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TITLE OF THE INVENTION

TRANSPARENT POLYAMIDE MOULDING MATERIALS HAVING IMPROVED TRANSPARENCY, RESISTANCE TO CHEMICALS AND HIGH PERMANENT FATIGUE STRENGTH

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to transparent polyamide moulding materials. More specifically, the present invention relates to polyamide moulding materials having an optimum transparency and optimum chemical resistance as well as high permanent fatigue strength.

Two polymer types are known in the field of transparent polyamides having a high light transmission, high permanent fatigue strength and excellent chemical resistance.

Microcrystalline, transparent polyamide moulding materials having excellent chemical resistance, especially to alcohols, which are produced from PACM having 35 – 60 mole-% of the bis-(4-aminocyclohexyl)methane trans,trans-isomer, 65-40 mole-% of other diamines and dodecanedioic acid are known by DE 43 10 970. A disadvantage is the low glass transition temperature (T_g) being 140 °C and the low stiffness. Due to the microcrystalline phases, the transparency does not achieve the optimum. The permanent fatigue strength for these polyamide types for defined initial bending stresses shows low numbers of cycles to break in fatigue test after Wöhler.

Amorphous, transparent polyamide moulding materials which have high chemical and thermal resistances and an excellent permanent fatigue strength to fatigue test after Wöhler and which are constituted from MACM (bis-(4-amino-3-methyl-cyclohexyl)-methane) and dodecanedioic acid are known by EP-A-0 725 101. With regard to the microcrystalline, transparent polyamides, the resistance to alcohols is lower. The transparency is comparable to the PACM12 types, but is not yet optimum.

DE 196 42 885 C2 describes amorphous, transparent polyamide moulding materials containing at least a second homopolyamide which show an excellent permanent fatigue strength besides the properties described in EP-A-0 725 101 and

which are suitable for producing moulded parts for electro-optical applications such as lenses for sunglasses and optical waveguides.

At mechanical loading of the surfaces, transparent polyamides have a high abrasion resistance and a good scratch resistance which can be further improved by a
5 coating with hard lacquer.

Transparent polyamides are advanced polymers which are used especially in the field of aggressive media and in the field of high pressure load and high permanent fatigue strength. Simultaneously, transparent polyamides have high glass transition temperatures (T_g) and achieve high thermal resistance.

10 For example, aggressive media at high temperatures are present in dishwashers or media-conducting systems to which transparent mass-produced materials such as PS (polystyrene), PMMA (poly(methyl methacrylate)), PET (polyethylene terephthalate), PVC (poly(vinyl chloride)) or PC (polycarbonate) do not resist. Application examples are baby bottles, bottles for carbonating, dinner-service and
15 cutlery handles. For example, resistance to chemicals in connection with thermal resistance and permanent fatigue strength are required for viewing glasses in the field of heating technics and service stations having direct fuel or oil contact, filter cups for drinking water treatment and media filtration, flowmeter for gases or liquid media, lamp cases, reflectors for auto lamps and sensors. The importance of transparent
20 polyamides for external use increases because high weathering resistances are achieved by a combination of cycloaliphatic diamines having long-chain aliphatic dicarboxylic acids, which can be adjusted optimumly by the tertiary butylphenol class and HALS types stabilizers.

Further, lacquering processes require chemical resistance to avoid stress cracks
25 to the solvents, but require simultaneously an activability of the surfaces to achieve an optimum lacquer adhesion. Numerous lacquers such as hard lacquers for increasing the scratch resistance require hardening temperatures up to 130°C.

High permanent fatigue strength in combination with a very good thermal and chemical resistance are required also in the field of spectacles and safety spectacles
30 besides the engine construction and the medicinal technics.

Spectacle glasses for sunglasses and correction spectacles can be produced due to the favorable optical properties such as refractive index and Abbe coefficient and

transparency. Also, lenses for technical devices, lights or signal lamps, opto-electronic couplers or LEDs can be produced. These applications require the optical properties as well as an improved transparency and clarity as well as simultaneously a high temperature stability with a very low discoloration of the materials. The combination
5 of suitable properties for spectacle frames and spectacle lenses of amorphous polyamides having an excellent resistance to chemicals and stress cracks allows new design forms for spectacles having bores for positioning screws directly in the spectacle glass, which leads to cracks and breaks for traditionally used materials such as glass, PC or PMMA.

10 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an advantage of the present invention to provide polyamide-based moulding materials having an optimum transparency and optimum chemical resistance as well as a high permanent fatigue strength and to provide moulded articles being obtainable therefrom to provide especially spectacles or lenses having an optimum
15 transparency and optimum chemical resistance as well as a high permanent fatigue strength.

Further, it is an advantage of the present invention to provide methods for producing the moulding materials according to the invention, moulded articles, spectacles and lenses.

20 To this end, the present invention provides transparent polyamide moulding materials constituted of mixtures of the diamines PACM (bis-(4-amino-cyclohexyl)-methane) and MACM (bis-(4-amino-3-methyl-cyclohexyl)-methane) and long-chain aliphatic dicarboxylic acids and having an optimum transparency and optimum chemical resistance as well as a high permanent fatigue strength.

