

Method for producing dienes by hydrodimerization

The present invention relates to a process for preparing substituted or unsubstituted 1,7-diolefins by hydrodimerizing non-cyclic olefins having at least two conjugated double bonds in the presence of a reducing agent and of a metal-carbene complex.

1,7-Octadiene is used as a comonomer or for the subsequent crosslinking of polyolefins for the production of plastics. In addition, substituted or unsubstituted 1,7-diolefins constitute valuable starting materials for the production of α,ω -diols or α,ω -diamines or sebacic acid, which are in turn of interest for the preparation of polyesters or polyamides or alkyd resins. Moreover, 1,7-octadiene serves as a reactant for the preparation of 1-octene - a comonomer for plastics production.

Processes for preparing 1,7-octadiene from 1,3-butadiene by means of hydrodimerization are described by numerous publications.

Gardner et al. describe, in Tetrahedron Lett. 2 (1972) 163-164, the reaction of 1,3-butadiene with formic acid in the presence of various catalysts, for example diacetopalladium(II) ($\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$), Li_2PtCl_4 or palladium complexes with phosphine ligands, to give 1,6-octadiene. It is likewise stated that, in a reaction of 1,3-butadiene with formic acid in dimethylformamide and in the presence of an Li_2PtCl_4 catalyst, up to 80% of 1,7-octadiene is formed.

Roffia et al. describe, in J. Organomet. Chem. 55 (1973) 405-407, likewise the reaction of 1,3-butadiene with formic acid. The catalyst precursor used is $(\text{PPh}_3)\text{PdCl}_2$ which is reduced under the reaction conditions specified. The product obtained is a mixture of 1,3,7-octatriene, 1,7-octadiene and 1,6-octadiene.

In J. Mol. Catal., 15 (1982) 377-381, Pittmann et al. describe the use of catalysts based on palladium with phosphine ligands for the preparation of 1,7-octadiene.
5 The highest selectivity of 93% based on 1,7-octadiene is achieved here when triethylphosphine ligands are used.

EP 0 004 408 B1 and EP 0 004 410 B1 describe a process
10 for preparing 1,7-octadiene from 1,3-butadiene in the presence of a palladium-phosphine catalyst. EP 0 004 410 additionally describes the use of palladium, platinum or rhodium on an inert support material as a cocatalyst.

15 EP 0 007 666 B1 likewise describes a process for preparing 1,7-octadiene from 1,3-butadiene in the presence of a palladium-phosphine catalyst; this process features the use of formates as a reducing
20 agent.

EP 0 012 472 and EP 0 012 475 disclose a process in which 1,7-octadiene is prepared in the presence of a palladium catalyst and tertiary organophosphorus
25 compounds, for example organophosphonites or organophosphinites or mixtures thereof, from 1,3-butadiene and formic acid or formates.

EP 0 008 139 B1 describes a process for preparing
30 1,7-octadiene from 1,3-butadiene in the presence of a palladium catalyst, tertiary phosphines and of a solvent selected from dialkyl sulphoxides and dialkylformamides, in the absence of a base.

35 The two published specifications DE 30 24 877 A1 and DE 30 24 878 A1 describe a process for hydrodimerizing 1,3-butadiene to 1,7-octadiene by means of a palladium-

phosphine catalyst, the reducing agent used being hydrogen or a hydrogen-carbon dioxide mixture.

The published specification DE 30 24 879 A1 describes a process for hydrodimerizing 1,3-butadiene to 1,7-octadiene by means of a palladium-phosphine catalyst and a reducing agent, the solvent used being an oxygen-containing nitrogen heterocycle. After the distillative removal of the 1,7-octadiene, the catalyst-containing distillation bottoms are returned to the hydrodimerization.

The published specification DE 30 34 098 A1 describes a process for preparing alkadienes by hydrodimerizing 1,3-butadiene or isoprene in the presence of a palladium or platinum catalyst in a sulpholane solution, the reaction mixture comprising tertiary alkylamine formates and phosphine compounds. Here too, the catalyst is removed after the hydrodimerization and then returned to the hydrodimerization.

JP 09-087207 A describes the dimerization of alkadienes, for example 1,3-butadiene, in the presence of a reducing agent and of a palladium phosphinite catalyst. In this case, yields of 94.7% of octadiene are achieved, the purity of the 1,7-octadiene being 97.1%.

EP 0 704 417 A2 describes a process for preparing octadienes from 1,3-butadiene and formic acid in the presence of a palladium catalyst having phosphorus ligands, the pressure of the system being not more than the vapour pressure of the butadiene. The quantitative ratio of 1,7-octadiene to 1,6-octadiene in the product is 89:11.

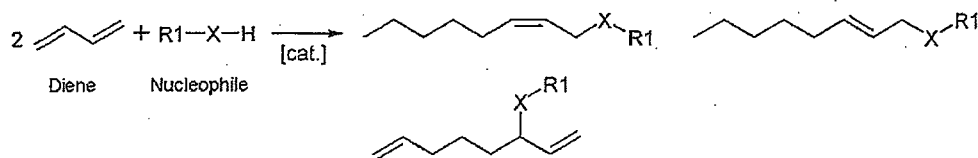
DE 101 49 347 A1 discloses a process for preparing 1-octene in a two-stage process. In the first step,

1,3-butadiene is converted in the presence of a telomerization catalyst and of a reducing agent to 1,7-octadiene; in the second step, the 1,7-octadiene is partially hydrogenated to 1-octene. The telomerization catalysts described are numerous nickel, rhodium, palladium and platinum compounds, also including Pd(0) compounds with carbene ligands. Suitable carbene ligands mentioned include 1,3-disubstituted 2,3-dihydro-1H-imidazol-2-ylidenes, 1,3-disubstituted 4,5-dihydro-1H-triazol-5-ylidenes and, in some cases, 2,3-dihydrothiazol-2-ylidenes.

WO 2005/047217 and WO 2005/047218 each disclose a process for preparing 1-octene in a two-stage process. In the first process step, 1,3-butadiene is converted in the presence of a palladium complex which comprises one or more trisubstituted monodentate phosphorus compounds and of a hydrogen donor in an aprotic polar solvent to 1,7-octadiene.

DE 101 28 144 A1 discloses a process for telomerizing non-cyclic olefins having at least two conjugated double bonds with nucleophiles, the catalyst used being a palladium-carbene complex.

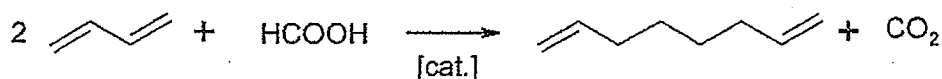
A telomerization is understood to mean the reaction of olefins with conjugated double bonds in the presence of nucleophiles. The products formed are compounds which are formed from two equivalents of the diene and one equivalent of the nucleophile, the product being a mixture of a plurality of compounds - as shown by Reaction Scheme 1.



Reaction Scheme 1

The main products formed in a telomerization are 1-substituted 2,7-octadienes; the by-products formed here are 3-substituted 1,7-octadienes. When telomerization catalysts modified with carbene ligands are used, ratios of main product to by-product of up to 98:2 are achieved (Chem. Eur. J. 10 (2004) 3891-3900).

In contrast, in a hydrodimerization, two equivalents of an olefin having conjugated double bonds are converted in the presence of a reducing agent according to Reaction Scheme 2:



Reaction Scheme 2

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The reducing agent used in a hydrodimerization serves as a hydrogen provider; in the case of formic acid as the reducing agent, the co-product formed is carbon dioxide. The main product of the hydrodimerization of 1,3-butadiene is 1,7-octadiene.

