

(19)



**Octrooi centrum
Nederland**

(11)

2018722

(12) B1 OCTROOI

(21)

Aanvraagnummer: **2018722**

(51)

Int. Cl.:
C08H 8/00 (2017.01) **C07G 1/00** (2018.01)

(22)

Aanvraag ingediend: **14 april 2017**

(41)

Aanvraag ingeschreven:
24 oktober 2018

(73)

Octrooihouder(s):
Trespa International B.V. te WEERT.

(43)

Aanvraag gepubliceerd:
-

(72)

Uitvinder(s):
Andrew Sidney Jobber te WEERT.
Luca Ferrari te WEERT.
Somayeh Kazemi te WEERT.
Kim Mechtilda Ferdinand Helwegen te WEERT.
Atte Ilari Virtanen te WEERT.

(47)

Octrooi verleend:
24 oktober 2018

(45)

Octrooischrift uitgegeven:
15 januari 2019

(74)

Gemachtigde:
ir. J.M.G. Dohmen c.s. te Eindhoven.

(54)

A method for preparing an activated lignin composition

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The present invention relates to a method for preparing an activated lignin composition. In addition, the present invention also relates to a method for further processing the thus activated lignin composition in a method for preparing a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin. Such a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin can be used in the manufacturing of laminates by replacing the traditional synthetic phenol formaldehyde resin.

Title: A method for preparing an activated lignin composition

Description

5 The present invention relates to a method for preparing an activated lignin composition. In addition, the present invention also relates to a method for further processing the thus activated lignin composition in a method for preparing a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin. Such a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin can be used in the manufacturing of laminates by replacing the traditional synthetic phenol
10 formaldehyde resin.

 Laminates are products that are comprised of multiple layers of semi-finished material (either impregnated papers or prepregs), that are then compressed and fused together. In general, laminate products typically contain about 55-80 wt% wood derived material (e.g. fibres or paper) and about 20-45 wt% thermosetting resin. The
15 fusing of the compressed stack of layered semi-finished material, is brought about by the condensation (or polymerisation reaction) of the thermosetting resin; which is normally driven by the application of heat, and by such means taken to a desired degree of final curing. This can be achieved using discontinuous or continuous processing methods. A common discontinuous method is the use of a multi-daylight
20 press wherein stacks of layered semi-finished material are placed within the daylight of the press and then subjected to a program of pressurised compression and applied heat, which result in a laminate product. A general product definition for such laminates is "High Pressure Laminate" or "HPL". An example of a continuous method is the use of a continuous press; wherein the semi-finished material is
25 continually fed into the press from multiple feeds, they are then compressed and heated to form a laminate product. A general product definition for such laminates is "Continuous Pressure Laminate" or alternatively "Continuous Pressed Laminate" both of which can be abbreviated to "CPL". The product norm or standard EN438 has a general definition for laminates termed as HPL or CPL, however in this document
30 the definition of laminates as described is somewhat wider.

 Decorative laminates are generally composed of a core layer or stack of core layers, with a decorative layer either on one or both sides. Laminates of this type are employed for interior or exterior uses in the building industry, being used as cladding panels or self-supporting units, depending on their thickness.

Decorative high-pressure compact laminates manufactured by the present applicant are known for outdoor applications. Such laminates consist of layers of wood-based fibres (paper and/or wood) impregnated with thermosetting resins and surface layer(s) on one or both sides, having decorative colours or designs. A transparent topcoat can be added to the surface layer(s) and cured to enhance weather and light protecting properties. These components are bonded together with simultaneous application of heat and high specific pressure to obtain a homogeneous non-porous material with increased density and integral decorative surface. These laminates have been disclosed in, inter alia, US Patent No. 4,801,495, US 4,789,604, US Patent application 2013/0078437. The present application is not restricted only to exterior compact laminates, but the scope of this application also includes interior laminates, which can be either thin or compact.