25 Further, the present invention provides methods for producing the moulding materials according to the invention and methods for producing and further treating moulded articles from the moulding materials according to the invention. Especially, the present invention relates to spectacles and spectacle glasses or eyeglasses, respectively, which are obtainable from the polyamide moulding materials according
30 to the invention.

The term PACM used in this application represents the ISO-name bis-(4-amino-cyclohexyl)-methane which is commercially available under the commercial name 4,4'-diaminodicyclohexylmethane as dicycane type (CAS no. 1761-71-3). The term MACM represents the ISO-name bis-(4-amino-3-methyl-cyclohexyl)-methane which is commercially available under the commercial name 3,3'-dimethyl-4,4'-diaminodicyclohexylmethane as Laromin C260 type (CAS no. 6864-37-5).

It is intended in the spirit of the present invention that the terms PACM and MACM, respectively, include all trivial names, commercial names or other names being common to those skilled in the art and corresponding to the chemical structures of the above compounds.

Additional features and advantages of the present invention are described in, and will be apparent from, the following Detailed Description of the Invention and the figures.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

According to the invention the advantages are achieved by providing transparent polyamide moulding materials being characterized in that the polyamides have a melting enthalpy between 0 and 12 J/g and the polyamides are constituted of

A. 100 mole-% of a diamine mixture having 10-70 mole-% of PACM [bis-(4-amino-cyclohexyl)-methane] with less than 50 wt.-% of trans,trans-isomer and 90-30 mole-% of MACM [bis-(4-amino-3-methyl-cyclohexyl)-methane], wherein, optionally, 0-10 mole-% can be replaced by other aliphatic diamines having 6 to 12 C atoms, cycloaliphatic, alkyl-substituted cycloaliphatic, branched aliphatic diamines or multiamines having 3 to 12 amino groups or mixtures thereof, and

B. 100 mole-% of long-chain aliphatic dicarboxylic acids having 8 to 14 C atoms or mixtures of these dicarboxylic acids, wherein 0-10 mole-% can be replaced by other aromatic or cycloaliphatic dicarboxylic acids having 8 to 16 C atoms, which are especially selected from the group consisting of isophthalic acid, terephthalic acid, naphthalenedicarboxylic acid, cyclohexanedicarboxylic acid or

5 mixtures thereof, and wherein, optionally, 0-10 mole-% of the other long-chain aliphatic diamines and 0-10 mole-% of the other long-chain aliphatic dicarboxylic acids can be added as 0-20 mole-% of ω -aminocarboxylic acids having 6 to 12 C atoms or lactams having 6 to 12 C atoms.

10 The special advantage of the polyamide moulding material according to the invention is that the used diamine mixture which is in the range of 30-90% MACM and preferably in the range of 30-70 % MACM shows an optimum transparency and minimum discoloration as well as maximum elongation at break. Simultaneously, notched-impact strength and chemical resistance are on a high level. The chemical resistance is adjusted in such a way that moulded articles which are produced from the polyamide moulding materials according to the invention can be treated with usual after-treatment technics, e. g. lacquering, printing, coating, vapor-depositing etc. Excellent values are obtained for a main property of the transparent polyamides, the permanent fatigue strength, which is required, for example, in drinking water systems, where spontaneous pressure changes occur frequently during opening and closing the cocks. The permanent fatigue strength which is measured in form of number of cycles to break in fatigue test after Wöhler achieves in moulded articles which are produced from polyamide moulding materials according to the invention high values compared to other polyamides and a multiple of the achievable values such as for moulded articles made of polycarbonate, polystyrene, SAN or poly(methyl methacrylate).

25 Transparent polyamides which are produced from aliphatic, cycloaliphatic or alkyl-substituted aliphatic or cycloaliphatic monomers on optimally adjusted large-scale plants (5-10 to) show due to a lack of aromatic absorption with 92% at 560 nm in the moulded article having a wall thickness of 2 mm a higher light transmission in the visible and near-infrared range as, for example, polystyrene (PS) or polycarbonate (PC) with 89% similar to the poly(methyl methacrylates) (PMMA) with 92%. The light transmission has a decisive importance in the high-quality transparent applications and is increased to maximum values by coating the surfaces with suitable protecting lacquers.

30 The optimum resistance to formation of stress cracks in, for example isopropanol, is obtained in the range of 45-0 mole-% of MACM and 65-100 mole-% of

PACM. In this range, crystalline phases are present which do not impair the transparency and have melting enthalpies between 8 and 25 J/g.

The stress at break and elongation at break of the polyamide moulding materials according to the invention have an optimum in the range of 30-90 mole-% of
5 MACM and 70-10 mole-% of PACM. Simultaneously, moulded articles having a high notched-impact strength and high permanent fatigue strength are obtained.

A possible reason for the advantageous transparency behaviour of the composition according to the invention is the low crystallinity in a defined range of the melting enthalpy of from 0 to 12 J/g and the reduction of the alkyl-substituted
10 diamines. The transparency decreases for a melting enthalpy above 12 J/g.

With regard to pure MACM12 and PACM12 polyamide types which are produced on pilot autoclaves, the transparency increases from 80 to 85 % at 540 nm, as measured on plates made of unpolished moulds having a thickness of 3 mm, for a composition of the diamines PACM/MACM of 60/40 mole-%. As experience shows,
15 the light transmission is higher for plates made of polished moulds.

