

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property
Organization
International Bureau

(43) International Publication Date
30 December 2020 (30.12.2020)



(10) International Publication Number
WO 2020/260705 A1

(51) International Patent Classification:
B63B 1/36 (2006.01) *B63B 1/38* (2006.01)

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/EP2020/068282

(22) International Filing Date:
29 June 2020 (29.06.2020)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
S2019/0104 27 June 2019 (27.06.2019) IE

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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every
kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM,
AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BN, BR, BW, BY, BZ,
CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DJ, DK, DM, DO,
DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN,
HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IR, IS, JO, JP, KE, KG, KH, KN, KP,
KR, KW, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME,
MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ,
OM, PA, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SA,
SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR,
TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, WS, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every
kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH,
GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, RW, SD, SL, ST, SZ, TZ,
UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, RU, TJ,
TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK,
EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV,
MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM,

(54) Title: LOW-COST VISCOUS-DRAG-REDUCING CLADDING

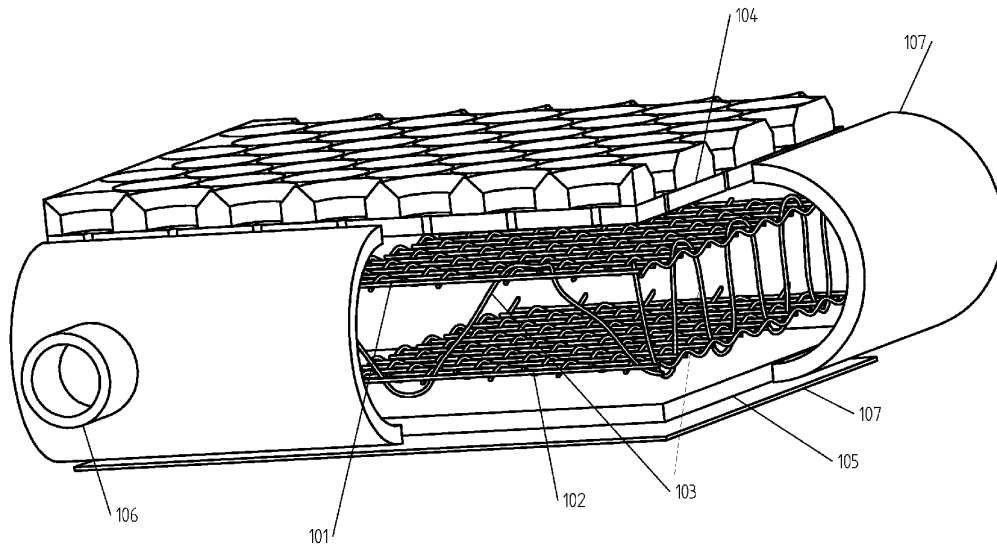


Fig 1

(57) Abstract: A low-cost viscous-drag-reducing cladding for a ship's hull comprising airbags whose outer surfaces are adapted to be water repelling. Each airbag comprises a plenum that comprises substantially open space, which does not obstruct the flow of air through it. The airbags are inflated with compressed air to a pressure higher than the adjoining hydrostatic pressure. The airbag material comprises a reinforcing fabric, which is adapted to withstand the forces encountered during operation, and is sealed with a sealant so as to be made substantially impermeable to air. The outer water-repelling surface of each airbag is connected to a plenum by means of restrictor holes. Air flows from the plenum through the restrictor holes into the water-repelling layer.

[Continued on next page]



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TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW,
KM, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

- *with international search report (Art. 21(3))*
- *before the expiration of the time limit for amending the
claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of
amendments (Rule 48.2(h))*