The environmental aspects of phenol resins are under discussion. Lignin is a natural polymer, which can be extracted from for example wood. As lignin is a natural biopolymer, its use as a component in resins instead of synthetic materials is a way to come up with a more environmentally friendly resin composition. Lignin is an aromatic polymer and a major constituent in wood, and has been extensively investigated as a suitable substitute for phenol during production of phenol-formaldehyde resins. These are used during manufacturing of structural wood products such as plywood, oriented strand board and fibreboard. During synthesis of such adhesives, lignin, partially replacing phenol, is reacted with formaldehyde in the presence of either basic or acidic catalyst to form a highly cross-linked aromatic resins; termed novolacs (when utilizing acidic catalysts), or resoles (when utilizing basic catalysts). The amounts of the phenol that can be replaced by lignin are, inter alia, determined by the lower reactivity of lignin.

International application WO 2016/157141 relates to a method for the making an activated lignin composition comprising the following steps: i) providing a lignin, such as an alkaline lignin, ii) adding one or more aqueous or water soluble dispersant(s) , such as water, iii) adding an alkali metal-based such as NaOH, iv) optionally adding one or more substituted and/or non- substituted hydroxybenzene compounds, such as phenol, and v) mixing said components and at the same time reducing the particle size of the lignin, preferably by using high shear treatment, whereby said components are subjected to high shear and flow, thus providing said composition.

International application WO2015123781 relates to a method for preparing a cross-linkable resin, the method comprising the step of: (i) converting a hexose to 5-hydroxymethyl furfural (HMF) in the presence of a phenolic compound and a catalyst that promotes formation of covalent bonds between a carbon atom of the aromatic ring of the phenolic compound and the carbon of the formyl group of the HMF to form the resin, wherein the phenolic compound is selected from unsubstituted phenol, cardanol and combinations thereof, especially wherein the phenolic compound is obtained from a lignocellulosic biomass. The biomass is one or more of pyrolysis oil, liquefied biomass, lignin, de-polymerized lignin, phenolated de-polymerized lignin, and liquefied lignin.

International application WO2013144454 relates to a method for increasing the reactivity of lignin, comprising the following steps: a) forming, under heating at a temperature of 30 - 70 °C, an aqueous dispersion comprising alkali and lignin, wherein the alkali comprises a hydroxide of an alkali metal; and b) heating the dispersion formed in step a) at a temperature of 50 - 95 °C for producing alkylated lignin, wherein step b) is carried out for 15 minutes - 24 hours, and wherein the method comprises, before step a) , the step i) of reacting lignin with a compound selected from the class of phenols. This International application WO2013144454 uses the term "alkylated lignin" and that would imply the covalent bonding of a carbon chain to the lignin. On the basis of the disclosure it means lignin dissolved in alkali, rather than an alkylation reaction whereby a hydrocarbon chain is covalently bonded to the lignin.

International application WO2015079107 relates to a method for treating lignin, comprising the following steps: a) dissolving lignin into an aqueous composition, which contains a compound selected from the class of phenols and alkali, while keeping the temperature of the composition at 40 - 85 °C, wherein the alkali comprises a hydroxide of an alkali metal; and b) heating the composition at a temperature, which is higher than the temperature of the composition in step a), with the proviso that the temperature of the composition does not exceed 100 °C, while keeping the pH of the composition at a pH value of 6 - 14. According to this publication further alkali is added to the composition in step b), thus alkali is added to the composition in step a) and in step b). This publication mentions that dissolving lignin into a composition of phenol, alkali and water, at the specific temperature used affects the time needed to dissolve lignin into the composition.

International application WO2016207493 relates to a method for recovering lignin from alkaline lignin containing feedstock by a thermal treatment, wherein the method comprises a simultaneous activation and precipitation of the lignin in the feedstock by a thermal treatment being carried out without added demethylation and demethoxylation enhancing agent, by applying temperature between 200 and 250 °C and a retention time between 0.5 and 10 hours to the feedstock, wherein the alkaline lignin containing feedstock is from alkaline pulping process, e.g. kraft black liquor. After the activation and precipitation, the lignin material is purified by acidic washing.