Simultaneously, lower discolorations are measured according to ASTM D1925 on plates having a thickness of 3 mm for the range of from 30 to 40 mole-% of MACM despite constant production conditions.

Also, the stress at break and elongation at break show an unexpected maximum
20 of 62 MPa and 160% of elongation in the range of 40-60 mole-% of MACM.

By increasing the PACM amount, the resistance to stress crack to isopropanol increases of from 15 to 59 MPa of bending stress up to crack formation and achieves the maximum already in the composition range according to the invention of from 30-90 mole-% of MACM. Also, a corresponding behaviour is found for hexane and
25 acetone.

The notched-impact strength at 23°C is on a stable level of 11 KJ/m² for all compositions and shows slight advantages for high PACM amounts with 12 KJ/m². Especially, these polyamide types are characterized in that the notched-impact strengths, also when measured at -70°C, do not show a decrease, as it is known for
30 polycarbonate (PC) and polyester. Other transparent materials such as polystyrene (PS) or poly(methyl methacrylate) (PMMA) have already 5 to 10 times lower values at 23 °C.

In a fatigue test at an initial bending stress of approx. 50 MPa, the polyamide moulding materials which are produced on pilot autoclaves achieve a maximum in the composition range of 20-40 mole-% of MACM with number of cycles to break from 0.3 to 0.4 mio. cycles and show highest permanent fatigue strength. When the polyamide moulding materials are produced on production plants having a vessel volume of 1 to 10 cubic meter, the values are higher with 1.0 mio. cycles for MACM12 and 0.6 mio. cycles for PACM12, as experience shows.

Preferred are transparent polyamide moulding materials which are constituted of 100 mole-% of a diamine mixture having 30-70 mole-% of bis-(4-amino-cyclohexyl)-methane with less than 50 wt.-% of trans,trans-isomer and 70-30 mole-% of bis-(4-amino-3-methyl-cyclohexyl)-methane and 100 mole-% of dodecanedioic acid (DDS) or sebacic acid (SS) or azelaic acid (AS) or mixtures thereof.

Especially preferred are transparent polyamide moulding materials which are constituted of 100 mole-% of a diamine mixture having 40-70 mole-% of bis-(4-amino-cyclohexyl)-methane with less than 50 wt.-% of trans,trans-isomer and 60-30 mole-% of bis-(4-amino-3-methyl-cyclohexyl)-methane and 100 mole-% of dodecanedioic acid.

Especially preferred are transparent polyamide moulding materials which are constituted of 100 mole-% of a diamine mixture having 50-70 mole-% of bis-(4-amino-cyclohexyl)-methane with less than 50 wt.-% of trans,trans-isomer and 50-30 mole-% of bis-(4-amino-3-methyl-cyclohexyl)-methane and 100 mole-% of dodecanedioic acid.

Further, polyamide moulding materials are especially preferred, which are constituted of 100 mole-% of a diamine mixture having 50-70 mole-% of bis-(4-amino-cyclohexyl)-methane with less than 50 wt.-% of trans,trans-isomer of the dicycane type with the commercial name 4,4'-diaminocyclohexylmethane (CAS no. 1761-71-3 of the company BASF) and 50-30 mole-% of bis-(4-amino-3-methyl-cyclohexyl)-methane of the Laromin C260 type with the commercial name 3,3'-dimethyl-4,4'-diaminodicyclohexylmethane (CAS no. 6864-37-5 of the company BASF) and 100 mole-% of dodecanedioic acid.

For adjusting the desired relative viscosity, as measured in 0.5 % of m-cresol solution, to 1.65-2.00, preferably 1.80 to 1.95, either the diamine or the dicarboxylic

acids can be used in low excess of from 0.01 to 1 mole-%. The regulation by monoamine or monocarboxylic acids in amounts of from 0.01 to 2.0 wt.-%, preferably 0.05 to 0.5 wt.-%, is preferred.

Suitable modifiers are benzoic acid, acetic acid, propionic acid, stearylamine or mixtures thereof. Especially preferred are modifiers having amine or carboxylic acid groups comprising HALS type or tertiary butylphenol type stabilizer groups such as triacetone diamine or isophthalic acid di-triacetone diamine derivates.

Suitable catalysts for accelerating the polycondensation reaction are phosphoric acids selected from the group consisting of H_3PO_2 , H_3PO_3 , H_3PO_4 , salts thereof or organic derivates thereof, which lead simultaneously to a reduction of the discoloration during processing. The catalysts are added in the range of from 0.01-0.5 wt.-%, preferably 0.03-0.1 wt.-%.

Suitable defoaming agents for preventing foam formation during degassing are aqueous emulsions containing silicones or silicone derivates in the range of from 0.01 to 1.0 wt.-%, preferably 0.01 to 0.10 for 10% emulsion.

Suitable heat or UV stabilizers can be added already before the polycondensation to the formulation in amounts of from 0.01 to 0.5 wt.-%. Preferably, high-melting types are used. Irganox 1098 or HALS types are especially preferred.

The production of polyamide moulding material according to the invention is performed in known pressure vessels. First, a pressure phase is run at 260-310°C. Then, a pressure release follows at 260-310°C. Degassing is performed at 260-310°C. Then, the polyamide moulding material is discharged in strand form, cooled in a water bath with 5-80°C and pelletized. The pellets are dried for 12 h at 80°C to a water content of below 0.06 %.

