1. A continuous method for the separation of a mixture of isomeric phenylenediamine said mixture comprising meta-phenylenediamine, ortho-phenylenediamine and para-phenylenediamine by a main distillation stage or by a secondary distillation stage followed by a main distillation stage, in which method the main distillation stage is performed using a divided wall column, wherein a side-draw product having a purity of at least 99.7% by weight of meta-phenylenediamine is obtained.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the mixture of isomeric phenylenediamine being distilled comprises 75 to 95% by weight of meta-phenylenediamine, 5 to 25% by weight of a mixture of ortho-phenylenediamine and para-phenylenediamine, 0 to 15% by weight of tars, and 0 to 2% by weight of a mixture of water and aniline.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the divided wall column comprises: a divided wall provided vertically inside the column shell, defining a divided wall section between an upper undivided section as a rectifying zone for concentrating lower-boiling components of having a lower boiling point than meta-phenylenediamine and a lower undivided section as a stripping zone for concentrating higher-boiling components of having a higher boiling point than meta-phenylenediamine; a divided wall section arranged between the rectifying zone and the stripping zone having a vertical dividing wall dividing the inner space of the divided wall section into a pre-fractionation zone at one side of the divided wall and a main fractionation zone at the opposite side of the divided wall; an inlet for the feed of the mixture of isomeric phenylenediamine in the pre-fractionation zone, a side draw outlet for the purified meta-phenylenediamine in the main fractionation zone, an overhead product drawn off from the rectification zone, and a bottoms product from the stripping zone.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the main distillation stage does not include any other distillation column in addition to the divided wall column.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the distillation is performed in two distillation stage, i.e. a secondary distillation stage with a de-tarring distillation column prior to the main distillation stage with a divided wall column, wherein the distillation in the secondary distillation stage is performed so that higher-boiling components include tars are removed from the phenylenediamine before it is fed to the main distillation stage.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein overhead product from the secondary distillation stage is introduced into the main distillation stage.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the overhead product from the main distillation stage is subjected to further distillation to obtain high purity ortho-phenylenediamine and para-phenylenediamine, respectively.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein a pressure and a temperature at the top of the divided wall column are in the ranges of 20 to 555 mbar and 150 to 240°C, respectively.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein a pressure and a temperature at the bottom of the divided wall column are in the ranges of 50 to 600 mbar and of 180 to 265°C, respectively.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the mass transfer elements are selected from the group consisting of trays, random packings, structured packings and any combinations thereof.