

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
3 May 2001 (03.05.2001)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 01/30885 A1

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: C08G 65/331, 65/30, 65/20

(21) International Application Number: PCT/EP00/10511

(22) International Filing Date: 25 October 2000 (25.10.2000)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
9900701 27 October 1999 (27.10.1999) BE

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(81) Designated States (national): AE, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW.

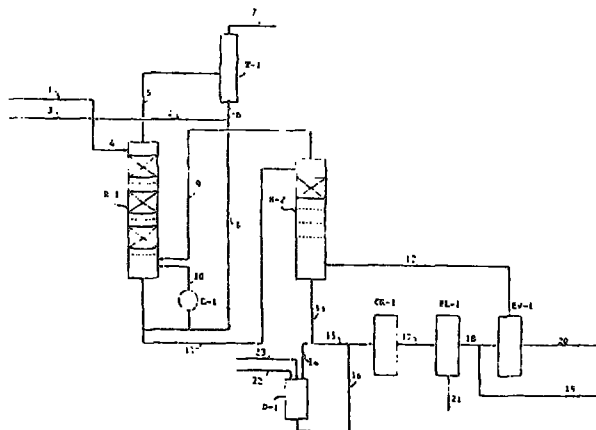
(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

- With international search report.
- Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments.

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: CONTINUOUS PROCESS FOR CONVERTING POLYTETRAMETHYLENE ETHER DIESTER TO POLYTETRAMETHYLENE ETHER GLYCOL



(57) Abstract: A continuous process for converting by transesterification the diester of polytetramethylene ether (PTMEA) to the corresponding polytetramethylene ether glycol (PTMEG). The process is characterized by the fact that the feed, consisting of PTMEA along with an alkanol (preferably methanol) and with an alkali metal oxide, hydroxide or alkoxide catalyst (preferably sodium methoxide) is made to react in two multistaged reactors in series. In the first reactor, including stages of retention in association with distillation trays of high efficiency, the bulk of conversion is achieved by stripping the alkanol ester formed in the transesterification with vapors of hot alkanol having a reduced content of alkanol ester. The transesterification is completed in the second reactor by stripping the effluent from the first reactor with vapors of hot alkanol almost free of alkanol ester. The PTMEG product is finally purified by neutralizing the alkaline catalyst with a mixture of phosphoric acid and sodium phosphate monobasic.



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