



Acid catalysis - a journey through industrial organic chemistry

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Mono- or polysubstituted derivatives of benzene or naphthalene are essential starting materials in the manufacturing of more elaborate key intermediates for health, agrochemistry and high performance polymers. The vast majority of these critical raw materials can be obtained industrially by acid catalysis, using either homogeneous acids (HCl, H₂SO₄, H₃PO₄, ...) or their heterogeneous analogues (oxides, mixed oxides, clays, zeolites and functional resins, ...), as demonstrated over the last 20 years. The interest for the later has been promoted by the search for more environmental friendly and hence sustainable technologies. In some cases, the literature and Rhodia's own experience have demonstrated the feasibility and the advantages of the heterogeneous solution vs. the historical homogeneous technology. This presentation will illustrate the importance of acid catalysis for Rhodia's chemistry. Also, the concepts and the methodology used when switching from homogeneous to heterogeneous catalysis will be illustrated, using key examples within Rhodia's product portfolio.

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