During drying while simultaneously circulating the pellets, additives such as lubricants, dyes, stabilizers or other can be applied onto or melted onto the hot pellets.

The finishing of the transparent moulding materials according to the invention with additives such as stabilizers; lubricants such as paraffin oils or stearates; dyes; fillers; impact modifiers such as terpolymers made of ethylene glycidyl methacrylate, especially with a refractive index in the range of the moulding materials according to the invention or maleic anhydride grafted polyethylenes, propoylenes; or reinforcing agents such as transparent dispersable nano-particles or glass spheres or glass fibres; or

mixtures of the additives; can be done by a known mixing method below, especially by extrusion on single- or multi-shaft extruders with melt temperatures between 250 to 350 °C, but increases the resulting yellow tinge which can be significantly reduced by adding H₃PO₃ or other phosphoric compounds.

5 Especially suitable stabilizers for producing polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to the extrusion method for applications in the external field such as spectacle glasses, clock cases, filter cups, lamp cases, protecting coverings, glazings, sport and leisure articles, or viewing glasses at roadside petrols are HALS type UV stabilizers such as Tinuvin 770 and Tinuvin 312 and tertiary butylphenol type
10 antioxidant agents such as Irganox 1010, Irganox 1070, Irganox 1098, which can be used alone or in combination.

Especially suitable additives for producing polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to the extrusion method for applications such as spectacle glasses are UV absorbers which filter completely out wavelengths below 400 nm and
15 which can be for example Tinuvin 327 or 326 or 312 or other chlorinated hydroxy-phenyl-benztriazene types and which are added in amounts of from 0.1 to 1.0 wt.-%. Further, dyes dispersible in polyamide are especially suitable additives.

Transparent blends which are obtainable by an extrusion method on single- or multi-shaft extruders with melt temperatures between 250 to 350 °C and from 100 to
20 30 wt.-% of the transparent moulding materials according to the invention and 0 to 70 wt.-% of polyamide 12 or polyamide 11, can further comprise a second microcrystalline phase having a melting point of 170-175°C and further improving the chemical resistance.

Suitable methods for producing highly transparent moulded articles from the
25 transparent polyamide moulding materials according to the invention are injection moulding methods, injection-compression moulding methods at melt temperatures of 230 to 320 °C, wherein the mould is adjusted to temperatures of 40 to 120 °C.

Especially suitable methods for producing highly transparent moulded articles from the transparent polyamide moulding materials according to the invention are
30 injection moulding methods, injection-compression moulding methods at melt temperatures of 230 to 320 °C, wherein the mould having temperatures of from 40 to 130 °C applies an embossed printing on the hot moulded article after filling the cavity.

Especially suitable methods for producing faultless stress-poor surfaces of the moulded article such as lenses for spectacles from transparent polyamide moulding materials according to the invention is an expansion injection-compression moulding process, wherein cavities having wall thicknesses of from 1-5 mm are filled and then
5 the mould cavity is spread out to higher wall thicknesses at permanent filling.

Suitable methods for producing sheets, pipes and semi-finished products in single- or multi-layer construction from the transparent polyamide moulding materials according to the invention are extrusion methods on single- or multi-shaft extruders with melt temperatures between 250 to 350°C, wherein depending on compatibility of
10 the different layer materials, suitable bonding agents in the form of corresponding copolymers or blends can be used.

Moulded articles which are constituted of the polyamide moulding materials according to the invention can be bonded to one another according to usual methods such as by ultrasonic welding, glowing wire welding, friction welding, spin welding or
15 laser welding by finishing with lasing dyes having an absorption in the range of 800 to 2000 nm.

Suitable methods for producing hollow bodies and bottles in single- or multi-layer construction from the transparent polyamide moulding materials according to the invention are injection blow methods, injection stretch-blow methods and extrusion
20 blow methods.

Suitable applications for moulded articles which are constituted of the transparent polyamide moulding materials according to the invention are viewing glasses for heating technics with direct oil contact, filter cups for drinking water treatment, baby bottles, bottles for carbonating, dinner-service, flowmeters for gases or
25 liquid media, clock cases, wrist watch cases, lamp cases and reflectors for car lamps.

Especially suitable applications for moulded articles which are constituted of the transparent polyamide moulding materials according to the invention are spectacle glasses for sunglasses or safety spectacles, lenses for correction spectacles, lenses for technical devices, Fresnel lenses for projectors, lights or signal lamps and prisms.

30 Spectacle glasses or eyeglasses, respectively, which are obtainable from the polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to an especially suitable method can be tinted by a dipping method with alcoholic, ester-containing, ketone-

containing or water-based pigment solutions, and corrected by dipping in acetone, and coated by usual hard lacquers which can be thermically or UV hardening and which can contain UV protection or dye pigments or antistatic finishing or antifogging finishing or other functional additives.

5 Spectacle glasses which are obtainable from the polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to an especially suitable method can be coated by a vapor-deposition method with metals, lumenized, metal-coated or finished in other usual form.

10 Further, spectacle glasses are obtainable from the polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to an especially suitable method can be produced by overmoulding polarizing sheets or composites of polarizing sheet, an adhesive layer and a layer of the polyamide moulding material of the invention on both side.

