

ABSTRACT

Disclosed is a method for continuously producing a dialkyl carbonate and a diol, comprising: (1) feeding a cyclic carbonate and an aliphatic monohydric alcohol to a continuous multi-stage distillation column, and effecting a transesterification in the presence of a catalyst in the multi-stage distillation column and/or at least one transesterification reactor which communicates fluid-tightly with the distillation column, while continuously withdrawing a low boiling point gaseous mixture containing the produced dialkyl carbonate from a upper portion of the distillation column and a high boiling point liquid mixture from a lower portion of the distillation column; and (2) continuously feeding water and the high boiling point mixture to a hydrolysis reactor, to thereby effect a continuous hydrolysis of the unreacted cyclic carbonate contained therein and produce a diol and carbon dioxide. By the method of the present invention, it becomes possible to produce a dialkyl carbonate and a high purity diol, with high productivity, even when the feedstock aliphatic monohydric alcohol contains a concomitant dialkyl carbonate.