



Press release dated July 24, 2020

BARDEHLE PAGENBERG's client LIVINGUARD AG launches a reusable face mask that inactivates SARS-CoV-2

Researchers at Freie Universität Berlin and RWTH Aachen have shown that the textiles used in face masks by the Swiss company Livinguard AG inactivate up to 99.9% of SarS-CoV-2 within a few hours.¹ The tests were carried out in the course of the EIT health project ViruShield funded by the European Union, which aims to find alternative materials for face masks for personal protective equipment.

The textiles are treated with active agents that give them a surface with a highly positive charge. The shell membrane of corona viruses and other pathogens, which is negatively charged, is attracted by the positively charged textile and then torn open and thus destroyed. The antiviral treatment is applied to the inside and outside of the masks, which is expected to reduce the risk of infection by the mask being touched, e.g. when it is put on or taken off. They are washable and can be reused up to 200 times.

BARDEHLE PAGENBERG has been comprehensively advising LIVINGUARD in all areas of intellectual property law since the end of 2014. Initial patent applications for the manufacture of antimicrobial textiles were filed in 2015. At the time, the focus was use in filters for drinking water that safely eliminate germs in contaminated water when the water flows through several layers of the antimicrobial textile. The founder of LIVINGUARD, Sanjeev Swamy, and his team succeeded in binding the antimicrobial agents to the textile so strongly that they ensure great efficiency on the one hand whilst being unable to leach into the drinking water on the other.

Now, the textile can also be used for an antiviral filtering face mask: such use requires extremely strong antimicrobial efficacy since the minute viruses are harder to destroy than bacteria. Moreover, the textile touches the mouth and the nose, which is why the active agents must remain on the textile. In contrast to many conventional antimicrobial textiles, no metals such as silver, which are increasingly classified as harmful to health, are used here.

From the very beginning, LIVINGUARD ensured that it had strong patent protection for its innovative technologies. Since they were used in products such as filters for drinking water or reusable sanitary pads, which are particularly used in developing

BARDEHLE PAGENBERG

Prinzregentenplatz 7
81675 München
T +49.(0)89.928 05-0
F +49.(0)89.928 05-444
info@bardehle.de
www.bardehle.com

BARDEHLE PAGENBERG
Partnerschaft mbB
Patentanwälte Rechtsanwälte
Amtsgericht München
Partnerschaftsregister 1152
ISO 9001 certified

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¹ Link to the press release of FU Berlin: https://www.fu-berlin.de/en/presse/informationen/fup/2020/fup_20_096-gesichtsmasken-corona/index.html



countries, the patent applications were made pending in 39 patent offices across the globe in 2017 – which is an extraordinarily high number for a start-up company that had approximately 30 employees at the time. During the pandemic, this geographically broad protection has proven advantageous to LIVINGUARD, which is distributing millions of its masks in virtually all regions of the world. More than 15 patent applications have now been granted and another 150 are pending worldwide. Furthermore, BARDEHLE PAGENBERG is coordinating the registration of LIVINGUARD’s trademarks, in approximately 70 countries to date.

At the beginning of May, our firm’s team were happy to receive a delivery of 300 of the antiviral masks. The users are very satisfied, since the masks are pleasant to wear and do not cause the wearer’s glasses to steam up. The latter fact was jokingly referred to as “an indication of inventive step in its own right” by a judge of the German Federal Patent Court who saw attorneys of the firm wearing the masks in a hearing.

Representatives of Livinguard AG: BARDEHLE PAGENBERG (Munich)

In patent matters: Dr. Christof Karl (Attorney-at-Law (Rechtsanwalt) & German and European Patent Attorney, Partner)

In trademark matters: Claus M. Eckhardt (Attorney-at-Law (Rechtsanwalt), Partner)

BARDEHLE PAGENBERG combines the professional expertise of attorneys, patent attorneys, professional representatives before the European Patent Office, specialized trademark lawyers and qualified technical consultants. Our consulting services are tailored to our clients' individual needs and the specific circumstances of each case.

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Press contact:

Gabriela Tröger
Marketing & PR
Prinzregentenplatz 7
81675 München

T +49.(0)89.928 05-0
F +49.(0)89.928 05-444
gabriela.troeger@bardehle.de
www.bardehle.com