15 Alternatively, spectacle glasses which are obtainable from the polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to an especially suitable method can be produced by overmoulding protecting sheets of the polyamide moulding material according to the invention which are loaded with phototropic substances.

20 Spectacle glasses which are constituted of the polyamide moulding material according to the invention can be adapted in all spectacle frames customary in trade without risk for stress cracks in the spectacle glasses being caused by plasticized spectacle frames or cracks or breaks being generated in the spectacle glass by too high adapting stresses of metal frames.

 Spectacle frames and spectacle glasses which are constituted of the polyamide moulding materials according to the invention can be produced directly in a form of an integral complete spectacle consisting of glass, frame and bow.

25 Preferred joining methods of spectacle frames and spectacle glasses for modern spectacle design which are constituted of polyamide moulding materials according to the invention are screwed connections, wherein the bores are directly arranged in the spectacle glass.

30 Preferred fixing methods of spectacle frames and spectacle glasses for modern spectacle design which are constituted of polyamide moulding materials according to the invention are clamped or detachable snap connections, wherein at least one fixing element is placed directly in the contour of the spectacle glass.

Now, the invention is explained by examples which are however only exemplary and do not limit the scope of the invention.

The production of the polyamide moulding materials according to the invention is performed in known pilot pressure autoclaves having a volume of 130L. First, a pressure phase at 290°C is run. Then, the pressure release follows at 280°C. Degassing is performed at 280°C. Then, the polyamide moulding material is discharged in strand form, cooled in a water bath with room temperature and pelletized. The pellets are dried for 12 h at 80°C to a water content of below 0.06 %.

The production of highly transparent moulded articles from the transparent polyamide moulding materials according to the invention was performed on an Arburg injection moulding machine at melt temperatures of 280°C, wherein the mould was adjusted to the temperature of 60°C.

By way of example and not limitation, examples of the present invention will now be given.

Comparison example 1 (DE 196 42 885 C2)

17.91 kg of MACM (Laromin C 260 = 3,3'-dimethyl-4,4'-diaminodicyclohexylmethane; CAS no. 6864-37-5 from the company BASF), 17.04 kg of DDS (dodecanedioic acid; DuPont), 48.65 g of benzoic acid, 8.75 g of hypophosphorous acid, 40 g of Irganox 1098 (Ciba) and 40 kg of soft water were filled in a 130L pressure autoclave. Then, the autoclave was closed and heated-up to 290°C with stirring. After a pressure phase for 2 h, it was released to external pressure within 1.5h and degassed for approx. 1h at 280°C. Then, the material was discharged in form of strands, cooled in water bath, pelletized and dried for 12 h at 80°C. A transparent material having characteristic properties according to table 1 was formed.

Examples 2-7

The composition of the diamines MACM (Laromin C 260 = 3,3'-dimethyl-4,4'-diaminodicyclohexylmethane; CAS no. 6864-37-5 from the company BASF), and PACM (dicycane = 4,4'-diaminodicyclohexylmethane, CAS no. 1761-71-3 from the company BASF) is according to table 1 and the residual composition is according to comparison example 1. The operating was performed in an analogous manner to comparison example 1. Materials having characteristic properties according to table 1 were formed.

Comparison example 8 (DE 43 10 970)

The composition PACM (dicycane = 4,4'-diaminodicyclohexylmethane, CAS no. 1761-71-3 from the company BASF) is according to table 1/CE8 and the residual composition is according to comparison example 1. The operating was performed in an analogous manner to comparison example 1. Materials having characteristic properties according to table 1 were formed.

Table 1: Test results

Example		CE1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	CE8
		mole %	mole %	mole %	mole %	mole %	mole %	mole %	mole %
MACM	Laromin C260	100	75	50	40	35	30	25	0
PACM	dicycane	0	25	50	60	65	70	75	100
DDS		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
rV/0.5% m-cr		1.75	1.81	1.84	1.84	1.90	1.91	1.90	1.91
Moisture content	%	0.044	0.057	0.014	0.021	0.051	0.162	0.035	0.011
Tg/DSC	°C	152	149	148	148	147	147	145	140
Mp /DSC	°C	--	--	--	233	235	238	239	251
Melt. enthal./DSC	J/g	--	--	--	6.7	9.1	11.5	20	22
Properties									
T540nm/3mm	%	80.0	82.6	84.4	84.9	85.3	84.4	83.4	80.5
YI/3mm		4.5	3.0	2.1	1.6	0	0	2.5	4.2
Charge no.		S596	6551	6552	6601	6600	6599	6598	6554
Bending stress	MPa	75	47	54	47.5	52	48	49	49
Number of cycles to break in fatigue test after Wöhler	1000 cycles	100	61	173	395	342	386	362	193
NIS/23°C/dry	KJ/m ²	11	12	12	11	11	11	12	13
Elong. at break/dry	%	100	142	162	155	148	143	140	126
Stress at break/dry	MPa	50	57	62	60	58	56	55	50
Elast. modulus/dry	MPa	1530	1490	1460	1460	1460	1460	1450	1430
SCR/n-hexane	MPa	43	44	52	59	59	59	59	58
SCR/acetone	MPa	38	41	59	59	59	59	59	58
SCR/isopropanol	MPa	15	10	19	22	52	59	59	58

The analysis of the PACM (dicycane= 4,4'-diaminodicyclohexylmethane; CAS-Nr. 1761-71-3 from the company BASF) trans, trans amount was determined by

the GC method by a FID detector. Therefore, 100mg of dicycane are dissolved in 10mL of dichloromethane.

