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NOVEL COPOLYETHERIMIDES AND
PHASE CATALYZED METHOD FOR
THEIR PREPARATION ✓

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 This invention relates to novel aromatic
copolyetherimides and a method for their preparation by a phase
transfer catalyzed reaction.

 Various types of aromatic polyethers, particularly
polyethersulfones and polyetherketones, have become important as
10 engineering resins by reason of their excellent properties. These
polymers are typically prepared by the reaction of salts of
dihydroxyaromatic compounds, such as bisphenol A disodium salt,
with dihaloaromatic molecules such as bis(4-fluorophenyl) sulfone,
bis(4-chlorophenyl) sulfone and the analogous ketones.

15 These reactions previously required the use of dipolar
aprotic solvents, which were necessary to solubilize one or both
reactants. Such solvents are expensive, difficult to purify and difficult
to keep dry, since they readily dissolve water. Moreover, the polymers
prepared by the use of such solvents are frequently colored by reason
20 of the occurrence of side reactions leading to colored by-products.

 Another class of polymers capable of preparation by a
similar method is the polyetherimides. U.S. Patents 3,787,364,
3,838,097 and 3,847,869 describe their preparation by the reaction of
salts such as bisphenol A disodium salt with halo- or nitro-substituted
25 bis(phthalimido) derivatives of aromatic diamines. These methods of
preparation also require dipolar aprotic solvents. In addition, they
frequently do not afford products of high molecular weight or in high
yield. As a result, polyetherimides are normally produced on a
commercial scale by the reaction of diamines with bis(ether
30 anhydrides). The latter reagents are generally themselves produced
by a complex multi-step synthetic method often employing nitro-

substituted phthalimides, which lead to the formation of by-products hazardous to the environment in varying degrees.

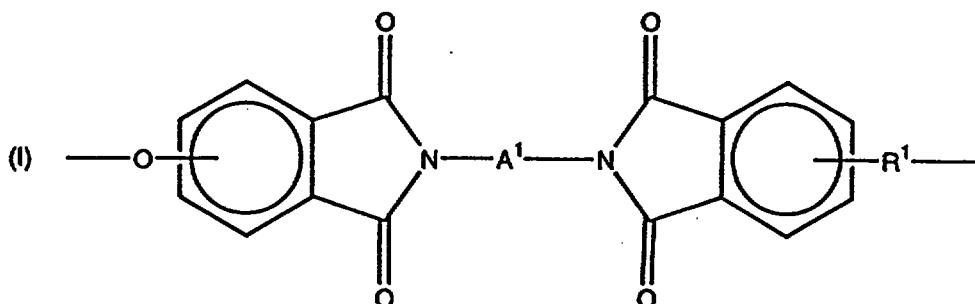
There has been considerable attention directed in recent years to methods for conducting organic reactions in heterogeneous systems, employing a phase transfer catalyst which facilitates migration of a reactant into a phase from which it is normally absent. Thus, for example, it is known that bis(ether anhydrides) may be prepared by the reaction of a bisphenol disodium salt with a nitro- or halo-substituted phthalimide in a methylene chloride-water mixture, employing a phase transfer catalyst to promote migration of the otherwise methylene chloride-insoluble bisphenol salt into the organic layer for reaction with the substituted phthalimide.

US Patent 5,229,482 discloses a phase transfer catalyzed reaction for the preparation of polyethers. Said reaction occurs between at least one alkali metal salt of a dihydroxy-substituted aromatic hydrocarbon and at least one substituted aromatic compound which may be, for example, a bis(substituted phthalimide), a bis(halophenyl) sulfone or a bis(halophenyl) ketone as indicated hereinabove, in the presence of a catalytically active amount of a phase transfer catalyst which is substantially stable at the temperatures employed. There is no disclosure, however, of copolyetherimides containing other types of structural units or a method for their preparation.