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The processes for hydrodimerizing 1,3-butadiene to 1,7-octadiene in the presence of phosphorus-modified palladium catalysts have low productivity (TON), activity (TOF) and/or selectivity, these being defined as follows:

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$$\text{TON} = n(\text{product})/n(\text{catalyst}) \text{ or}$$

30

$$\text{TOF} = n(\text{product})/[n(\text{catalyst}) \cdot \text{time}]$$

$$\text{Selectivity} = n(\text{product})/[n(\text{product}) + n(\text{by-products})].$$

Generally, trivalent phosphorus compounds are oxygen-sensitive and are easily oxidized to the corresponding pentavalent phosphorus species, which is accompanied by

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deactivation of the catalyst. Owing to their high sensitivity, the recycling of these phosphorus-modified palladium catalysts is performable with difficulty and industrially only with large losses of activity.

5 Palladium(II)-phosphine complexes are reduced under the reaction conditions of the hydrodimerization to form thermally unstable intermediates. When palladium complexes are modified with trialkylphosphines, this forms active catalysts which are selective for the

10 1,7-octadiene. Trialkylphosphines are, however, pyrophoric, expensive and difficult to use on the industrial scale. The triarylphosphines, which can be handled better, exhibit, in comparison to the trialkylphosphines, a significantly poorer selectivity in the

15 hydrodimerization. In the prior art processes, these phosphine compounds are added to the hydrodimerization in excess. In the handling of phosphonites and phosphinites too in industrial scale plants, precautionary measures have to be taken, since these

20 compounds are hydrolysis- and acid-sensitive. The use of formic acid or formic acid derivatives in the hydrodimerization has a correspondingly adverse effect on the stability of phosphonite or phosphinite-modified catalysts.

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It was therefore an object of the present invention to provide a process for preparing substituted or unsubstituted 1,7-diolefins by hydrodimerization, which features simplified handling of the catalyst and also a

30 high catalyst productivity. In particular, high selectivities with regard to the substituted or unsubstituted 1,7-octadiene should be achieved.

It has been found that, surprisingly, substituted or

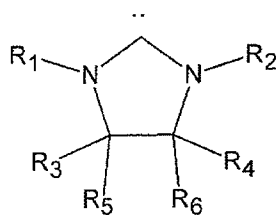
35 unsubstituted 1,7-diolefins can be prepared by hydrodimerizing non-cyclic olefins having at least two conjugated double bonds in the presence of a reducing agent and of a catalyst by a novel process, wherein the

catalyst used is a metal-carbene complex which has a metal of group 8 to 10 of the Periodic Table and at least one carbene ligand. The process according to the invention has an improved selectivity and also a higher productivity compared to prior art processes. In the process according to the invention, for example in the hydrodimerization of 1,3-butadiene with formic acid, catalyst productivities of greater than 10 000 can be realized. In particular, it was found that, in the case of use of stabilizers for the non-cyclic olefins selected from alkylated phenols and stable N-oxyl radicals, smaller amounts of catalyst are required in comparison to the use of 4-tert-butylcatechol - the stabilizer according to the prior art. Moreover, this process variant of the process according to the invention features low by-product formation. The process according to the invention thus has a higher process reliability compared to prior art processes, and also a high catalyst productivity.

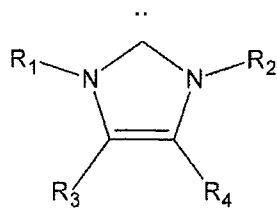
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The invention provides a process for preparing substituted or unsubstituted 1,7-diolefins by hydrodimerizing non-cyclic olefins having at least two conjugated double bonds in the presence of a reducing agent and of a catalyst, characterized in that the catalyst used is a metal-carbene complex which has a metal of group 8 to 10 of the Periodic Table and at least one carbene ligand of the structure 1, 2, 3 or 4

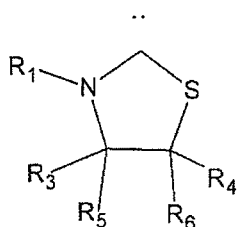
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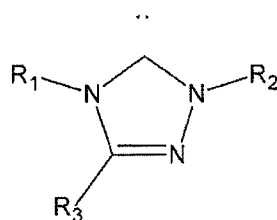
(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)

where:

$R_1, R_2 = -(CH_2)_n-B$

B = mono- or polycyclic aryl group having 6 to 14 carbon atoms or mono- or polycyclic heterocycle having 5 to 14 carbon atoms and heteroatoms, where this heterocycle has 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from the group of N, O and S,

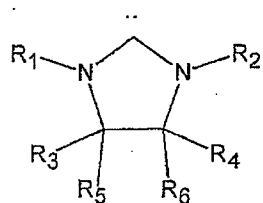
n = 0-4

R_3, R_4, R_5 and R_6 = hydrogen, alkyl, heteroaryl, aryl, -CN, -COOH, -COO-alkyl, -COO-aryl, -OCO-alkyl, OCO-aryl, -OCOO-alkyl, OCOO-aryl, -CHO, -CO-alkyl, -CO-aryl, -NH₂, -NH(alkyl), -N(alkyl)₂, NH(aryl), -N(aryl)₂, -F, -Cl, -Br, -I, -OH, -CF₃, -NO₂, -ferrocenyl, -SO₃H, -PO₃H₂, where the alkyl groups have 1 to 12 carbon atoms and the aryl groups 5 to 14 carbon atoms, and the substituents of the R_3 and R_4 type may also be part of a bridging aliphatic or aromatic ring,

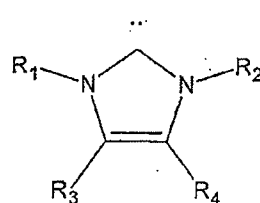
and the substituents of the R_1 and R_2 type are the same or different and are substituted or unsubstituted, and the substituents of the R_3, R_4, R_5 and R_6 type are likewise the same or different and are substituted or unsubstituted and formic acid and/or formates are used as the reducing agent.

In the process according to the invention for preparing substituted or unsubstituted 1,7-diolefins by hydrodimerizing non-cyclic olefins having at least two conjugated double bonds in the presence of a reducing agent and of a catalyst, the catalyst used is a metal-carbene complex which has a metal of group 8 to 10 of the Periodic Table and at least one carbene ligand of the structure 1, 2, 3 or 4

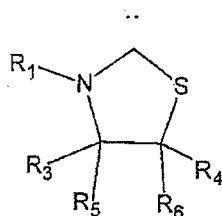
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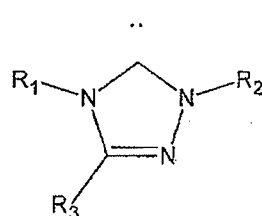
(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)

where:

R_1, R_2

B

15

$= -(\text{CH}_2)_n-\text{B}$

= mono- or polycyclic aryl group having 6 to 14 carbon atoms or mono- or polycyclic heterocycle having 5 to 14 carbon atoms and heteroatoms, where this heterocycle has 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from the group of N, O and S, but preferably monocyclic aryl group having 6 carbon atoms,

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n

= 0-4, preferably 0-1, more preferably 0,

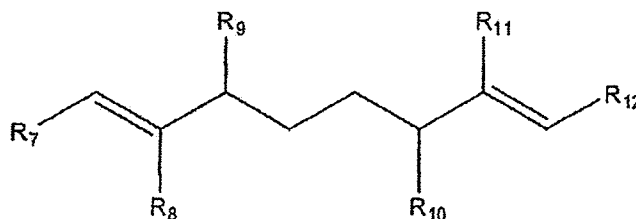
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R₃, R₄, R₅ and R₆ = hydrogen, alkyl, heteroaryl, aryl, -CN, -COOH, -COO-alkyl, -COO-aryl, -OCO-alkyl, OCO-aryl, -OCOO-alkyl, OCOO-aryl, -CHO, -CO-alkyl, -CO-aryl, -NH₂, -NH(alkyl), -N(alkyl)₂, NH(aryl), -N(aryl)₂, -F, -Cl, -Br, -I, -OH, -CF₃, -NO₂, -ferrocenyl, -SO₃H, -PO₃H₂, where the alkyl groups have 1 to 12 carbon atoms and the aryl groups 5 to 14 carbon atoms, and the substituents of the R₃ and R₄ type may also be part of a bridging aliphatic or aromatic ring,

and the substituents of the R₁ and R₂ type are the same or different and are substituted or unsubstituted, and the substituents of the R₃, R₄, R₅ and R₆ type are likewise the same or different and are substituted or unsubstituted and formic acid and/or formates are used as the reducing agent.