Peak	Retention time [min.]	Amount [area %]	Assignment Isomers
1	9.747	0.770	
2	9.804	0.374	
3	9.995	0.402	
4	10.097	47.248	Trans, trans
5	10.202	41.469	
6	10.276	9.737	
	sum	100.000	

- 5 The measurement of the relative viscosity (rV) is performed with solutions in 0.5% of m-cresol at 23°C.

Glass transition temperatures (T_g), melting temperature and melting enthalpy were measured on an usual DSC device having heating rates of 20°C per minute.

- 10 The measurement of the light transmission (T_{540nm}) was performed on an UV spectrometer of the company Perkin Elmer on plates having a thickness of 3 mm. The absolute transparency of the moulding materials which are produced on small pilot plants show due to their lower purity lower values compared to moulding materials which are produced on large-scale plants, as experience shows. But, relative comparisons are perfectly possible.

- 15 The measurement of the Yellow Index (YI) was performed according to ASTM D 1925 on plates having a thickness of 3 mm.

The moisture content was measured according to the method ISO 155/12, wherein the moisture is stripped by heating-up and supplied to the Karl Fischer reagent.

- 20 The notched-impact strength (NIS) was determined according to ISO 179 / eA.

The residual mechanical properties such as elongation at break, stress at break and elastic modulus were determined according to ISO 527.

- 25 For measuring the stress crack resistance (SCR) the ISO tension test bars were fixed on a template having defined edge fiber elongation (bending stress) and dipped for 60 sec in the solvent to be tested. The given values in MPa represent the applied bending stress until which no cracks can be seen visually in the specimen.

The measurement of the number of cycles to break in a fatigue test after Wöhler were performed in the form of “stress-number curves” on a device of the company Dyna Mess, CIMTronic 2000 according to DIN53442 and ISO 178. The number of cycles to break at an initial bending stress of approx. 50 MPa is indicated.

5 It should be understood that various changes and modifications to the presently preferred embodiments described herein will be apparent to those skilled in the art. Such changes and modifications can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention and without diminishing its intended advantages. It is therefore intended that such changes and modifications be covered by the appended
10 claims.

CLAIMS

The invention is claimed as follows:

1. Transparent polyamide moulding materials, characterized in that they have a melting enthalpy between 0 and 12 J/g and the polyamides are constituted of:
 - A. 100 mole-% of a diamine mixture having 10-70 mole-% of PACM [bis-(4-amino-cyclohexyl)-methane] with less than 50 wt.-% of trans,trans-isomer and 90-30 mole-% of MACM [bis-(4-amino-3-methyl-cyclohexyl)-methane], wherein, optionally, 0-10 mole-% can be replaced by other aliphatic diamines having 6 to 12 C atoms, cycloaliphatic, alkyl-substituted cycloaliphatic, branched aliphatic diamines or multiamines having 3 to 12 amino groups or mixtures thereof, and
 - B. 100 mole-% of long-chain aliphatic dicarboxylic acids having 8 to 14 C atoms or mixtures of these dicarboxylic acids, wherein 0-10 mole-% can be replaced by other aromatic or cycloaliphatic dicarboxylic acids having 8 to 16 C atoms, which are especially selected from the group consisting of isophthalic acid, terephthalic acid, naphthalenedicarboxylic acid, cyclohexanedicarboxylic acid or mixtures thereof, and wherein, optionally, 0-10 mole-% of the other long-chain aliphatic diamines and 0-10 mole-% of the other long-chain aliphatic dicarboxylic acids can be added as 0-20 mole-% of ω -aminocarboxylic acids having 6 to 12 C atoms or lactams having 6 to 12 C atoms.
2. Transparent polyamide moulding materials according to claim 1, characterized in that the polyamides are constituted of:
 - A. 100 mole-% of a diamine mixture having 30-70 mole-% of PACM [bis-(4-amino-cyclohexyl)-methane] with less than 50 wt.-% of trans,trans-isomer and 70-30 mole-% of MACM [bis-(4-amino-3-methyl-cyclohexyl)-methane] and
 - B. 100 mole-% of dodecanedioic acid (DDS) or sebacic acid (SS) or azelaic acid (AS) or mixtures thereof.