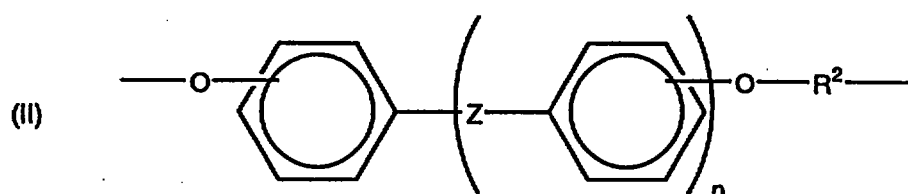
SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is based on the discovery of a class of copolyetherimides containing ether sulfone or ether ketone groups, and a method for their preparation by a phase transfer catalyzed method.

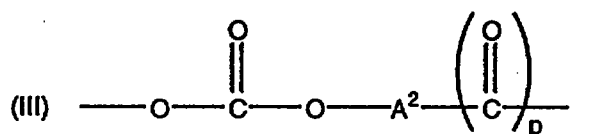
In one of its aspects, the invention includes copolyetherimides comprising structural units of the formulas



and at least one of the following:



and

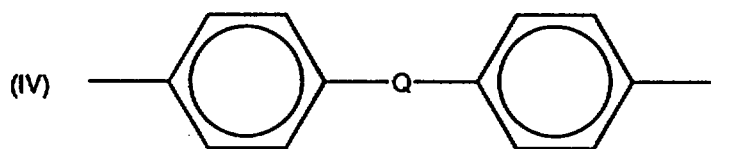


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wherein:

A¹ is a C₆₋₂₀ divalent aromatic hydrocarbon or halogenated hydrocarbon radical, a C₂₋₂₀ alkylene or divalent alicyclic radical, a C₂₋₈ bis(alkylene-terminated) polydiorganosiloxane radical or a divalent radical of the formula

10



each of A², R¹ and R² is independently a divalent aromatic radical;

15

bond;

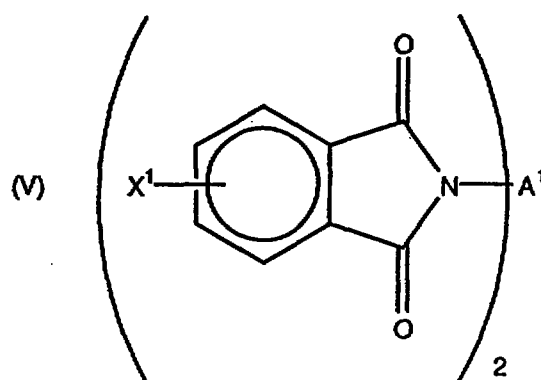
Q is -C₂H₄-, -O-, -C(CF₃)-, -C(O)-, -SO₂- or a covalent

Z is -CO- or -SO₂-;

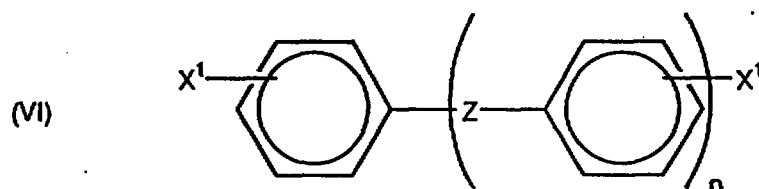
n is 1 or 2; and

p is 0 or 1.

In another aspect, the invention is a method for preparing a copolyetherimide which comprises contacting, in a solvent and at a temperature in the range of about 125-250 °C, (A) at least one alkali metal salt of a dihydroxy-substituted aromatic hydrocarbon having the formula HO-R¹-OH with (B) at least one first substituted aromatic compound of the formula



and (C) at least one second substituted aromatic compound of the formula



or (D) at least one macrocyclic polycarbonate or polyarylate oligomer; wherein each X¹ is independently fluoro, chloro, bromo or nitro and A¹, R¹, Z and n are as previously defined; in the presence of a catalytically active amount of a phase transfer catalyst which is substantially stable at the temperatures employed.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION; PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

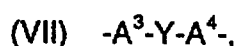
The A¹ radical in the copolyetherimides of this invention may be an aromatic hydrocarbon, halogenated aromatic hydrocarbon,

alkylene or divalent alicyclic radical as indicated. It may also be a bis(alkylene-terminated)polydiorganosiloxane radical such as that derived from 1,9-diamino-4,4,6,6-tetramethyl-4,6-disila-5-oxanonane, also designated bis(3-aminopropyl)tetramethyldisiloxane, and its
5 equilibration products with cyclic polydialkylsiloxanes such as octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane.