In the context of this invention, substituted or unsubstituted 1,7-diolefins are understood to mean compounds of the structure 9:



(9)

where R₇ to R₁₂ are each independently an alkyl group, which in particular has 1 to 4 carbon atoms, preferably

one carbon atom, or a halogen group, especially chlorine.

In a particular embodiment of the process according to the invention, the metal-carbene complexes have carbene ligands with substituents of the R_1 , R_2 , R_3 , R_4 , R_5 or R_6 type, which have at least one substituent from the group of H, -CN, -COOH, -COO-alkyl, -COO-aryl, -OCO-alkyl, -OCO-aryl, -OCOO-alkyl, -OCOO-aryl, -CHO, -CO-alkyl, -CO-aryl, -NH₂, -NH(alkyl), -N(alkyl)₂, NH(aryl), -N(aryl)₂, -F, -Cl, -Br, -I, -OH, -CF₃, -NO₂, -ferrocenyl, -SO₃H, -PO₃H₂, where the alkyl groups contain 1 to 12 carbon atoms and the aryl groups 5 to 14 carbon atoms.

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In the process according to the invention, preference is given to using metal-carbene complexes which have a metal selected from nickel, rhodium, palladium and/or the metal. However, particular preference is given to using metal-carbene complexes which have palladium as the metal.

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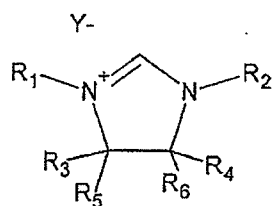
In the context of this invention, carbene ligands are understood to mean both free carbenes which can function as ligands and carbenes coordinated to the metal. In the process according to the invention, preference is given to using metal-carbene complexes which have at least one carbene ligand selected from structures 1 to 4 where R_3 to R_6 = hydrogen. The metal-carbene complexes used preferably have at least one carbene ligand of the structure 2 where R_3 and R_4 are each hydrogen. Particular preference is given to using metal-carbene complexes which have at least one carbene ligand of the structure 2 where R_3 and R_4 are each hydrogen and R_1 and R_2 , where $n = 0$, and B are each a phenyl or 2,4,6-trimethylphenyl group.

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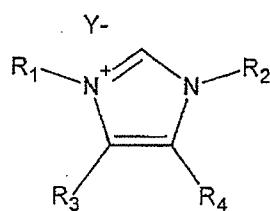
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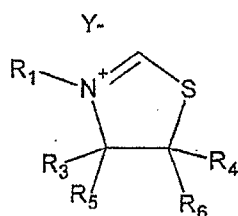
- Examples of carbene ligands which correspond to the general structures 1 or 2, and complexes which contain such ligands, are already described in the technical literature (W.A. Herrmann, C. Köcher, *Angew. Chem.* **1997**, *109*, 2257; *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed. Engl.* **1997**, *36*, 2162; V.P.W. Böhm, C.W.K. Gstöttmayr, T. Weskamp, W.A. Herrmann, *J. Organomet. Chem.* **2000**, *595*, 186; DE 44 47 066).
- 10 The catalyst metal, which is preferably palladium and with which the active catalysts form under the reaction conditions, can be introduced into the process according to the invention in various ways:
- 15 a.) as a palladium-carbene complex, where the palladium is present preferably in the (II) or (0) oxidation states,
- b.) in the form of precursors from which the catalysts
20 are formed in situ. This can be done by widening the ligand sphere or by breaking up bridge structures, proceeding from metal salts or metal complexes. A further possibility is the exchange of ligands which coordinate on the central metal by the carbene ligands.
- 25 Preference is given here to using palladium(0) and/or palladium(II) compounds; particular preference is given to using palladium(II) acetate, palladium(II) acetylacetonate and/or bis(dibenzylideneacetone)palladium(0). The carbene ligands of the structures 1 to 4 are used
30 in the form of free carbenes or as metal complexes, or obtained in situ from carbene precursors. Suitable carbene precursors are, for example, salts of the carbenes of structures 5 to 8



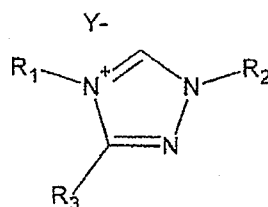
(5)



(6)



(7)



(8)

where the substituents of the R_1 to R_6 type are each as defined in the structures 1 to 4, and Y is a singly charged anionic group or, according to the stoichiometry, a proportionate amount of a multiply charged anionic group.

Examples of Y are halides, hydrogensulphate, sulphate, alkylsulphates, arylsulphates, borates, hydrogen-carbonate, carbonate, alkylcarboxylates, aryl-carboxylates. It is possible to release the corresponding carbenes from the salts of the carbenes, for example, by reaction with a base. Suitable bases are, for example, metal hydrides, metal alkoxides, carbonyl metallates, metal carboxylates, metal amides or metal hydroxides.

The amount is highly dependent upon the type of base used. In metal-carbene complexes, preference is given to using 0 to 50 000 mol of base per mole of metal, preferably 0.5 to 5000 mol, more preferably 0.5 to 500 mol of base per mole of metal. It is also possible to use a mixture of a plurality of bases.

The concentration of the catalyst, reported in a formal sense in ppm (mass) of metal based on the overall mass

of the reaction mixture is, at the start of the hydrodimerization in the process according to the invention, preferably 0.01 ppm to 5000 ppm, preferentially 0.1 to 1000 ppm, more preferably 0.1 to 500 ppm and most preferably 1 to 100 ppm. In a particular embodiment of the process according to the invention, this concentration of the catalyst may be 1 to 50 ppm. The ratio [mol/mol] of carbene ligand to metal is preferably 0.01:1 to 250:1, preferably 0.1:1 to 100:1, more preferably 1:1 to 20:1.

The carbene ligand can be supplied to the reaction in bulk, dissolved or in the form of metal complexes. An additional ligand can be supplied to the reaction at any time and at any point in the reactor, in bulk, as a solution or in the form of a metal complex. This additional ligand may likewise be a carbene or a carbene precursor, or else belong to another class of ligands, for example phosphorus ligands, especially triphenylphosphine. In the process according to the invention, preference is given to using catalysts which do not have any phosphorus ligands; particular preference is given to using catalysts which have exclusively carbene ligands, and very particular preference to using catalysts which have exclusively carbene ligands of the structures 1, 2, 3 or 4.

After the hydrodimerization process, the catalyst can be removed and recycled for a new reaction. This removal can be effected, for example, by means of a distillation, extraction, precipitation or adsorption. When the catalyst is present completely or partly in a second phase, this can be done by a simple separation of the phases.