International application WO2017006215 relates to a method for increasing the reactivity of lignin, a resin composition comprising said lignin and use of said resin composition. The method comprises the following steps: providing a mixture comprising lignin and an alkali solution wherein the concentration of the alkali solution of the mixture is between 5-50% by weight, storing said mixture for a period of at least 1 day whereby the reactivity of the lignin is increased, wherein the storage is done at room temperature, i.e. at a temperature of 20 - 30 °C. The mixture comprises 10-80% by weight of lignin.

The present inventors found that for laminate (including HPL and CPL) applications, it is necessary for the resin binder composition to be able to impregnate kraft papers or wood fibres and to have sufficient flow during panel pressing. In Lignin Phenol Formaldehyde (LPF) binders described by the prior art, the lignin has been co-condensed with the phenol formaldehyde or simply post added. This aspect will generally result in binders that are too viscous for the desired application.

In addition, it is known that phenol in the presence of an alkali can form a phenolate ion. This can undergo resonance and form three structures, thus giving rise to active hydrogens at the two ortho positions and the para position. Any of these are capable of reacting with formaldehyde and forming a methylol group. This methylation reaction can be identified as the first reaction step in making a phenolic resin. The methylolated phenol thus formed can react with a further two molecules of formaldehyde to form dimethylolated phenol and trimethylolated phenol and these methylolated phenol species can react with themselves to form larger oligomer units via condensation reactions. The methylation and condensation reactions can occur simultaneously.

Since lignin consists of aromatic units, some of which are analogous to phenol, with a phenolic OH group and a free ortho position, it has long been thought

that it can partake in the above reactions as a phenol substitute. However, these active sites are relatively rare (in terms of reactive sites divided by molecular weight of lignin macromolecule), or may be sterically hindered. Consequently the success of lignin phenol formaldehyde resins has been somewhat limited. Indeed, if one were to react a mixture of phenol, formaldehyde and lignin together; it is found that the formaldehyde reacts preferentially with the phenol. Furthermore, methylation increases the reactivity with formaldehyde, so the methylolated and dimethylolated phenols have higher kinetic rates of reaction. This unfortunately leaves the lignin left behind in terms of reaction kinetics, and therefore it is questionable how well it is incorporated into the final 3D polymer network.

The object of the present invention is to provide a method for preparing an activated lignin composition.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a process on basis of lignin wherein the above discussed methylation reaction is favoured over the condensation reaction.

Another object of the present invention is to provide an activated lignin composition that has improved functionality towards reaction with phenol formaldehyde reaction species and the consequent oligomers.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a method for preparing a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin on the basis of an activated lignin composition.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin that can be used in the manufacturing of laminates.

The present invention thus relates to a method for preparing an activated lignin composition, comprising the following steps:

- i) providing a liquid lignin having free active hydrogen positions;
- ii) heating said liquid lignin to a temperature in a range of 50 °C and 100 °C;
- iii) adding formaldehyde to said heated liquid lignin under stirring conditions;
- iv) maintaining the temperature of the mixture according to iii) in a range of 50 °C and 100 °C during a time period of at least 10 minutes.

The present inventors found that one or more of the above identified objects of the present invention can be achieved by the method steps i) –iv) as recited above. According to the present invention the liquid lignin, with free active

hydrogen positions, is reacted with formaldehyde under alkali conditions, and at temperatures that favour the methylolation reaction over the condensation reaction. Furthermore after the dosing of formaldehyde, the mixture is held at a temperature favouring the methylolation reaction – but not the condensation reaction – for a period of time. This will result in an activated lignin that has improved functionality towards reaction with phenol formaldehyde reaction species and the consequent oligomers. The methylolation reaction and the condensation reaction will be discussed later in this document.

The liquid lignin as mentioned in step i) can be prepared from commercially sourced kraft lignin. However, any lignin could in principle be used providing that it results in a homogeneous liquid containing the lignin and is suitable for the activation step described by the present invention. Therefore the lignin could be sourced from hardwood, softwood or annual plants (e.g. grasses or crop residues), or a blend thereof. It could be natural lignin, or one which has undergone a process to separate it from the rest of the bio-mass; e.g. kraft lignin, organosolv lignin, liginosulphonate lignin, lignin extracted from pyrolysis oil, or a blend of such lignins. The lignin may be modified from the natural state by either the process used to separate it from the bio-mass and/or by a desired chemical modification.