A^1 may also be a divalent radical of formula IV, wherein Q is as defined. Most often, A^1 is m-phenylene, p-phenylene, alkylated m- or p-phenylene or a mixture thereof.

10 The copolyetherimides of the invention also comprise structural units of formula II or formula III. In formula II, Z may be a carbonyl group or a sulfone group and n may be 1 or 2. The R^2 radicals in formulas I and II is a divalent aromatic radical and preferably a bisphenol-derived radical, especially
15 2,2-bis(4-phenylene)propane, the radical derived from bisphenol A.

In formula III, A^2 is a divalent aromatic radical and p is 0, whereupon the units of formula III are carbonate units, or 1, whereupon they are ester units. When p is 1, A^2 is preferably p-phenylene, m-phenylene or a mixture thereof. When p is 0, the
20 preferred A^2 radicals often have the formula



wherein each of A^3 and A^4 is a monocyclic divalent aromatic hydrocarbon radical and Y is a bridging hydrocarbon radical in which one or two atoms separate A^3 from A^4 . The free valence bonds in
25 formula I are usually in the meta or para positions of A^3 and A^4 in relation to Y. Both A^3 and A^4 are preferably p-phenylene, although both may be o- or m-phenylene or one o- or m-phenylene and the other p-phenylene.

The bridging radical, Y, is one in which one or two atoms, preferably one, separate A^3 from A^4 . Illustrative radicals of this type
30 are methylene, cyclohexylmethylene, 2-[2.2.1]bicycloheptylmethylene,

ethylene, isopropylidene, neopentylidene, cyclohexylidene, cyclopentadecylidene, cyclododecylidene and adamantylidene; gem-alkylene (alkylidene) radicals are preferred. For reasons of availability and particular suitability for the purposes of this invention, the preferred
5 radical of formula VII is derived from bisphenol A, in which Y is isopropylidene and A³ and A⁴ are each p-phenylene.

The method of this invention requires the use of compound A which is an alkali metal, preferably sodium, salt of a dihydroxyaromatic compound such as bisphenol A, said compound
10 hereinafter sometimes designated "bisphenol salt", and compound B having formula V in which X¹ may be fluoro, chloro, bromo or nitro in the 3- or 4-position, preferably the 4-position. In most instances, chloro is preferred by reason of the relative availability and effectiveness of the compounds containing it. Among the particularly
15 preferred substituted aromatic compounds of formula V are 1,3- and 1,4-bis[N-(4-chlorophthalimido)]benzene and 4,4'-bis[N-(4-chlorophthalimido)]phenyl ether and the corresponding nitro compound.

Also required is compound C or D. Compound C may
20 be, for example, bis(4-fluorophenyl) sulfone or the corresponding chloro compound, or bis(4-fluorophenyl) ketone or the corresponding chloro compound.

Compound D is at least one macrocyclic polycarbonate or polyarylate oligomer. Illustrative oligomers are disclosed in US
25 Patents 4,644,053 and 4,829,144 respectively, the disclosures of which are incorporated by reference herein.

A third material employed according in the method of the invention is a solvent, typically one of low polarity, usually substantially lower than that of the dipolar aprotic solvents previously employed for
30 the preparation of aromatic polyether polymers. Said solvent preferably has a boiling point above about 150 °C, in order to facilitate the reaction which requires temperatures in the range of about 125-250°C. Suitable solvents of this type include o-dichlorobenzene,

dichlorotoluene, 1,2,4-trichlorobenzene, diphenyl sulfone and anisole. Solvents of similar polarity but lower boiling points, such as chlorobenzene, may be employed at superatmospheric pressures.