Owing to the catalyst activities and stabilities, it is possible in the process according to the invention to use extremely small amounts of catalyst. As a result,

there exists the option of not needing to recycle the catalyst owing to the low concentrations in the reaction mixture.

5 When a metal-carbene complex whose oxidation number is > 0 is used, this complex may optionally be pre-reduced before the hydrodimerization. The reducing agent used for this purpose may be identical to the reducing agent used in the hydrodimerization. Possible reducing agents
10 are, for example, formic acid, formates, hydrogen, alkali metal borohydrides, alkali metal aluminium hydrides or boranes.

In the process according to the invention, preference
15 is given to using non-cyclic olefins having at least two conjugated double bonds, selected from 1,3-butadiene, isoprene, 1,3-pentadiene, chloroprene, or corresponding mixtures which comprise non-cyclic olefins having at least two conjugated double bonds, as
20 arise, for example, from a cracking process. Preference is given to using 1,3-butadiene in the process according to the invention.

The non-cyclic olefins having at least two conjugated
25 double bonds may be used in stabilized or unstabilized form. Suitable stabilizers are preferably free-radically active inhibitors, for example alkylated phenols, alkylated catechols or stable N-oxyl radicals. In particular, in the process according to the
30 invention, non-cyclic olefins which have either no stabilizer or a stabilizer selected from alkylated phenols or stable N-oxyl radicals are used. In the process according to the invention, preference is given to using non-cyclic olefins which have, as a
35 stabilizer, alkylated phenols or stable N-oxyl radicals. Particular preference is given to stable N-oxyl radicals as stabilizers, for example 4-substituted or unsubstituted 2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-

piperidine N-oxyis, especially 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl or 2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl. The stabilizer may also be added to the reaction mixture in the process according to the invention separately from the non-cyclic olefins.

The reducing agents used in the process according to the invention are formic acid and/or formates; preference is given to using formic acid. Examples of formates are ammonium formate, organic salts, for example triethylammonium formate, trimethylammonium formate, tripropylammonium formate and alkali metal and alkaline earth metal salts, especially lithium formate, sodium formate, potassium formate, magnesium formate and calcium formate. The formates may be added to the reaction in bulk or in the dissolved form or be prepared in situ. For instance, the alkali metal formates can be prepared from the reaction of formic acid with the metal hydroxides, but may also be prepared from metal hydroxides and carbon monoxide. The carbon monoxide sources used may be gases comprising carbon monoxide, for example synthesis gas (H_2/CO mixture).

To form one mole of 1,7-octadiene from two moles of butadiene, one mole of formic acid or formate is required (stoichiometry of the reaction). Depending on the reaction, the entire amount and optionally an excess of reducing agent can be added completely at the start of the reaction. Alternatively, the reducing agent can be metered in in the course of the reaction. When formic acid is used as the reducing agent in the process according to the invention, the formic acid should be metered in in the course of the reaction. When the formic acid is initially charged, a deactivation of the catalyst can be observed.

It is possible to use a plurality of reducing agents alongside one another, for example formic acid and hydrogen.

In the process according to the invention, the ratio [mol/mol] between non-cyclic olefin having at least two conjugated double bonds used and reducing agent is preferably 1:1 to 10:1, preferentially 2:1 to 4:1 and more preferably 2:1 to 3:1.

In the process according to the invention, preference is given to using solvents which are inert under the reaction conditions, or exhibit substantially inert behaviour. Suitable solvents include aliphatic, cycloaliphatic and aromatic hydrocarbons, amines, for example pyridine and 2,6-lutidine, amides, for example N-methylpyrrolidine, acetamide, N,N-dimethylformamide, N,N-dimethylacetamide, nitriles, for example acetonitrile and benzonitrile, ketones, for example acetone and methyl ethyl ketone, carboxylic esters, for example ethyl acetate, ethers, for example methyl tert-butyl ether, tetrahydrofuran, dioxane, anisole, alkyl and aryl ethers of ethylene glycol, diethylene glycol and polyethylene glycol, and other polar solvents, for example dimethyl sulphoxide, 1,3-dimethyl-2-imidazolidinone, 1,3-dimethyl-3,4,5,6-tetrahydro-2(1H)-pyrimidinone, sulpholane, propylene carbonate or tetrahydrothiophene oxide. Ionic liquids, for example imidazolium or pyridinium salts, may also be used as solvents. The solvents may be used alone or else as mixtures of different solvents. In the process according to the invention, preference is given to

using solvents which have a relative dielectric constant of 30 to 100 (at a temperature of 20°C), especially solvents selected from N-methylpyrrolidone, N,N-dimethylformamide, dimethyl sulphoxide and
5 dimethylacetamide.

It is often advantageous to perform the hydrodimerization in the presence of bases. Examples of suitable bases are metal hydroxides, especially alkali
10 metal hydroxides and alkaline earth metal hydroxides, metal carbonates and metal hydrogencarbonates, especially alkali metal and alkaline earth metal carbonates and alkali metal and alkaline earth metal hydrogencarbonates, hydroxides of quaternary ammonium
15 or phosphonium ions, alkoxides, enolates, phenoxides, metal salts of carboxylic acids, metal amides, for example sodium amide or lithium diethylamide, and organic nitrogen bases, especially amines, for example triethylamine, trioctylamine or pyridine. It is also
20 possible to use carbon dioxide as the base. Preference is given to using alkali metal hydroxides, alkali metal alkoxides or tertiary amines as bases in the process according to the invention.

25 The amount of base used which can be added to the hydrodimerization is highly dependent upon the type of base used. In the process according to the invention, preference is given to using 0 mol% to 100 mol%, preferably 0 mol% to 50 mol%, more preferably 0 mol% to
30 20 mol% and most preferably 0 mol% to 10 mol%, of basic component, based on the olefin used. It is also possible to use a mixture of a plurality of bases in the process according to the invention.

35 For the process according to the invention, it is advantageous when no acidic components are present in the reaction mixture, since they lead to the increased formation of by-products by isomerization. This can be

ensured by the use of neutral reducing agents, for example formates.

In the case of use of pure formic acid as a reducing agent, an equimolar amount of a base, for example triethylamine, can be added. Preference is given to a process according to the invention in which the formic acid reducing agent is reacted completely without or with a substoichiometric amount of base; this means a stoichiometric ratio of base to formic acid of 0:1 to 1:1. Particular preference is given to the embodiment in which formic acid is metered in at reaction temperature, which results, owing to the high reaction rate, in a spontaneous reaction, and formic acid cannot become enriched in the reaction mixture. In this case, the amount of base required is significantly reduced, or it can even be dispensed with entirely.

In the process according to the invention, the hydrodimerization is performed preferably under a pressure of 1 to 100 bar and preferentially of 6 to 25 bar.

The temperature during the hydrodimerization in the process according to the invention is preferably 20 to 160°C, preferably 60 to 120°C and more preferably 70 to 100°C.

The process according to the invention can be operated continuously or batchwise, and is not restricted to the use of particular reactor types. Examples of reactors in which the reaction can be performed are stirred tank reactors, stirred tank batteries, flow tubes and loop reactors. Combinations of different reactors are also possible, for example a stirred tank reactor with downstream flow tube.

The heat of reaction which arises in the reaction is removed by known processes, for example by means of internal or external coolers. Specifically, this may mean the use of tube bundle reactors, reactors with cooling fingers, cooling coils or plates, or the cooling of a recycle stream (reactors with circulation, recycling).

