

**Internal distribution code:**

- (A) [ - ] Publication in OJ
- (B) [ - ] To Chairmen and Members
- (C) [ - ] To Chairmen
- (D) [ X ] No distribution

**Datasheet for the decision  
of 12 March 2014**

**Case Number:** T 2460/10 - 3.2.01

**Application Number:** 06818599.0

**Publication Number:** 1948506

**IPC:** B64D11/00, B61D37/00

**Language of the proceedings:** EN

**Title of invention:**

Attachment structure for affixing interior equipment components of an aircraft passenger cabin

**Applicant:**

Airbus Operations GmbH

**Headword:**

**Relevant legal provisions:**

EPC Art. 54(1)

**Keyword:**

Novelty - (no)

**Decisions cited:**

**Catchword:**



**Beschwerdekammern  
Boards of Appeal  
Chambres de recours**

European Patent Office  
D-80298 MUNICH  
GERMANY  
Tel. +49 (0) 89 2399-0  
Fax +49 (0) 89 2399-4465

Case Number: T 2460/10 - 3.2.01

**D E C I S I O N**  
**of Technical Board of Appeal 3.2.01**  
**of 12 March 2014**

**Appellant:** Airbus Operations GmbH  
(Applicant) Kreetslag 10  
21129 Hamburg (DE)

**Representative:** Kopf, Korbinian Paul  
Maiwald Patentanwalts GmbH  
Elisenhof  
Elisenstrasse 3  
80335 München (DE)

**Decision under appeal:** **Decision of the Examining Division of the European Patent Office posted on 16 July 2010 refusing European patent application No. 06818599.0 pursuant to Article 97(2) EPC.**

**Composition of the Board:**

**Chairman:** G. Pricolo  
**Members:** C. Narcisi  
P. Guntz

## **Summary of Facts and Submissions**

- I. The European patent application No. 06818599.0 was refused by the decision of the Examining Division posted on 16 July 2010. Against this decision an appeal was lodged by the Applicant on 13 September 2010 and the appeal fee was paid at the same time. The statement of grounds of appeal was filed on 26 November 2010.
- II. Oral proceedings were held on 12 March 2014. The Appellant (Applicant) requested that the decision be set aside and that a patent be granted on the basis of claim 1 of the main and sole request as filed during the oral proceedings. The request for reimbursement of the appeal fee, as submitted with the notice of appeal, was withdrawn.

Claim 1 reads as follows:

"Fuselage cabin comprising an aircraft structure comprising frame elements (5) and stringers (6), a cabin floor and an attachment structure for affixing interior equipment components (9) in an aircraft passenger cabin,  
the attachment structure comprises  
suspension devices (2),  
a system support (1),  
wherein the frame elements (5) are arranged so as to be spaced apart from each other with a first spacing in longitudinal direction of the fuselage cabin;  
wherein the suspension devices (2) are arranged so that they extend in planes defined by the frame elements (5), so that a free end of the suspension devices (2) extend in the direction of the passenger cabin, at which free end of the suspension devices (2) the system support (1) is attached to the suspension devices (2)

such that the system support is attached to the aircraft structure;  
wherein the suspension devices are attached at least indirectly to the frame elements (5);  
wherein the suspension devices (2) are arranged for attaching the system support (1) above the cabin floor (12) to the aircraft structure (5, 66);  
wherein the the system support (1) extends above the cabin floor of the fuselage cabin along more than two frame elements (5);  
wherein the system support (1) has a longitudinal extension along which the system support (1) comprises a plurality of attachment elements, evenly spaced apart from each other with a second spacing for affixing interior equipment components (9); and  
wherein the second spacing of the attachment elements is smaller than the first spacing of the frame elements (5)."

III. The Appellant's arguments may be summarized as follows:

1. The subject-matter of claim 1 is new over D1 (US-B1-6 883 753). Specifically D1 does not disclose the features implying that (i) "a free end of the suspension devices (2) extend in the direction of the passenger cabin, at which free end of the suspension devices (2) the system support (1) is attached to the suspension devices (2)" and implying that (ii) "the system support (1) extends above the cabin floor of the fuselage cabin along more than two frame elements (5)". As to feature (i) it appears from figures 1 and 2 of D1 that on the assumption that the bracket 28 (D1, figures 1,2) represents a "suspension device" according to claim 1, still said suspension device 28 does not have a free end within the meaning of claim 1. Indeed, the lower end of the bracket 28, to which the "system