5 An essential feature of the invention is the presence of a phase transfer catalyst which is substantially stable at temperatures in the range of about 125-250°C. Various types of phase transfer catalysts may be employed for this purpose. They include quaternary phosphonium salts of the type disclosed in US Patent 4,273,712, N-alkyl-4-dialkylaminopyridinium salts of the type disclosed in US
10 Patents 4,460,778 and 4,595,760, and guanidinium salts of the type disclosed in US Patents 5,081,298, 5,116,975 and 5,229,482. Said patents are incorporated by reference herein. Said guanidinium salts are preferred, with the hexaalkylguanidinium salts being most preferred by reason of their availability and particular suitability.

15 In a first embodiment of the method of the invention, random copolyimides are prepared by bringing compounds A, B and C into contact in proportions such that the molar ratio of compound A to the total of compounds B and C is at least about 1:1, preferably in the range of about 1.0-1.1:1. For maximum molecular weight, the amounts
20 should be as close as possible to exactly equimolar, but molecular weight control may be achieved by employing one reagent or the other in slight excess. It is also within the scope of the invention to employ monofunctional reagents such as monohydroxyaromatic compounds or monohalo- or nitroaromatic compounds as chain termination agents.

25 In a second embodiment, compound A is first brought into contact with compound B or C and then with the other of said compounds; i.e., compound C or B respectively. The first step of this 2-step procedure employs a slight excess, typically about 1-3% molar, of one reagent, most often compound A, to provide an intermediate
30 having reactive phenol end groups. Further compound A is then added in combination with an approximately equimolar amount of the other of compounds B and C. A block copolyimide is thus formed.

Reaction temperatures are in the range of about 125-250°C, preferably about 130-225°C. The proportion of phase transfer catalyst employed is generally about 0.5-10 and preferably about 1-8 mole percent based on compound A.

5 A third embodiment of the method of the invention involves the use of reagent D instead of reagent C. It is normally a two-step reaction similar to that described hereinabove for the preparation of block copolyetherimides, except that macrocyclic polycarbonate or polyarylate oligomers are employed in place of
10 compound C. The proportion of macrocyclic oligomer composition introduced will depend on the molecular weight and block size desired in the product copolyetherimide, since a block copolymer is also produced in this embodiment. Otherwise, reaction conditions are similar to those described hereinabove.

15 Following completion of the reaction, the copolyetherimide may be isolated by conventional methods. These typically include the steps of washing and precipitation by combination of the polymer solution with a non-solvent for the polymer.

20 The copolyetherimides of this invention may be used as molding materials, for injection molding and the like. They may also be used as compatibilizers for mixtures of otherwise incompatible polymers.

 The invention is illustrated by the following examples. The bisphenol disodium salts employed in the examples, (of
25 4,4'-dihydroxybiphenyl and bisphenol A) were prepared by the reaction of the bisphenol with an aqueous solution containing a stoichiometric amount of sodium hydroxide, followed by removal of the water by azeotropic distillation with xylene and storage of the anhydrous salt in a drybox. Compound B in each example was
30 1,3-bis(N-4-chlorophthalimido)benzene (CIPAMI). All molecular weights are weight average, determined by gel permeation chromatography relative to polystyrene.