For the process according to the invention, it is not necessary to achieve complete conversion of the non-cyclic olefin in the hydrodimerization reaction. The conversion of the non-cyclic olefin is therefore preferably 40% to 100%, more preferably 60% to 99%, most preferably 85% to 98%. In the case of complete conversion of the non-cyclic olefin in the process according to the invention, there may be increased formation of by-products, since the reducing agent is no longer depleted completely. In the case of use of formic acid as the reducing agent, this may lead to isomerization reactions. The hydrodimerization in the process according to the invention is advantageously performed with the exclusion of oxygen, since oxygen promotes the polymerization of non-cyclic olefins having at least two conjugated double bonds and, as a result, lowers the yield of substituted or unsubstituted 1,7-diolefins.

The reactants of the process according to the invention can all be initially charged together and then the appropriate reaction conditions can be established. In a particular embodiment of the process according to the invention, the catalyst is first obtained in situ and then the stabilizer and the non-cyclic olefin are added and the appropriate reaction conditions are established thereafter. In particular, it is advisable in the process according to the invention to meter in the

reducing agent in the course of the reaction and not to initially charge it - especially in the case of use of formic acid as a reducing agent. Even excessively rapid metered addition of the formic acid as a reducing agent
5 can lead to lower yields of 1,7-diolefins.

The examples which follow are intended to further illustrate the process according to the invention without any intention that the invention be restricted
10 to this embodiment.

Example 1: Preparation of the carbene ligand bis-(2,4,6-trimethylphenyl)imidazolium o-cresoxide-o-cresol

15 1,3-Bis(2,4,6-trimethylphenyl)imidazolium chloride is prepared by the process described in Organometallics 1999, 18, 529-533. The 1,3-bis(2,4,6-trimethylphenyl)-imidazolium chloride prepared in this way is converted to the corresponding cresoxide as follows: 2.35 g of
20 NaOH are dissolved in 45 g of water and then 12.7 g of molten o-cresol are added. This forms a milky grey liquid. This solution is added slowly with stirring to a solution of 20 g of
1,3-bis(2,4,6-trimethylphenyl)imidazolium chloride in
25 45 g of water. A light grey solid precipitates out, and is filtered off with a G4 frit. Subsequently, the solid is washed with a little water and methyl tert-butyl ether. After the drying, 18.9 g of bis(2,4,6-trimethylphenyl)imidazolium o-cresoxide-o-cresol are obtained,
30 which corresponds to a yield of 91%.

Example 2 (100 ppm of Pd, 1,3-butadiene stabilized with 4-tert-butylcatechol):

Under protective gas, 0.112 g of palladium acetate
35 (47.5% Pd, from Acros), 0.312 g of 1,3-bis(2,4,6-trimethylphenyl)imidazolium o-cresoxide-o-cresol and 0.108 g of sodium methoxide (> 97%, from Merck) are dissolved in 200 g of freshly distilled N-methyl-

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pyrrolidone (NMP, $\geq 99.5\%$, from Merck) and stirred at 50°C for 1 hour. This mixture is sucked into an evacuated 2 l autoclave from Büchi and then 240 g of 1,3-butadiene (1,3-butadiene 2.6, stabilized with approx. 100 ppm of 4-tert-butylcatechol (TBC), from Oxeno Olefinchemie GmbH) are condensed in at -5°C. The amount is measured by means of the weighing of the pressurized gas bottle. Thereafter, a pressure of 11 bar is applied by means of argon and the reactor is heated to 75°C. Within 30 minutes, 101 g of formic acid (98-100%, from Riedel-de Haen) are metered in. The pressure is kept constant at 20 bar by means of a valve. An amount of offgas of 31.7 l is measured. The continued reaction time is 15 min. After the cooling and decompression of the autoclave, the product mixture is analysed by GC. After a one-stage distillation at 50 mbar and a maximum bottom temperature of 80°C, a further analysis is effected by means of GC. Table 1 shows the particular analysis results in GC area%.

Table 1

	1,3-Butadiene	1,7-Octadiene	1,6-Octadiene	4-Vinylcyclohexene	N-Methylpyrrolidone	Further compounds
Reactor effluent	2.1	69.4	1.6	0.1	26.7	0.1
Distillate	0	97.4	2.4	0.1	0	0.1
Distillation bottoms	0	6.2	0.3	0	92.7	0.8

The distillate obtained is 215.7 g of octadienes, which corresponds to an isolated yield of 89.3%. The purity based on 1,7-octadiene is 97.4%. The conversion of the formic acid is complete.

Example 3 (50 ppm of Pd, 1,3-butadiene stabilized with 4-tert-butylcatechol):

Under protective gas, 0.056 g of palladium acetate, 0.26 g of 1,3-bis(2,4,6-trimethylphenyl)imidazolium o-cresoxide-o-cresol and 0.108 g of sodium methoxide are dissolved in 200 g of freshly distilled N-methylpyrrolidone and stirred at 50°C for 1 hour. This mixture is sucked into an evacuated 2 l autoclave from Büchi and then 240 g of 1,3-butadiene (stabilized with approx. 100 ppm of 4-tert-butylcatechol) are condensed in at -5°C. The amount is measured by means of the weighing of the pressurized gas bottle. Thereafter, a pressure of 14 bar is applied by means of argon and the reactor is heated to 75°C. Within 30 minutes, 93 g of formic acid are metered in. The pressure is kept constant at 20 bar by means of a valve. An amount of

offgas of < 1 l is measured. The continued reaction time is 30 minutes. After the cooling and decompression of the autoclave, the product mixture is analysed by GC. Table 2 shows the particular analysis results in GC area%.

Table 2

	1,3-Butadiene	1,7-Octadiene	1,6-Octadiene	4-Vinylcyclohexene	N-Methylpyrrolidone	Further compounds
Reactor effluent	14.2	7.3	7.6	0.3	70.2	0.7

318.4 g of crude product mixture are obtained. The remaining amount of formic acid is 82.4 g (determined titrimetrically), i.e. the conversion is only 11% based on the formic acid used.

Example 4 (not inventive)

Under protective gas, 0.112 g of palladium acetate, 0.134 g of 1,3-dimethylimidazolium iodide (prepared according to Example 1 A in WO 97/34875) and 0.108 g of sodium methoxide are dissolved in 200 g of freshly distilled N-methylpyrrolidone and stirred at 50°C for 1 hour. This mixture is sucked into an evacuated 2 l autoclave from Büchi and then 240 g of 1,3-butadiene (stabilized with approx. 100 ppm of 4-tert-butylcatechol) are condensed in at -5°C. The amount is measured by means of the weighing of the pressurized gas bottle. Thereafter, a pressure of 14 bar is applied by means of argon and the reactor is heated to 75°C.

Within 64 minutes, 101 g of formic acid are metered in. The pressure is kept constant at 20 bar by means of a valve. No offgas evolution is measured. After the cooling and decompression of the autoclave, the product mixture is analysed by GC. A compilation of the analysis results is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

	1,3-Butadiene	1,7-Octadiene	1,6-Octadiene	4-Vinylcyclohexene	N-Methylpyrrolidone	Further compounds
Reactor effluent	10.5	0	0	0.3	88.8	0.4

10

No 1,7-octadiene was detectable in the crude product mixture.