3. Transparent polyamide moulding materials according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the polyamides are constituted of:
- A. 100 mole-% of a diamine mixture having 40-70 mole-% of PACM [bis-(4-amino-cyclohexyl)-methane] with less than 50 wt.-% of trans,trans-isomer and 60-30 mole-% of MACM [bis-(4-amino-3-methyl-cyclohexyl)-methane] and
- B. 100 mole-% of dodecanedioic acid.
4. Transparent polyamide moulding materials according to any one of preceding claims 1 to 3, characterized in that the polyamides are constituted of:
- A. 100 mole-% of a diamine mixture having 50-70 mole-% of PACM [bis-(4-amino-cyclohexyl)-methane] with less than 50 wt.-% of trans,trans-isomer and 50-30 mole-% of MACM [bis-(4-amino-3-methyl-cyclohexyl)-methane] and
- B. 100 mole-% of dodecanedioic acid.
5. Transparent polyamide moulding materials according to any one of preceding claims 1 to 4, characterized in that the polyamides are constituted of:
- A. 100 mole-% of a diamine mixture having 50-70 mole-% of PACM [bis-(4-amino-cyclohexyl)-methane] with less than 50 wt.-% of trans,trans-isomer of the dicycane type with commercial name 4,4'-diaminocyclohexylmethane (CAS no. 1761-71-3) and 50-30 mole-% of MACM [bis-(4-amino-3-methyl-cyclohexyl)-methane] of the Laromin C260 type with commercial name 3,3'-dimethyl-4,4'-diaminodicyclohexylmethane (CAS no. 6864-37-5) and
- B. 100 mole-% of dodecanedioic acid.
6. Transparent polyamide moulding materials according to any one of preceding claims 1 to 5, characterized in that for adjusting the relative viscosity, as measured in 0.5 % of m-cresol solution, to 1.65-2.00, preferably 1.80 to 1.95, either diamine or dicarboxylic acid excesses are used in amounts of from 0.01 to 1 mole-% or at least one monoamine or monocarboxylic acid modifier is used in amounts of from 0.01 to 2.0 wt.-%, preferably 0.05 to 0.5 wt.-%, in the polycondensation.

7. Transparent polyamide moulding materials according to claim 6, characterized in that benzoic acid, acetic acid, propionic acid, stearylamine or mixtures thereof is used as monoamine or monocarboxylic acid modifier, respectively, wherein especially modifier having amine or carboxylic acid groups and comprising HALS type or tertiary butylphenol type stabilizer groups are preferred, wherein triacetone diamine or isophthalic acid di-triacetone diamine derivatives are especially preferred.
8. Transparent polyamide moulding materials according to any one of preceding claims 1 to 7, characterized in that phosphoric acids selected from the group consisting of H_3PO_2 , H_3PO_3 , H_3PO_4 , salts thereof or organic derivatives thereof, which lead simultaneously to reduction of the discoloration during processing are used in amounts in the range of from 0.01-0.5 wt.-%, preferably 0.03-0.1 wt.-% as suitable catalysts for accelerating the polycondensation reaction.
9. Transparent polyamide moulding materials according to any one of preceding claims 1 to 8, characterized in that aqueous emulsions containing silicones or silicone derivatives are used in the range of from 0.01 to 1.0 wt.-%, preferably 0.01 to 0.10 for 10% emulsion as suitable defoaming agents for preventing foam formation during degassing.
10. Transparent polyamide moulding materials according to any one of preceding claims 1 to 9, characterized in that suitable heat or UV stabilizers are added already before the polycondensation to the formulation in amounts of from 0.01 to 0.5 wt.-%, wherein preferably high-melting types are used, especially preferred tertiary butylphenols, in particular Irganox 1098 and HALS types are used.
11. Method for producing the polyamide moulding materials according to any one of claims 1 to 10, characterized in that the polyamides are polycondensed according to known methods in known pressure vessels with a pressure phase at 260-310°C, a pressure release phase at 260-310°C, a degassing phase at 260-310°C, wherein the polyamide moulding materials are subsequently discharged in strand form,

cooled in a water bath with 5-80°C and pelletized and the pellets are dried for 12 hours at 80°C to a water content of below 0.06 %.

12. Method for producing the polyamide moulding materials according to claim 11,
5 characterized in that additives such as lubricants, dyes, stabilizers are applied onto or melted on the hot pellets during drying while simultaneously circulating the pellets.
13. Method for producing the polyamide moulding materials according to claim 11 or
10 12, characterized in that additives such as stabilizers, lubricants such as paraffin oils or stearates, dyes, fillers, impact modifiers such as terpolymers made of ethylene glycidyl methacrylate, especially with a refractive index in the range of from 1.50 to 1.55, or maleic anhydride grafted polyethylenes, propylenes, or reinforcing agents such as transparent nano-scale fillers, especially nano-silicates,
15 or glass spheres or glass fibres or mixtures of the additives are incorporated by known mixing methods, especially by extrusion on single- or multi-shaft-extruders with melt temperatures of between 250 to 350 °C in the polyamide moulding materials and the resulting yellow tinge of the polyamide moulding material is reduced by adding H_3PO_3 or other phosphoric compounds.
- 20 14. Method for producing polyamide moulding materials according to claim 13, characterized in that for applications in the external field, especially for spectacle glasses, clock cases, filter cups, lamp cases or viewing glasses at roadside petrols, additives such as HALS type UV stabilizers selected from the group consisting of
25 Tinuvin 770 and Tinuvin 312 and tertiary butylphenol type antioxidant agents selected from the group consisting of Irganox 1010, Irganox 1070, Irganox 1098, alone or in combination, are incorporated in the polyamide moulding material by extrusion.
- 30 15. Method for producing polyamide moulding materials according to any one of preceding claims 11 to 14, characterized in that additives by extrusion methods for applications such as spectacle glasses, UV absorber having benztriazine structure

filtering completely out wavelengths less than 400 nm are incorporated in amounts of from 0.1 to 1.0 wt.-% and/or dyes dispersible in polyamide are incorporated.