EXAMPLES 1-6

A series of oven-dried 50-ml 3-necked flasks was employed. Each flask was transferred to a nitrogen dry box and charged with 10.15 mmol of bisphenol disodium salt and 5 mmol each of CIPAMl and compound C. The flasks were capped, transferred to a heated oil bath and fitted with a condenser, nitrogen inlet and mechanical stirrer. Solvent, 25 ml, was added and the mixtures were heated under reflux, with stirring. About 5 ml of solvent was allowed to distill, after which a solution of 0.5 mmol of hexa-n-propylguanidinium chloride in about 1 ml of solvent was added over one minute, whereupon a vigorous exothermic reaction occurred. The reaction mixture was sampled periodically by removing small aliquots which were quenched with acetic acid and diluted with methylene chloride for molecular weight analysis. When a product of high molecular weight had been obtained, the reaction was quenched with acetic acid and the mixture was cooled to ambient temperature, diluted with methylene chloride, washed with aqueous hydrochloric acid solution and several times with water. The methylene chloride solutions were concentrated by evaporation and the products, which were the desired random copolyetherimides, were precipitated into methanol.

The results are given in Table I. The following reactant abbreviations are employed.

PP - 4,4'-dihydroxybiphenyl
BPA - bisphenol A
CPS - bis(4-chlorophenyl) sulfone
FBP - 4,4'-difluorobenzophenone
FBB - 1,4'-bis(4-chlorobenzoyl)benzene
DCB - o-dichlorobenzene.

TABLE 1

Example	Bisphenol	Compound C	Solvent	Time, min.	Product mol. wt.
1	BP	CPS	Anisole	300	42,000
2	BP	CPS	DCB	180	50,000
3	BPA	CPS	Anisole	240	44,000
4	BPA	FBP	Anisole	75	69,000
5	BPA	FBB	Anisole	37	66,200
6	BPA	FBB	Anisole	20	88,600

EXAMPLES 7-8

A series of oven-dried 100-ml 3-necked flasks was employed. Each flask was transferred to a nitrogen dry box and charged with 10.20 mmol of bisphenol disodium salt and 10 mmol of CIPAMI. The flasks were capped, transferred to a heated oil bath and fitted with a condenser, nitrogen inlet and mechanical stirrer. o-Dichlorobenzene, 25 ml, was added and the mixtures were heated under reflux, with stirring. About 5 ml of solvent was allowed to distill, after which a solution of 0.5 mmol of hexa-n-propylguanidinium chloride in about 1 ml of solvent was added over one minute, whereupon a vigorous exothermic reaction occurred. After two hours, 10 mmol of compound C was added, followed 5 minutes later by an additional 10 mmol of bisphenol A disodium salt. When products of high molecular weight had been obtained, said products, which were the desired block copolyetherimides, were worked up as in Examples 1-6. The results are given in Table II.

TABLE II

Example	Compound C	Time, min.	Product mol. wt.
7	FBP	3	51,000
8	FBB	276	43,700

EXAMPLE 9

The procedure of Examples 1-6 was repeated, substituting for the CIPAMI a corresponding bis(chlorophthalimide)

prepared from "Ethacure 100", an isomeric mixture of diethylmethyl-m-phenylenediamines available from Albemarle Corporation. After 20 minutes, a copolyetherimide having a molecular weight of 54,400 was obtained.

5 **EXAMPLE 10**

The procedure of Example 8 was repeated, substituting for the CIPAMI the "Ethacure 100" mixture. After 172 minutes, a copolyetherimide having a molecular weight of 66,200 was obtained.

EXAMPLE 11

10 A flask similar to that used in Examples 7-8 was charged with 10.20 mmol of bisphenol A disodium salt and 10 mmol of CIPAMI. It was fitted, dried and charged with o-dichlorobenzene and guanidinium salt as in Examples 1-6. After the initial exothermic
15 reaction, there was added 10 mmol (based on carbonate structural units) of a macrocyclic bisphenol A polycarbonate oligomer mixture. After 5 minutes, the molecular weight had reached 140,000 and no further cyclic polycarbonates were detected. The reaction was
20 quenched with acetic acid after 10 minutes and the mixture was cooled and worked up as in Examples 1-6. The product was the desired block copolyetherimidecarbonate.