Example 5 (not inventive)

15 Under protective gas, 0.112 g of palladium acetate, 0.109 g of 1,3-di-i-propylimidazolium chloride (> 97%, from ABCR) and 0.108 g of sodium methoxide are dissolved in 200 g of freshly distilled N-methylpyrrolidone and stirred at 50°C for 1 hour. This mixture is sucked into an evacuated 2 l autoclave from Büchi and then 240 g of 1,3-butadiene (stabilized with approx. 100 ppm of 4-tert-butylcatechol) are condensed in at -5°C. The amount is measured by means of the weighing of the pressurized gas bottle. Thereafter, a pressure of 11 bar is applied by means of argon and the reactor is heated to 75°C. Within 65 minutes, 101 g of formic acid are metered in. The pressure is kept

20

25

constant at 20 bar by means of a valve. An amount of offgas of 2.9 l is measured. The continued reaction time is 30 minutes. After the cooling and decompression of the autoclave, the product mixture is analysed by GC. A compilation of the analysis results is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

	1,3-Butadiene	1,7-Octadiene	1,6-Octadiene	4-Vinylcyclohexene	N-Methylpyrrolidone	Further compounds
Reactor effluent	14.4	0	0	0.5	85.1	0

10

No 1,7-octadiene was detectable in the crude product mixture.

Example 6 (not inventive)

15 Under protective gas, 0.112 g of palladium acetate, 0.130 g of 1,3-di-tert-butylimidazolium chloride (> 97%, from ABCR) and 0.108 g of sodium methoxide are dissolved in 200 g of freshly distilled N-methylpyrrolidone and stirred at 50°C for 1 hour. This
20 mixture is sucked into an evacuated 2 l autoclave from Büchi and then 240 g of 1,3-butadiene (stabilized with approx. 100 ppm of 4-tert-butylcatechol) are condensed in at -5°C. The amount is measured by means of the weighing of the pressurized gas bottle. Thereafter, a
25 pressure of 11 bar is applied by means of argon and the reactor is heated to 75°C. Within 60 minutes, 101 g of formic acid are metered in. The pressure is kept

constant at 20 bar by means of a valve. An amount of offgas of 2.8 l is measured. The continued reaction time is 30 minutes. After the cooling and decompression of the autoclave, the product mixture is analysed by GC. A compilation of the analysis results is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

	1,3-Butadiene	1,7-Octadiene	1,6-Octadiene	4-Vinylcyclohexene	N-Methylpyrrolidone	Further compounds
Reactor effluent	10	0	0	0.4	89.2	0.4

10

No 1,7-octadiene was detectable in the crude product mixture.

Example 7 (not inventive)

15 Under protective gas, 0.112 g of palladium acetate, 0.109 g of 1,3-di-tert-butylimidazolium-2-ylidene (98%, from Strem) and 0.108 g of sodium methoxide are dissolved in 200 g of freshly distilled N-methylpyrrolidone and stirred at 50°C for 1 hour. This
20 mixture is sucked into an evacuated 2 l autoclave from Büchi and then 240 g of 1,3-butadiene (stabilized with approx. 100 ppm of 4-tert-butylcatechol) are condensed in at -5°C. The amount is measured by means of the weighing of the pressurized gas bottle. Thereafter, a
25 pressure of 14 bar is applied by means of argon and the reactor is heated to 75°C. Within 66 minutes, 101 g of formic acid are metered in. The pressure is kept

constant at 20 bar by means of a valve. An amount of offgas of 3.42 l is measured. The continued reaction time is 30 minutes. After the cooling and decompression of the autoclave, the product mixture is analysed by GC. A compilation of the analysis results is shown in Table 6.

Table 6

	1,3-Butadiene	1,7-Octadiene	1,6-Octadiene	4-Vinylcyclohexene	N-Methylpyrrolidone	Further compounds
Reactor effluent	11.7	0.2	0	0.5	87.1	0.5

10

Only 0.2 area% of 1,7-octadiene were detectable in the crude product mixture.

Examples 4 - 7 show clearly that not all metal-carbene complexes catalyze a hydrodimerization of 1,3-butadiene to 1,7-octadiene.

Example 8 (30 ppm of Pd, 1,3-butadiene stabilized with 100 ppm of 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl based on 1,3-butadiene):

Under protective gas, 0.056 g of palladium acetate, 0.521 g of 1,3-bis(2,4,6-trimethylphenyl)imidazolium o-cresoxide-o-cresol and 0.27 g of sodium methoxide are dissolved in 200 g of freshly distilled N-methylpyrrolidone, and the mixture is stirred at 50°C for 1 hour and then cooled to 20°C. Subsequently, 0.32 g of 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl (SiYPro

C710 from Degussa AG) is added. This mixture is sucked into an evacuated 2 l autoclave from Büchi and then 480 g of 1,3-butadiene (unstabilized) are condensed in at -5°C. The amount is measured by means of the weighing of the pressurized gas bottle. Thereafter, a pressure of 10 bar is applied by means of argon and the reactor is heated to 75°C. Within 120 minutes, 202 g of formic acid (98-100%) are metered in. After the reaction has set in, the temperature is kept between 80°C and 90°C. The pressure is kept constant at 20 bar by means of a valve. An amount of offgas of 82.7 l is measured. The continued reaction time is 30 minutes. After the cooling and decompression of the autoclave, the product mixture is analysed by GC. After a one-stage distillation at 50 mbar and a maximum bottom temperature of 80°C, a further analysis is effected by means of GC. Table 7 shows the particular analysis results in GC area%.

20 Table 7

	1,3-Butadiene	1,7-Octadiene	1,6-Octadiene	4-Vinylcyclohexene	N-Methylpyrrolidone	Further compounds
Reactor effluent	7.6	70.0	4.2	0.2	17.8	0.2
Distillate	0	94.3	5.5	0.2	0	0
Distillation bottoms	0	6.2	0.8	0.1	90.8	2.1

The distillate obtained is 336.3 g of octadienes, which corresponds to an isolated yield of 69.4%. The purity

based on 1,7-octadiene is 94.3%. The conversion of the formic acid is complete.

Example 9 (28 ppm of Pd, base, 1,3-butadiene stabilized with 100 ppm of 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl based on 1,3-butadiene):

Under protective gas, 0.056 g of palladium acetate, 0.521 g of 1,3-bis(2,4,6-trimethylphenyl)imidazolium o-cresoxide-o-cresol and 0.27 g of sodium methoxide are dissolved in 200 g of freshly distilled N-methylpyrrolidone, and the mixture is stirred at 50°C for 1 hour and then cooled to 20°C. Subsequently, 0.32 g of 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl (SiYPro C710 from Degussa AG) and 44.4 g of triethylamine as base are added. This mixture is sucked into an evacuated 2 l autoclave from Büchi and then 480 g of 1,3-butadiene (unstabilized) are condensed in at -5°C. The amount is measured by means of the weighing of the pressurized gas bottle. Thereafter, a pressure of 10 bar is applied by means of argon and the reactor is heated to 75°C. Within 123 minutes, 202 g of formic acid (98-100%) are metered in. After the reaction has set in, the temperature is kept between 80°C and 90°C. The pressure is kept constant at 20 bar by means of a valve. An amount of offgas of 77 l is measured. The continued reaction time is 15 min. After the cooling and decompression of the autoclave, the product mixture is analysed by GC. After a distillation and the removal of two fractions at 50 mbar and a maximum bottom temperature of 80°C, a further analysis is effected by means of GC. Table 8 shows the particular analysis results in GC area%.

Table 8

	1,3-Butadiene	Triethylamine	1,7-Octadiene	1,6-Octadiene	4-Vinylcyclohexene	N-Methylpyrrolidone	Further compounds
Reactor effluent	2.8	5.6	69.4	4.9	0.2	16.6	0.5
Distillate 1	0	27.4	69.3	3.2	0.1	0	0
Distillate 2	0	2.9	90.1	6.5	0.2	0.1	0.2
Distillation bottoms	0	0.7	5.6	1.0	0.1	89.5	3.1

In the distillates, 400.8 g of octadienes are obtained, which corresponds to a yield of 82.7%. The purity of the octadienes based on 1,7-octadiene is 93.5%. The conversion of the formic acid is complete.