The chemical functionality of the lignin could be changed by, for example, alterations in the distribution of naturally occurring lignin functional groups and linkages (e.g. aliphatic OH, aromatic OH, carboxylic acids, β -O-4 etc.), the introduction of new chemical functional groups brought about by the bio-mass separation process (e.g. sulphonic acid groups in liginosulphonate lignin), further chemical modification of the lignin brought about by reaction with a reagent or catalyst that is not formaldehyde or a form of formaldehyde (e.g. paraformaldehyde, 1,3,5-Trioxane). Furthermore, since modification with formaldehyde and its various forms is in the scope of the present invention, it follows also that modification with dialdehydes such as glyoxal, glutaraldehyde, butyraldehyde, etc. is covered here as well. The term “further chemical modification of the lignin” refers to a reaction with a reagent or a catalyst that is not formaldehyde, and includes, but is not be limited by: esterification, sulphonation and epoxidation.

The present inventors found that irrespective what type of lignin is used to prepare the homogeneous liquid, it must have active hydrogens on the lignin macromolecule that can undergo a reaction with formaldehyde to form a methylol

group. These active hydrogens are typically on aromatic rings within the lignin structure. Important active hydrogens are those located on the Guaiacyl (G) and p-Hydroxyphenyl (H) units, especially the G5, H3 and H5 active hydrogens. The other positions G2, G6, H2 and H6 can be methylolated, though this is highly unfavourable, and if seen, only form as minor constituents.

In an embodiment of the present method for preparing an activated lignin composition the liquid lignin having free active hydrogen positions has a pH range of at least 6, preferably a pH in a range of 6 – 13, more preferably in a range of 8-12, even more preferably in a range of 9-11. The present inventors found that below pH 6 the reaction of formaldehyde with active hydrogens on lignin to form methylol groups on lignin (i.e. lignin-CH₂OH) is too slow. Also at even lower pH's (and assuming it is a lignin that is still soluble at low pH's), an alternative undesired reaction is possible. Namely this is the acidic condensation reaction with formaldehyde. The formaldehyde attacks the active hydrogen positions and because of the acidic conditions a methylene carbo-cation is formed (i.e. lignin=CH₂⁺) this is highly reactive and immediately forms a methylene bridge to another lignin active hydrogen position, i.e. a condensation reaction. The present inventors also found that at very high pH's the reaction to form the desired methylol groups is very good, however it also aids the condensation of said methylol groups. Consequently at the later stages of resin condensation, line impregnation and panel pressing, the curing profile is more difficult to control. Also it introduces unnecessary salt into the product, which will cause an osmotic pressure if it is immersed in water, such that water will want to enter the laminate and cause swelling.

In another embodiment of the present method for preparing an activated lignin composition the temperature according to step ii) is in a range of 60 °C – 85 °C, preferably in a range of 65 °C – 80 °C. These temperature ranges are to optimise the methylolation reaction over that of the condensation reaction. Consequently the liquid lignin needs to be adjusted to this optimal temperature range prior to the addition of the formaldehyde. If it were too high then condensation would occur whilst the formaldehyde is being added. At temperatures below 60°C there is little reaction.

In another embodiment of the present method for preparing an activated lignin composition the temperature according to step iv) is in a range of 60 °C – 85

°C, preferably in a range of 65 °C – 80 °C. These temperature ranges are to optimise the methylation reaction over that of the condensation reaction.

The period of time according to step iv) in an embodiment of the present method for preparing an activated lignin composition is in a range of 15 minutes – 4 hours, preferably in the range 30 minutes to 2 hours.. The present inventors found that a reaction time less than 10 minutes is unlikely to give sufficient activation, whereas more than 4 hours is not commercially sensible.

In an embodiment of the present method for preparing an activated lignin composition the addition of formaldehyde to the heated liquid lignin is carried out on a continuous base. The present inventors found that such a dose regime offers improved control over the reaction. In addition, it helps to avoid overheating to a temperature range wherein the condensation becomes significant. In another embodiment the formaldehyde can be dosed in one or more charges.

