and the cross-members 24 of the panels 1 are sized so that they can deform permanently, reaching even substantial deformations.

 The outermost glass panes 4 are optionally sized so that they can
30 break during the explosion.

The innermost glass pane also can break, but its fragments remain stuck to the one or more plastics sheets that reinforce it; said sheets are sized so that they can deform plastically without breaking, thus reducing the risk that the fragments coupled to them might damage people or objects that
5 are inside the building.

The presence of the first means for strengthening and interconnection between the uprights 5a and 5b and the cross-members 24 reduces the risk that the intense deformations undergone by them might cause their mutual separation, which would cause the glass panes 4 that are still supported by
10 them to fall; at least the innermost glass pane 4 therefore remains associated with the frame 3 and can be deformed but cannot break, thus protecting the interior of the building against the shock wave generated by the explosion.

Further, the engagement of the male elements 32 with the female elements 37 subjects the contiguous uprights 5a and 5b of two mutually
15 superimposed panels 1 to great deformations and movements without mutually separating, thus ensuring the vertical continuity of the curtain wall during the explosion and accordingly protecting the interior of the building from the effects of said explosion.

Further, the presence of the springs 44 ensures that the various panels
20 1 arranged mutually side by side do not separate during an explosion, thus ensuring that the continuity of the curtain wall is maintained also in a horizontal direction.

The preservation of the horizontal continuity of the curtain wall is assisted also by the shape of the second head 57 of the brackets 56 and of
25 the fourth seats 51 within which they are accommodated; the square shape of said components allows minimal rotations of the bracket 56 with respect to the respective support 50.

It has thus been found that the invention has achieved the intended aim and objects, a panel particularly for providing explosion-resistant
30 curtain walls having been provided which, by allowing the deformation of

the uprights and of the cross-members that constitute it, does not require said uprights and cross-members to have great thicknesses and therefore great weights, thus reducing the mechanical stresses applied by said panel to the load-bearing structure of the building to which it is applied.

5 Further, the reduced weight of the uprights and cross-members and the presence of the supports and of the respective brackets facilitate the transport and installation of the panel according to the invention.

Moreover, the presence of the second means for strengthening and guiding the mutual position of two contiguous uprights and of the third
10 means for limiting the mutual rotation of two contiguous uprights allows to maintain, during an explosion, the vertical and horizontal continuity of the curtain wall constituted by means of the panel according to the invention, thus protecting the interior of the building against the effects of the explosion.

15 Further, the possibility of the uprights and cross-members to deform plastically and therefore absorb part of the energy of an explosion limits the fraction of said energy that is transferred to the load-bearing structure of the building, consequently limiting the damage thereto.

Moreover, the production costs of the invention remain low, since the
20 invention is constituted exclusively by components which are easily available or simple to produce and assemble.

The terms "approximately" and "substantial/substantially", as used herein, are intended to mean that the feature to which they refer has the form/shape/configuration indicated but for tolerances that are known to be
25 normal by the ones skilled in the present technical field.

The invention is of course susceptible of numerous modifications and variations, all of which are within the scope of the appended claims.

The materials used, as well as the dimensions that constitute the individual components of the invention, may of course be more pertinent
30 according to specific requirements.

The various means for performing certain different functions need not certainly coexist only in the illustrated embodiment but can be present per se in many embodiments, including ones that are not illustrated.

The characteristics indicated as advantageous, convenient or the like
5 may also be omitted or be replaced with equivalents.

CLAIMS

1. A panel, particularly for providing an explosion-resistant curtain wall, comprising: one or more glass panes (4) which are associated with a supporting frame (3), so as to form a glazing unit, said frame (3) being constituted by at least two uprights (5a, 5b) which are connected, at their upper (14) and lower (15) ends, by at least two cross-members (24); first seats (6) provided, respectively, in each one of said uprights (5a, 5b) and said cross-members (24) so as to extend along the entire length thereof; second seats (11) that are provided axially in each one of said uprights (5a, 5b), proximate to a lateral end thereof and extending along their entire length; first interconnection means (25) for strengthening and interconnecting said uprights (5a, 5b) and said cross-members (24) that comprise at least one block rigidly fixable to a respective one of said uprights (5a, 5b) and shaped so as to be positionable partially inside said first seat (6) of a respective one of said cross-members (24); second strengthening means (32, 37) for strengthening and guiding the mutual position of two contiguous uprights (5a, 5b) of two panels (1) arranged one above the other and associated with said uprights (5a, 5b); and third limiting means (44) for limiting the mutual rotation of two contiguous uprights (5a, 5b) of two panels (1) arranged side by side; and fixing means (50) for fixing the panels (1) to the load bearing structure (4) of a building, characterized in that said second strengthening means comprise a male element (32) associable with a said first seat (6) at a lower end (15) of one (5a) of the two contiguous uprights (5a, 5b) and a female element (37) that is associable with a said first seat (6) at an upper end (14) of the other one (5a) of said contiguous uprights (5a, 5b), said male element (32) being engageable in said female element (37), in that said third limiting means (44) comprise respective springs (44), each one of which is dimensioned so as to be accommodatable within a space formed by two mutually facing said second seats (11) of two (5a, 5a) mutually mateable said uprights (5a, 5b), and in that said fixing means comprise a support (50) provided with seats (51) thereof and at least one bracket (56) that has a head (57) slidably associable with each one of said seats (51) of said support (50) and a plate-like stem (59) that is insertable within a said first seat (6) of a said upright (5a, 5b), said head (57) of the bracket (56) and said seats (51) of the support (50) having such a shape so as to allow minimal rotations of

the bracket (56) with respect to said support (50) suitable to allow preservation of the horizontal continuity of the curtain wall.