Example 10 (15 ppm of Pd, 1,3-butadiene stabilized with 100 ppm of 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl based on 1,3-butadiene):

Under protective gas, 0.028 g of palladium acetate, 0.26 g of 1,3-bis(2,4,6-trimethylphenyl)imidazolium o-cresoxide-o-cresol and 0.13 g of sodium methoxide are dissolved in 200 g of freshly distilled N-methylpyrrolidone, and the mixture is stirred at 50°C for 1 hour and then cooled to 20°C. Subsequently, 0.32 g of 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl (SiYPro C710 from Degussa AG) is added. This mixture is sucked into an evacuated 2 l autoclave from Büchi and then 480 g of 1,3-butadiene (unstabilized) are condensed in at -5°C. The amount is measured by means of the weighing of the pressurized gas bottle. Thereafter, a pressure of 10 bar is applied by means of argon and the reactor is heated to 80°C. Within 240 minutes, 193 g of

formic acid (98-100%) are metered in. After the reaction has set in, the temperature is kept between 80°C and 81°C with the aid of an internal cooling coil. The pressure is kept constant at 20 bar by means of a valve. An amount of offgas of 71 l is measured. The continued reaction time is 10 minutes. After the cooling and decompression of the autoclave, the product mixture is analysed by GC. After a one-stage distillation at 100-50 mbar and a maximum bottom temperature of 80°C, a further analysis is effected by means of GC. Table 9 shows the particular analysis results in GC area%.

Table 9

	1,3-Butadiene	1,7-Octadiene	1,6-Octadiene	4-Vinylcyclohexene	N-Methylpyrrolidone	Further compounds
Reactor effluent	1.8	77.0	2.6	0.3	18.2	0.1
Distillate	0	96.1	3.4	0.3	0.2	0
Distillation bottoms	0	6.4	0.5	0.1	91.9	1.1

The distillate obtained is 421.2 g of octadienes, which corresponds to an isolated yield of 94.7%. The purity based on 1,7-octadiene is 96.1%. The conversion of the formic acid is complete.

Example 11 (6 ppm of Pd, 1,3-butadiene stabilized with 100 ppm of 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl based on 1,3-butadiene):

Under protective gas, 0.0112 g of palladium acetate, 0.521 g of 1,3-bis(2,4,6-trimethylphenyl)imidazolium o-cresoxide-o-cresol and 0.13 g of sodium methoxide are dissolved in 200 g of freshly distilled N-methylpyrrolidone, and the mixture is stirred at 50°C for 1 hour and then cooled to 20°C. Subsequently, 0.32 g of 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl (SiYPro C710 from Degussa AG) is added. This mixture is sucked into an evacuated 2 l autoclave from Büchi and then 480 g of 1,3-butadiene (unstabilized) are condensed in at -5°C. The amount is measured by means of the weighing of the pressurized gas bottle. Thereafter, a pressure of 10 bar is applied by means of argon and the reactor is heated to 80°C. Within 12 hours, 193 g of formic acid (98-100%) are metered in. After the reaction has set in, the temperature is kept between 80°C and 81°C with the aid of an internal cooling coil. The pressure is kept constant at 20 bar by means of a valve. An amount of offgas of 71.4 l is measured. The continued reaction time is 10 minutes. After the cooling and decompression of the autoclave, the product mixture is analysed by GC. After a one-stage distillation at 100-50 mbar and a maximum bottom temperature of 80°C, a further analysis is effected by means of GC. Table 10 shows the particular analysis results in GC area%.

Table 10

	1,3-Butadiene	1,7-Octadiene	1,6-Octadiene	4-Vinylcyclohexene	N-Methylpyrrolidone	Further compounds
Reactor effluent	1.7	77.6	2.5	0.6	17.6	0
Distillate	0	96.1	3.1	0.7	0	0.1
Distillation bottoms	0	6.1	0.2	0.3	92.1	1.3

The distillate obtained is 395.6 g of octadienes, which
 5 corresponds to an isolated yield of 85.5%. This gives
 rise to a catalyst productivity TON (octadienes) =
 72248. The purity based on 1,7-octadiene is 96.1%. The
 conversion of the formic acid is complete. It should be
 emphasized that, even in the case of long reaction
 10 times, no further isomerization of the 1,7-octadiene
 occurs in this preparation process.

Examples 8 and 11 show clearly that, in the case of use
 of N-oxyl radicals as stabilizers for 1,3-butadiene,
 15 for example 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine
 N-oxyl, even small amounts of catalyst of < 50 ppm are
 sufficient. In contrast, Example 3 using the 4-tert-
 butylcatechol stabilizer for 1,3-butadiene and a
 catalyst amount of 50 ppm exhibits a significantly
 20 poorer yield.

Example 12 (45 ppm of Pd, isoprene stabilized with
 100 ppm of 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine
 N-oxyl based on 1,3-butadiene):

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Under protective gas, 0.112 g of palladium acetate, 0.521 g of 1,3-bis(2,4,6-trimethylphenyl)imidazolium o-cresoxide-o-cresol and 0.27 g of sodium methoxide are dissolved in 200 g of freshly distilled N-methylpyrrolidone, and the mixture is stirred at 50°C for 1 hour and then cooled to 20°C. Subsequently, 0.32 g of 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl (SiYPro C710 from Degussa AG) is added. This mixture is sucked into an evacuated 2 l autoclave from Büchi and then 606 g of freshly distilled isoprene (unstabilized) are sucked in. Thereafter, a pressure of 14 bar is applied by means of argon and the reactor is heated to 80°C. Within 240 minutes, 193 g of formic acid (98-100%) are metered in. After the reaction has set in, the temperature is kept between 80°C and 81°C with the aid of an internal cooling coil. The pressure is kept constant at 20 bar by means of a valve. An amount of offgas of 73.4 l is measured. The continued reaction time is 20 minutes. After the cooling and decompression of the autoclave, the product mixture is analysed by GC. After a one-stage distillation at 100-40 mbar and a maximum bottom temperature of 105°C, a further analysis is effected by means of GC. Table 11 shows the particular analysis results in GC area%.

Table 11

	Isoprene	Dimethyloctadiene 1 (Isomer 1)	Dimethyloctadiene 2 (Isomer 2)	Dimethyloctadiene 3 (Isomer 3)	N-Methylpyrrolidone	Further compounds
Reactor effluent	11.1	40.1	30.9	4.1	12.7	1.1
Distillate	0	51.9	40.1	5.0	1.1	1.9
Distillation bottoms	0	0.2	1.5	1.3	94.8	2.2

The distillate obtained is 510.8 g of isomeric dimethyloctadienes, which corresponds to an isolated yield of 83.2%.

Example 13 (57 ppm of Pd, isoprene and 1,3-butadiene stabilized with 100 ppm of 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl based on 1,3-butadiene):

Under protective gas, 0.112 g of palladium acetate, 0.521 g of 1,3-bis(2,4,6-trimethylphenyl)imidazolium o-cresoxide-o-cresol and 0.27 g of sodium methoxide are dissolved in 200 g of freshly distilled N-methylpyrrolidone, and the mixture is stirred at 50°C for 1 hour and then cooled to 20°C. Subsequently, 0.32 g of 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl (SiYPro C710 from Degussa AG) is added. This mixture is sucked into an evacuated 2 l autoclave from Büchi and then 303 g of freshly distilled isoprene (unstabilized) are sucked in. Thereafter, 240 g of 1,3-butadiene (unstabilized) are condensed in at -5°C. Then, a pressure of 14 bar is applied by means of argon and the reactor is heated to 80°C. Within 60 minutes, 193 g of

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formic acid (98-100%) are metered in. After the reaction has set in, the temperature is kept between 80°C and 81°C with the aid of an internal cooling coil. The pressure is kept constant at 20 bar by means of a valve. An amount of offgas of 79.2 l is measured. The continued reaction time is 20 minutes. After the cooling and decompression of the autoclave, the product mixture is analysed by GC. After a one-stage distillation at 100-40 mbar and a maximum bottom temperature of 105°C, a further analysis is effected by means of GC. Table 12 shows the particular analysis results in GC area%.