The present inventors found that the amount of formaldehyde added to the heated liquid lignin is in a range suitable for reacting with the lignin based upon the mass of dry lignin that the mixture contains and more specifically, the moles of active hydrogen sites that the said lignin contains. In an embodiment the formaldehyde is added in a stoichiometric 1:1 molar ratio with the active hydrogens. In another embodiment the formaldehyde is added in a stoichiometric excess i.e. >1:1 so as to aid the reaction kinetics and to optionally provide a certain amount of pre-dosing of formaldehyde prior to the phenol addition. In another embodiment the formaldehyde is added in a stoichiometric deficiency i.e. <1:1 so as to provide a lower formaldehyde resin.

The processing steps according to the present invention result in an activated lignin. The present inventors found that it only marginally increases in molecular weight, but that it does indeed consume significant formaldehyde. 2D NMR studies have shown marked decreases in the G5, H3 and H5 signals and the appearance of strong signals related to –CH₂OH (i.e. the methylol functionality from the reaction, lignin + formaldehyde). The present inventors found that activated liquid lignin obtained according to the present process step is well functionalised to react into a 3D polymer network together with phenol formaldehyde oligomers.

The present invention also relates to a method for preparing an intermediate type of lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin comprising the following steps:

a) providing an activated lignin composition obtained according to any one of claims 1-10;

b) optionally heating said activated lignin composition of step a) to a temperature in a range of 50°C – 90 °C;

5 c) adding phenol to said activated lignin composition;

d) adjusting the temperature of the mixture of step c) such that it is in the range of 60 °C – 90 °C;

e) adding formaldehyde to said mixture of step d).

The aim of this method for preparing an intermediate type of lignin-phenol
10 formaldehyde resin is to enable a low molecular weight lignin phenol formaldehyde resin with good impregnation properties and low free monomers, i.e. low free formaldehyde and low free phenol, to be made. For the preparation of the lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin as such one or more additional process steps of, inter alia, are needed, e.g. methylation step, condensation step, dilution step and
15 addition of additives. Please note that the present invention also relates to a situation wherein the method for preparing an activated lignin composition could be carried out at one facility and transported to another for resin synthesis. Thus the method for preparing an activated lignin composition and the method for preparing a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin can be carried out on different locations and/or by
20 different firms.

It follows that in a potential embodiment of the present method for preparing an intermediate type of lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin, step c) uses a phenol solution, which has a lower freezing point than pure phenol. Therefore the lower boundary of the temperature range in step b) could be lowered in accordance
25 or even eliminated for practical purposes. This may be of use if the activated lignin in step a) has come from storage or via transport and is at a lower temperature.

The step of heating is optional. This means that the present method for preparing an intermediate type of lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin can be carried out by combining the present activated lignin composition and phenol and adjusting
30 the temperature of the mixture such that it is in the range of 60 °C – 90 °C. Thus the starting materials may be at room temperature. According to another embodiment the present activated lignin composition is heated to a temperature in a range of 50°C – 90 °C and phenol is added to the heated activated lignin composition. After

mixing the temperature of the mixture is adjusted such that it is in the range of 60 °C – 90 °C.

5 In an embodiment of the present method for preparing an intermediate type of a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin, step b) and d) is carried out in a temperature in a range of 65-80°C.

10 In another embodiment of the present method for preparing an intermediate type of a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin, the addition of formaldehyde according to step e) is carried out on a continuous base. The formaldehyde can also be charged in one or in several doses, but is preferred to dose continuously for reasons of temperature control. Furthermore with the good temperature control made possible by continuous dosing, it is possible to keep the batch in a temperature range that favours the phenol formaldehyde methylation reaction over that of the phenol formaldehyde condensation reaction; thus helping to keep the molecular weight distribution of the resin components low.

15 In an embodiment of the present method for preparing an intermediate type of a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin the addition of formaldehyde according to step e) takes place in a period of time between 20 and 150 minutes, preferably 30 minutes and 90 minutes.

20 In an embodiment of the present method for preparing an intermediate type of a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin, the temperature during step e) is maintained in a range of 60 °C – 90 °C, preferably 65-80°C. The present inventors found that this temperature range favours the methylation reaction and not the condensation reaction.