support" (bin bridge) 14 is attached, does not stand out and is not clearly distinguished from the frame elements 16 and likewise does not project or protrude in the direction of the passenger cabin of the aircraft. Furthermore, feature (ii) is not disclosed by the embodiment of figures 1,2 and 6 of D1, given that the wording of claim 1 evidently requires the system support (1) to be formed by a single constructional part with a longitudinal extension and having a plurality of attachment elements evenly spaced from each other. By contrast, D1 shows (see figure 6) separate and distinct constructional elements 26 (bin bridge) and 93 (monument bridge), which moreover do not include evenly spaced attachment elements along their entire length. It ensues that the subject-matter of claim 1 is new over D1, given that features (i) and (ii) are not known from D1.

### **Reasons for the Decision**

1. The appeal is admissible.
2. The subject-matter of claim 1 lacks novelty over D1. In effect, D1 generally discloses an aircraft structure (see figures 1,2,6) comprising frame elements 16 and stringers (such longitudinal stiffening members are necessarily present in any aircraft structure; tie rod 108 in figures 4 and 6 is just an example), a cabin floor and an attachment structure (column 1, lines 1-4; figure 2) for affixing interior equipment components in an aircraft passenger cabin. The attachment structure comprises suspension devices 28 (figures 1, 2) and a system support 14,24,26,27 (column 3, lines 44-47), wherein the frame elements 16 are spaced apart from each other with a first spacing in a longitudinal

direction of the fuselage cabin. The suspension devices 28 extend in planes defined by the frame elements 16 (see in particular figure 2) and are attached to the frame elements 16 (see figure 2, fasteners 42). The suspension devices 28 are arranged for attaching the system support 14 above the cabin floor to the aircraft structure (see figures 1, 2), wherein the system support 14 has a longitudinal extension along which a plurality of attachment elements 20 (column 3, lines 32-36; see figures 1, 2) are disposed, evenly spaced apart from each other with a second spacing for affixing interior equipment components 18 (figures 1, 2), wherein the second spacing is smaller than the first spacing of the frame elements 16.

It was not disputed by the Appellant that the above mentioned features of claim 1 are known from D1. As to contested features (i) and (ii) it is noted first that the suspension devices 28 disclosed in D1 are fixed at their one end to the frame elements 16 (see above; see figure 2), whereas at their opposite end the support system 14 is attached (see figure 2; column 3, line 66-column 4, line 6). Further, figure 2 shows that the forward and rearward brackets 30, 34 constituting suspension device (bracket) 28 (column 3, line 66-column 4, line 6) extend and protrude into the direction of the passenger cabin at said opposite end of the suspension device (see figure 2, lowermost part of lower portion 31 of bracket 28; column 3, lines 52-53), such that coupling of the system support 14 to this protruding portion of the suspension device 28 is rendered possible via pins 38 and pin attachment holes 35. Thus, it results clearly and unambiguously from figures 1 and 2 that said opposite end of the suspension device 28 is spaced and stands out from the frame elements 16, thereby constituting a free end of

the suspension devices 28. Feature (i) is therefore known from D1.

Concerning feature (ii) it is noted that the wording of claim 1 does not provide any indication as to the specific configuration and the structure of said support system, except for the indication that it has a longitudinal extension and comprises a plurality of evenly spaced attachment elements. Hence claim 1 does not allow by any means to distinguish said support system from the support system as disclosed in figure 6 of D1, which comprises said bin bridge 14, 26 and further comprises monument bridge 93 (column 6, lines 30-44). In effect, both said bin bridge and said monument bridge extend longitudinally and include evenly spaced attachment elements (see monument bridge 93 in figure 4, reference sign 99; column 5, lines 29-36), wherein the two bridges together extend along more than two frame elements 16 (see figure 6; along three frame elements). The fact that the bin bridge and the monument bridge do not form a single integral piece is immaterial, given that claim 1 does not require that the support system be integrally formed. Finally, monument bridge 93 is attached to the free ends 102, 106 of respective suspension devices (brackets) 100 and 104 (figure 4; column 5, lines 37-42), in very much the same way as for bin bridge 14 and suspension devices (brackets) 28.

In view of the above reasons the subject-matter of claim 1 lacks novelty over D1 (Art. 54 (1) EPC).

**Order**

**For these reasons it is decided that:**

The appeal is dismissed.

The Registrar:

The Chairman:



A. Vottner

G. Pricolo

Decision electronically authenticated