Table 12

	Isoprene/1,3-butadiene	Octadiene	Methyloctadiene	Dimethyloctadiene	N-Methylpyrrolidone	Further compounds
Reactor effluent	5.5	21.4	22.4	31.0	15.5	4.2
Distillate	0.1	26.5	27.6	39.4	0.8	5.6
Distillation bottom	0	0	0	0	97.6	2.4

- 5 The distillate obtained is a mixture of isomeric C8-C10 diolefins. These are mainly octadiene, methyloctadiene and dimethyloctadiene. 441.9 g are obtained as distillate, which corresponds to an isolated yield of 88.4% of hydrodimerization products.

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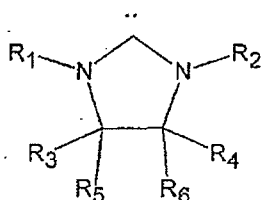
Example 14 (not inventive; 30 ppm of Pd, 1,3-butadiene stabilized with 100 ppm of 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl based on 1,3-butadiene):

- Under protective gas, 0.056 g of palladium acetate,
 15 0.521 g of 1,3-bis(2,4,6-trimethylphenyl)imidazolium o-cresoxide-o-cresol and 0.27 g of sodium methoxide are dissolved in 200 g of freshly distilled N-methylpyrrolidone, and the mixture is stirred at 50°C for 1 hour and then cooled to 20°C. Subsequently, 0.32 g of
 20 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl (SiYPro C710 from Degussa AG) is added. This mixture is sucked into an evacuated 2 l autoclave from Büchi and then 480 g of freshly distilled 1,3-butadiene (unstabilized)

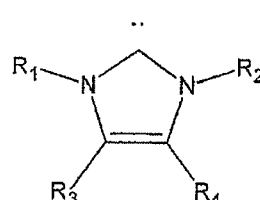
are condensed in at -5°C . The amount is measured by means of the weighing of the pressurized gas bottle. Thereafter, 202 g of formic acid (98-100%) are metered in with a pump. Subsequently, a pressure of 10 bar is
5 applied by means of argon and the reactor is heated to 75°C and stirred for 2 hours. The pressure is kept constant at 20 bar by means of a valve. During this time, no offgas evolution is observed. The continued
10 reaction time is 30 minutes. After the cooling and decompression of the autoclave, the product mixture is analysed by GC. No 1,7-octadiene is detected in the reaction mixture.

Claims:

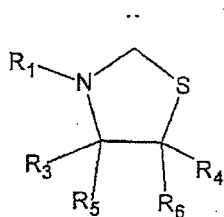
1. A process for preparing substituted or unsubstituted 1,7-diolefins by hydrodimerizing non-cyclic olefins having at least two conjugated double bonds in the presence of a reducing agent and of a catalyst, characterized in that the catalyst used is a metal-carbene complex which has a metal of group 8 to 10 of the Periodic Table and at least one carbene ligand of the structure 1, 2, 3 or 4



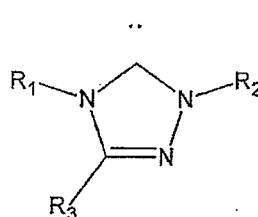
(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)

where:

- 15 $R_1, R_2 = -(CH_2)_n-B$
 $B = \text{mono- or polycyclic aryl group having 6 to 14 carbon atoms or mono- or polycyclic heterocycle having 5 to 14 carbon atoms and heteroatoms, where this heterocycle has 1 to 3}$
 20 $\text{heteroatoms selected from the group of N, O and S,}$
 $n = 0-4$
 $R_3, R_4, R_5 \text{ and } R_6 = \text{hydrogen, alkyl, heteroaryl, aryl, -CN, -COOH, -COO-alkyl, -COO-aryl, -OCO-alkyl, OCO-aryl, -OCOO-alkyl, OCOO-aryl, -CHO,}$
 25 $\text{-CO-alkyl, -CO-aryl, -NH}_2, \text{-NH(alkyl), -N(alkyl)}_2,$

NH(aryl), -N(aryl)₂, -F, -Cl, -Br, -I, -OH, -CF₃, -NO₂, -ferrocenyl, -SO₃H, -PO₃H₂, where the alkyl groups have 1 to 12 carbon atoms and the aryl groups 5 to 14 carbon atoms, and the substituents of the R₃ and R₄ type may also be part of a bridging aliphatic or aromatic ring,

and the substituents of the R₁ and R₂ type are the same or different and are substituted or unsubstituted, and the substituents of the R₃, R₄, R₅ and R₆ type are likewise the same or different and are substituted or unsubstituted and formic acid and/or formates are used as the reducing agent.

2. A process according to claim 1, characterized in that a metal-carbene complex which has a metal selected from nickel, rhodium, palladium and/or platinum is used.

3. A process according to claim 2, characterized in that a metal-carbene complex which has palladium as the metal is used.

4. A process according to at least one of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that a metal-carbene complex which has at least one carbene ligand selected from the structures **1** to **4** where R₃ to R₆ = hydrogen is used.

5. A process according to claim 4, characterized in that a metal-carbene complex which has at least one carbene ligand of the structure **2** where R₃ and R₄ are each hydrogen is used.

6. A process according to claim 5, characterized in that

a metal-carbene complex which has at least one carbene ligand of the structure 2 where R_3 and R_4 are each hydrogen and R_1 and R_2 , where $n = 0$, and B are each a phenyl or 2,4,6-trimethylphenyl group is used.

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7. A process according to at least one of claims 1 to 6,

characterized in that

the concentration of the catalyst, reported in a formal sense in ppm (mass) of metal based on the overall mass of the reaction mixture, at the start of the hydrodimerization is 1 to 500 ppm.

8. A process according to at least one of claims 1 to 7,

characterized in that

the non-cyclic olefins having at least two conjugated double bonds used are compounds selected from 1,3-butadiene, isoprene, 1,3-pentadiene, chloroprene, or corresponding mixtures which comprise non-cyclic olefins with at least two conjugated double bonds.

9. A process according to at least one of claims 1 to 8,

characterized in that

non-cyclic olefins which either have no stabilizer or have a stabilizer selected from alkylated phenols or stable N-oxyl radicals are used.

10. A process according to claim 9, characterized in that

the stabilizers used are free-radical stabilizers selected from alkylated phenols or stable N-oxyl radicals.

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11. A process according to claim 10, characterized in that

N-oxyl radicals selected from 4-substituted or unsubstituted 2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyls, 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl or 2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine N-oxyl are used as stabilizers.

12. A process according to claim 8, characterized in that 1,3-butadiene is used as the non-cyclic olefin.

13. A process according to at least one of claims 1 to 12, characterized in that formic acid is used as the reducing agent.

14. A process according to claim 13, characterized in that the formic acid is metered in in the course of the reaction.

15. A process according to at least one of claims 1 to 14, characterized in that the hydrodimerization is performed in the presence of bases.

16. A process according to claim 15, characterized in that alkali metal hydroxides, alkali metal alkoxides or tertiary amines are used as bases.