- 5 16. Method for producing polyamide moulding materials according to any one of preceding claims 13 to 15, characterized in that they are transparent blends or alloys, they are obtainable from a mixture of 100 to 30 wt.-% of the transparent polyamide moulding materials according to any one of preceding claims 1 to 10 and 0 to 70 wt.-% of polyamide 12 or polyamide 11 or copolyamides thereof by an extrusion method on single- or multi-shaft extruders with melt temperatures
10 between 250 to 350 °C, wherein the blend or the alloy forms a second microcrystalline phase having a melting point of 170-175°C.
- 15 17. Method for producing highly transparent moulded articles from the polyamide moulding materials according to any one of preceding claims 1 to 10 or 16, characterized in that injection moulding methods, injection-compression moulding methods at melt temperatures of 230 to 320 °C are applied, wherein the mould has temperatures of 40 to 130 °C.
- 20 18. Method for producing highly transparent moulded articles from the polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to any one of claims 1 to 10 or 16, characterized in that injection moulding methods, injection-compression moulding methods at melt temperatures of 230 to 320 °C are applied, wherein the mould having temperatures of from 40 to 130 °C applies an embossed printing on the hot moulded article after filling the cavity.
25
- 30 19. Method for producing faultless stress-poor surfaces of the moulded article from the polyamide moulding materials according to any one of claims 1 to 10 or 16, characterized in that lenses for spectacles are produced by an expansion injection-compression moulding process, wherein cavities having wall thicknesses of from 1-5 mm are filled and then the mould cavity is spread out to higher wall thicknesses at permanent filling.

20. Method for producing sheets, pipes and semi-finished products in single- or multi-layer construction from the transparent polyamide moulding materials according to any one of claims 1 to 10 or 16, characterized in that extrusion methods on single- or multi-shaft extruders with melt temperatures between 250 to 350°C are used, wherein depending on a compatibility of the different layer materials, suitable bonding agents in the form of corresponding copolymers or blends of polymers of the layer materials can be used.
21. Method for producing hollow bodies and bottles in single- or multi-layer construction from the transparent polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to any one of claims 1 to 10 or 16, characterized in that injection blow methods, injection stretch-blow methods and extrusion blow methods are used.
22. Use of moulded articles, obtainable from the transparent polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to any one of claims 1 to 10 or 16, as viewing glasses for heating technics with direct oil contact, filter cups for drinking water treatment and media filtration, baby bottles, bottles for carbonating, dinner-service, flowmeters for gases or liquid media, clock cases, wrist watch cases, lamp cases, protection coverings, glazings, sport and leisure articles, and reflectors for car lamps and sensors.
23. Use of moulded articles, obtainable from the transparent polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to claim 1 to 10 or 16, as spectacle glasses for sunglasses or safety glasses, lenses for correction glasses, lenses for technical devices, Fresnel lenses for projectors, lights or signal lamps, optoelectronic couplers, LED prisms.
24. Method for producing spectacle glasses, obtainable from the polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to any one of claims 1 to 10 or 16, characterized in that they are tinted according to the dipping method in alcoholic, ester-containing, ketone-containing or water-bases pigment solutions, they are corrected by dipping in acetone and coated by usual hard coat lacquers being

thermically or UV hardening and containing UV protection or dye pigments or antistatic finishing or antifogging finishing or other functional additives.

25. Method for producing spectacle glasses, obtainable from the polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to any one of claims 1 to 10 or 16, characterized in that they are coated according to the especially suitable vapor-deposition methods with metals, lumenized, metal-coated or finished in other usual form.
26. Method for producing spectacle glasses, obtainable from the polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to any one of claims 1 to 10 or 16, characterized in that the glasses are produced by overmoulding polarizing sheets or composites of a polarizing sheet, a layer of an adhesive and a layer of the polyamide moulding material of the invention on both side.
27. Method for producing spectacle glasses, obtainable from the polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to any one of claims 1 to 10 or 16, characterized in that the glasses are produced by overmoulding protecting sheets finished with phototropic substances.
28. Spectacle glasses, obtainable from the polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to any one of claims 1 to 10 or 16, characterized in that they can be adapted in all spectacle frames customary in trade without risk for stress cracks in the spectacle glass being caused by plasticized spectacle frames or cracks or breaks being generated in the spectacle glass by too high adapting stresses of metal frames.
29. Method for producing moulded articles, obtainable from the polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to any one of claims 1 to 10 or 16, characterized in that they are joined to itself or to other compatible moulded articles according to usual methods by ultrasonic welding, glowing wire welding,

friction welding, spin welding or by laser welding after finishing with lasing dyes having absorption in the range of 800 to 2000 nm.

- 5 30. Spectacle frames and spectacle glasses, obtainable from the polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to any one of claims 1 to 10 or 16, characterized in that they are produced directly in the form of an integral complete spectacle consisting of glass, frame and bow.
- 10 31. Method for producing spectacles, obtainable from the polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to any one of claims 1 to 10 or 16, wherein joining methods for modern spectacle design with screwed connections are applied characterized in that the bores are directly arranged in the spectacle glass.
- 15 32. Fixing method for modern spectacle design of spectacle frames and spectacle glasses, obtainable from the polyamide moulding materials of the invention according to any one of claims 1 to 10 or 16, having clamped or detachable snap connections, characterized in that at least one fixing element in is placed directly in the contour of the spectacle glass.