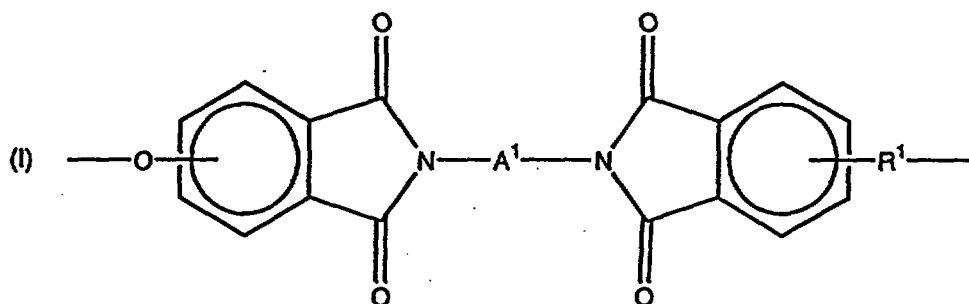
EXAMPLE 12

 The procedure of Example 11 was repeated, substituting for the CIPAMI the "Ethacure 100" mixture. After 138 minutes, a
25 copolyetherimidecarbonate having a molecular weight of 49,300 was obtained.

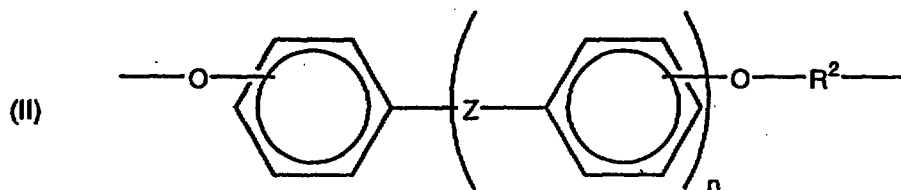


What is claimed is:

1. A copolyetherimide comprising structural units of the formulas

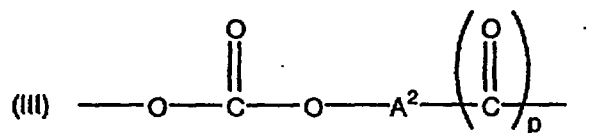


and at least one of the following:



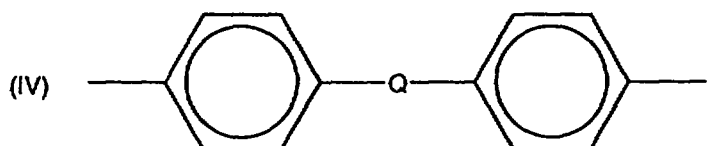
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and



wherein:

10 A^1 is a C_{6-20} divalent aromatic hydrocarbon or halogenated hydrocarbon radical, a C_{2-20} alkylene or divalent alicyclic radical, a C_{2-8} bis(alkylene-terminated) polydiorganosiloxane radical or a divalent radical of the formula





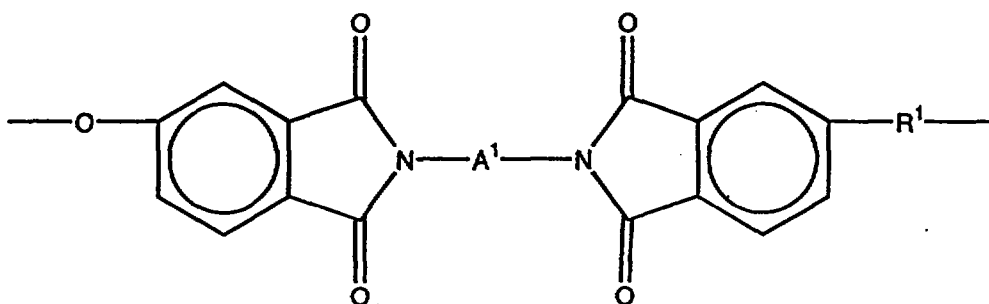
each of A^2 , R^1 and R^2 is independently a divalent
15 aromatic radical;
Q is $-C_2H_4-$, $-O-$, $-C(CF_3)-$, $-C(O)-$, $-SO_2-$ or a covalent
bond;

Z is $-CO-$ or $-SO_2-$;

n is 1 or 2; and

20 p is 0 or 1.