25 In an embodiment of the present method for preparing an intermediate type of lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin the amount of formaldehyde added according to step e) is related to the amount of phenol added according to step c) and the amount of residual free formaldehyde in the activated lignin.

30 The combination of the amount of formaldehyde added in step e) together with the amount of formaldehyde residual in the activated lignin should give, when compared with the amount of phenol charged in step c), a molar ratio P:F in the range of 1.0:0.9 – 2.0, preferably in a range of 1.0:1.0 – 1.5.

In an embodiment of the present method for preparing a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin an additional step f) is optionally carried out, said step f) being carried out after step e). Thus the material obtained after step e) is further processed

in a step f), i.e. a step f) that, according to the present invention, can be identified as methylation. The methylation step comprises heating and maintaining the mixture of step e) at a temperature in a range 50 – 80°C, more preferably in a range of 60 – 80°C and most preferably 65 °C – 80 °C during a period of time of at least 10 minutes, but preferably of at least 30 minutes. The present inventors found that according to an embodiment some condensation can take place in the high temperature range of the methylation step resulting in the final lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin. The product thus obtained can be diluted with solvent and one or more additives, if necessary. The advantage of the methylation stage (batch temperature held between 50°C and 80°C, preferably between 60°C and 80°C) is that the methylation reaction is favoured over the condensation reaction, this leads to a lower free formaldehyde and lower free phenol for a given degree of condensation later on. The length of time for the methylation stage can be subject to the particular requirements of the resin. The present inventors found that the methylation stage should be at least 10 minutes, but preferably of at least 30 minutes, and more preferably between 40 minutes and 120 minutes, and even more preferably between 40 minutes and 70 minutes.

In another embodiment of the present method for preparing a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin an additional step g) is optionally carried out, said step g) being carried out after step e). Thus the material obtained after step e) is further processed in a step g), i.e. a step g) that, according to the present invention, can be identified as condensation. This condensation stage should be at temperatures over 80°C, preferably in the range of 85° to 95°C.. In the situation of step e) being followed by step g) no methylation step f) is carried out, i.e. the step of adding formaldehyde to the mixture of step d) is directly followed by condensation. The product thus obtained can be diluted with solvent and one or more additives, if necessary.

In another embodiment of the present method for preparing a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin step e) is followed by step f) and step f) is followed by step g). This means that the step of adding formaldehyde to the mixture of step d) is followed by methylation, and methylation is followed by condensation. The temperature ranges as mentioned above for both the methylation and condensation apply here as well. This means that the methylation step is carried out at a temperature in a range 50 °C – 80°C, preferably 60 °C – 80°C, and most preferably

65 °C – 80 °C during a period of time of at least 10 minutes but preferably of at least 30 minutes, and more preferably between 40 minutes and 120 minutes, and even more preferably between 40 minutes and 70 minutes; and that the condensation step is carried out at temperatures over 80°C, but preferably in the range of 85°C to 95°C. The lignin phenol formaldehyde resin product thus obtained can be diluted with solvent and one or more additives, if necessary.

The condensation stage [step g)] allows the resin to advance further in molecular weight as a polymer, which may aid classification of the resin as a polymer, or to reach required free monomer concentration specifications.

Dilution with a solvent, and optionally also with additional water, can reduce the viscosity, and also the surface tension, of the resin. This can enable a better impregnation of paper by the resin; the resin up-take of the paper is mainly driven by the capillary action capabilities of the paper.

From the view of flash point and flammability the solvent used to dilute the resin should be added safely to the batch. In addition, the methylation and condensation reactions of the resin should not progress any further, therefore the batch temperature for mixing and homogenizing the batch with the solvent following its addition is preferably below 50°C, more preferably in the temperature range of 20°C to 50°C. The solvent charge may be used as a means to cool the batch following the desired resin synthesis step, perhaps in addition to other measures such as cooling coils.

In the dilution phase the solvent can be dosed in one charge. The amount of solvent to be charged is between 2 wt% and 15 wt%, but preferably between 4 wt% and 12 wt%, and more preferably between 6 wt% and 10 wt%, based on the total weight of the resin.