2. The panel according to claim 1, characterized in that said first seats (6) are formed axially with respect to said uprights (5a, 5b) and said cross-members (24) and
5 have an approximately rectangular plan shape, said first means for strengthening and interconnecting said uprights and said cross-members comprising said at least one block (25), which is approximately shaped like a parallelepiped and has a plan shape which is substantially complementary to the shape of one of said first seats (6) formed axially in
said cross-members (24), said at least one block (25) being arrangeable, during use,
10 partially inside one of said first seats (6) of said cross-members (24).

3. The panel according to claims 1 or 2, characterized in that said at least one block (25) can be rigidly coupled to the respective cross-member (24) by way of appropriately provided first screws (26) which pass through holes (27) formed in the first lateral wall (8) of an adjacent upright and can be rotatably associated with
15 complementarily threaded holes (28) formed in the upper surface of said block (25).

4. The panel according to any one of the claims 1 - 3, characterized in that block threaded holes (30) are formed at holes (18) provided in said uprights (5a, 5b) on a front surface (29) of said at least one block (25) which during use is directed toward the outside of said first seat (6) of the respective cross-member (24), said block holes (30) being
20 suitable for fixing appropriately provided second screws (31) which ensure the fixing of said at least one block (25), and therefore of the respective cross-member (24) rigidly coupled thereto, to said upright (5a).

5. The panel according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that second strengthening means (32, 37) for strengthening and guiding the mutual
25 position of two contiguous uprights are associated with said uprights (5a, 5b), two panels (1) arranged one above the other being associated therewith, said second means comprising said male element (32), which can be associated with the lower end (15) of said uprights (5a, 5b) and is constituted by a plug which has an approximately T-shaped plan configuration, so as to form a first head (33) which has an approximately rectangular
30 plan shape and has an approximately rectangular transverse cross-section and dimensions

which allow to insert it partially within said first seat (6) of said uprights (5a, 5b).

6. The panel according to claim 5, characterized in that said first head (33) can be fixed rigidly, during use, to a respective upright (5a, 5b) by way of appropriately provided third screws (34), which are inserted in holes (19) formed proximate to the lower end (15) of the respective upright (5a, 5b) and can be fixed in appropriately provided complementarily threaded holes (35) formed in said first head (33).

7. The panel according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that a first stem (36) having an approximately rectangular plan shape and beveled edges protrudes from said first head (33) of said male element (32) on the opposite side with respect to the respective upright (5a, 5b).

8. The panel according to claim 7, characterized in that said first stem (36) protrudes, during use, axially and externally with respect to the upright (5a, 5b) with which said male element (32) is associated.

9. The panel according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that said second strengthening means comprise said female element (37), which can be associated with the upper end (14) of said uprights (5a, 5b) at said first seat (6) thereof and is constituted by a plug which has an approximately U-shaped plan configuration, so as to form a first base (38), which has an approximately rectangular plan shape, an approximately rectangular transverse cross-section and such dimensions that it can be accommodated, during use, in said first seat (6) provided in an upright (5a, 5b).

10. The panel according to claim 9, characterized in that said first base (38) can be fixed to the respective upright (5a, 5b) by means of appropriately provided fourth screws (39), which can be inserted in said holes (19) formed in an upright (5a, 5b) proximate to said upper end (14) thereof and can be fixed in appropriately provided complementarily threaded holes (40) which are formed in said first base (38) and are axially aligned with said holes (19) formed in an upright.

11. The panel according to claim 9, characterized in that two first arms (41a, 41b) protrude approximately at right angles from said base (38) on the opposite side with respect to said upright (5a, 5b) and are shaped approximately like a parallelepiped with beveled edges, the mutual distance between said two first arms (41a, 41b) being such that

it is possible to accommodate between them, with a selected play, said first stem (36) of said male element (32).

12. The panel according to any of the claims 3 - 11, characterized in that the said first lateral wall (8) is shorter than said uprights (5a, 5b), so as to form first openings (16) proximate to said upper (14) and lower (15) ends thereof, said first arms (41a, 41b) of said female element being arranged, during use, approximately at a said first opening (16) of a respective said upright (5a, 5b).