2. A copolyetherimide according to claim 1 wherein the
units of formula I have the formula



3. A copolyetherimide according to claim 2 wherein A^1 is
m-phenylene, p-phenylene, alkylated m- or p-phenylene or a mixture
thereof.

4. A copolyetherimide according to claim 1 comprising
units of formula II.

5. A copolyetherimide according to claim 4 wherein Z is
 $-CO-$.

6. A copolyetherimide according to claim 4 wherein Z is
 $-SO_2-$.

7. A copolyetherimide according to claim 1 wherein each
of R^1 and R^2 is 2,2-bis(4-phenylene)propane.



8. A copolyetherimide according to claim 1 comprising units of formula III.

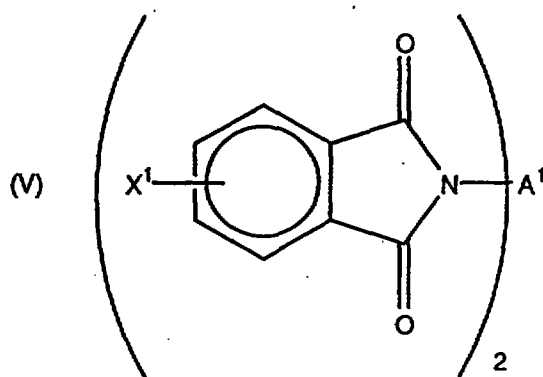
9. A copolyetherimide according to claim 8 wherein A^2 is 2,2-bis(4-phenylene)propane.

10. A copolyetherimide according to claim 8 wherein p is 0.

11. A copolyetherimide according to claim 1 which is a random copolymer.

12. A copolyetherimide according to claim 1 which is a block copolymer.

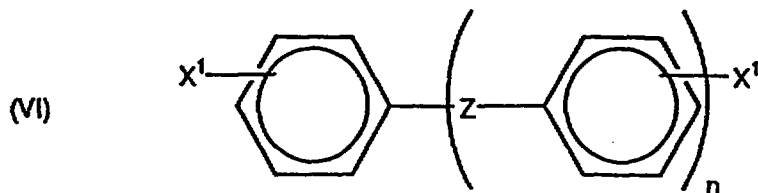
13. A method for preparing a copolyetherimide which comprises contacting, in a solvent and at a temperature in the range of about 125-250°C, (A) at least one alkali metal salt of a dihydroxy-substituted aromatic hydrocarbon having the formula
5 $HO-R^1-OH$ with (B) at least one first substituted aromatic compound of the formula



and (C) at least one second substituted aromatic compound of the formula



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or (D) at least one macrocyclic polycarbonate or polyarylate oligomer; wherein each X^1 is independently fluoro, chloro, bromo or nitro; in the presence of a catalytically active amount of a phase transfer catalyst which is substantially stable at the temperatures employed.

14. A method according to claim 13 wherein the phase transfer catalyst is a quaternary phosphonium salt, an N-alkyl-4-dialkylaminopyridinium salt or a hexaalkylguanidinium salt.

15. A method according to claim 14 wherein the phase transfer catalyst is a hexaalkylguanidinium halide.

16. A method according to claim 13 wherein A^1 is m-phenylene, p-phenylene, alkylated m- or p-phenylene or a mixture thereof.

17. A method according to claim 13 wherein compound C is employed.

18. A method according to claim 17 wherein compounds A, B and C are brought into contact in proportions such that the molar ratio of compound A to the total of compounds B and C is at least about 1:1, thereby producing a random copolymer.

19. A method according to claim 17 wherein component A is first brought into contact with compound B or C and then with the other of said compounds B and C, thereby producing a block copolymer.

20. A method according to claim 13 wherein compound D is employed.



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21. A method according to claim 20 wherein compound D is a macrocyclic polycarbonate oligomer mixture.