13. The panel according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that once two of said panels (1) are arranged one above the other, said first stems (36) of said male element (32) associated with said uprights (5a, 5b) of said panel (1) arranged above the other panel (1) are arranged respectively in the interspace provided between said two first arms (41a, 41b) of said female elements (37) of said panel (1) that is arranged downward.

14. The panel according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that said male elements (32) and said female elements (37) allow said two contiguous panels (1) to perform axial movements and/or rotations.

15. The panel according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that said first stem (36) of said male element (32) associated with an upright (5a, 5b) can be inserted in an appropriately provided complementarily shaped third seat (42), which has a substantially rectangular plan shape and is formed at a footing (43) which is suitable to support a first panel (1), said third seat (42) having such dimensions as to allow said first stem (36) to be inserted axially therein and perform a selected rotation with respect to its plane of arrangement without escaping from said third seat (42).

16. The panel according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that second seats (11) are formed in said uprights (5a, 5b), proximate to one of their lateral ends (10), axially extend over the entire length of said uprights (5a, 5b) and have an approximately T-shaped transverse cross-section, so as to form a first access port (12) and two first abutments (13) which affect said second seats (11) along their entire length, said panel (1) comprising said third limiting means for limiting the mutual rotation of two contiguous said uprights (5a, 5b), of two panels (1) arranged mutually side by side, said

third limiting means being constituted by said springs (44) which are suitable to ensure that the various panels (1) that are mutually laterally adjacent do not separate during an explosion, thus ensuring that the continuity of the curtain wall is maintained also in a horizontal direction.

5 17. The panel according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that said springs (44) are constituted by a lamina which is extruded or folded so as to assume an approximately U-shaped plan configuration having a second approximately flat base (45), whose dimensions are such that it can be accommodated during use within two of said second mutually facing seats (11) of two mutually mated uprights (5a, 5b).

10 18. The panel according to claim 17, characterized in that said second base (45) of said springs (44) is arranged, during use, within one of said second seats (11) adjacent to said second side wall (17) of an upright (5a, 5b) and can be fixed thereto by way of appropriately provided first pins (46), which can be fixed in appropriately provided eighth holes formed in said second side wall (17).

15 19. The panel according to claim 18, characterized in that two second arms (47a, 47b) protrude from said second base (45), are substantially flat and approximately mutually parallel, and are connected to said second base (45) by means of an inclined portion which facilitates their elastic flexing in the direction of their mutual approach.

20 20. The panel according to claim 19, characterized in that the length of said two second arms (47a, 47b) is shorter than the sum of the distance formed by the space between two of said second mutually facing seats (11) of two mutually mated uprights (5a, 5b).

25 21. The panel according to claim 20, characterized in that the free ends of said two second arms (47a, 47b), which are arranged approximately halfway along the depth of the respective second seat (11), are folded toward the outside of said spring (44) and toward said second base (45), forming respectively two inclined hooks (48a, 48b) which can be arranged, during use, within said second seat (11) of an adjacent upright (5a).

30 22. The panel according to claim 21, characterized in that said hooks (48a, 48b) can engage, during use, respectively said first abutments (13) formed in said second seats (11) so as to prevent their escape from them through said first access port (12).

23. The panel according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that said fixing means for fixing panels (1) to the load-bearing structure (49) of a building comprise said support (50) which is shaped approximately like a parallelepiped and axially to which two said support seats (51) are provided, which have an approximately T-shaped transverse cross-section, so as to form a second access port (52) and two second longitudinal abutments (53a, 53b), which affect said seats (51) of said support (50) along their entire length, second openings (54) being provided in axial alignment with said second access port (52), on the opposite side thereof, and affecting said support (50), appropriately provided second pins (55) being insertable therein and being fixable to said load-bearing structure (49).

24. The panel according to claim 23, characterized in that said at least one bracket (56) can be associated slidingly with said support seats (51) and has an approximately T-shaped plan configuration so as to form said head (57), which is substantially shaped like a parallelepiped and can be associated slidingly with a said support seat (51), an internally threaded hole (58) being formed approximately axially with respect to said head (57).

25. The panel according to claim 24, characterized in that a second stem (59) protrudes from said head (57) approximately at right angles, is substantially plate-like, and can be inserted within said first seat (6) of one of said uprights (5a, 5b) through an appropriately provided third opening formed therein proximate to said upper end (14) of the upright.

26. The panel according to claim 25, characterized in that said second stem (59) can be fixed to the respective said upright by means of fifth screws (60), which can be associated with appropriately provided holes (61) formed in said first side walls (8) and can be fixed in complementary threaded holes (62) formed in said second stem (59), the axial position of said brackets (56) with respect to said support (50) being adjustable by way of appropriately provided adjustment means (63).

27. The panel according to claim 26, characterized in that said adjustment means are constituted by sixth screws (63), the threaded stem of which cooperates with said complementarily threaded holes (58) which are associated axially with said second heads (57) and with the interposition of a perforated plate (64), which is suitable to abut against

the upper transverse edge of said support seats (51) in order to prevent the downward escape of said heads (57).