The viscosity range is preferably between 3 mPa.s and 50 mPa.s, more preferably between 5 and 30 mPa.s, and even more preferably between 5 and 20 mPa.s.

In an embodiment the solvent comprises molecules having an alcohol group (i.e. R-OH), such as methanol, ethanol, propanol, isopropanol, butanol, isobutanol, pentanol, iso-pentanol, plus higher alcohols and their isomers. Furthermore diols such as mono ethylene glycol, triols such as glycerol, or glycol ethers such as diethylene glycol can be used. If for example methanol is used, it should be charged to the resin batch at temperatures below 40°C. Optionally, if the flashpoint of the

solvent is high enough, or the facilities can safely handle the hazards, the solvent can be added at the liquid lignin preparation, lignin activation, or resin synthesis steps.

5 In an embodiment, an additive or additive mixture is added to the resin, for example after dilution with solvent as discussed above, or this can be dosed into the resin batch just before impregnation. A possible aim of the additive addition is to ensure a good wettability of the paper, i.e. enabling a good impregnating of the resin into the paper. Alternatively it may assist with foaming issues on the impregnation line. The additive may also serve to provide modified flow properties and plasticize
10 the resin on final curing and pressing.

In an embodiment, the resin temperature during dosing of the additive or additive mixture is preferably in a range of 20°C to 50°C, more preferably a temperature between 25°C and 35°C.

In an embodiment the additive or additive mixture is dosed in one charge.
15 The amount of additive or additive mixture to be charged is between 0.0 wt% and 5 wt%, preferably between 0.5wt% and 4wt%, and more preferably between 1.5 wt% and 2.5 wt%, based on the resin.

As discussed before the resin up-take of the paper is mainly driven by the capillary action capabilities of the paper. The additive or additive mixture lowers the
20 surface tension (or interfacial tension) between a liquid and a solid thereby promoting a better transfer of resin into the paper.

The resin mixture obtained according to the present invention will be used to impregnate an impregnation paper. This paper has a basis weight of preferably between 100 g/m² and 250 g/m², more preferably between 128 g/m² and 215 g/m².
25 The average moisture percentage of impregnation papers is in a range of 2.5 to 5wt%.

The present invention furthermore relates to the use of the above-described resin mixture which is used to impregnate an impregnation paper. The so called semi-finished material will be composed into a stacked package and used in a
30 pressing operation to form laminates. The pressing operation will be carried out using an elevated temperature and an elevated pressure. In an embodiment at least on one side of the stacked package a decorative layer is provided prior to or after the pressing operation.

The present invention is also suitable for the production of CPL ("Continuous Pressure Laminates" or alternatively "Continuous Pressed Laminates"). In the past CPL lines were run with pressure in the range of 20 – 50 bar, but modern CPL lines are capable of achieving pressures in the range of 70 – 80 bar. Hence from a "pressure" point of view there is no difference to the multi daylight presses which are also typically referred as HPL (High Pressure Laminate) presses. The present invention also covers the Double Belt Press (DBP) for the production of CPL. CPL typically has decorative paper impregnated with resins, which is fused under heat and high pressure with resin impregnated backer(s). Laminate properties are similar to standard HPL and a typical thickness range is between 0.4 mm to 1 mm. Flexible CPL is decorative paper impregnated with flexible thermosetting resins and fused under heat and high pressure with resin-impregnated backer(s). During the step of bonding together the individual components, i.e. the core layer, and the décor layer, with simultaneous application of heat, for example $\geq 120^{\circ}\text{C}$, and high specific pressure ($> 7\text{ MPa}$) a homogeneous non-porous panel with increased density and integral decorative surface is obtained.

In order to have a good end product, meaning a HPL or CPL, a homogeneous and full resin penetration into the paper is preferred. Therefore the altering of the physical properties of the paper might be needed. Also additives may be used to enhance the resin penetration into the paper. All papers can be used for impregnation with the resin obtained according to the present invention. For HPL and CPL applications saturation base Kraft paper is preferably used.

A stationary press, possibly a multi daylight press, is used for pressing and suitably curing the impregnation paper impregnated with the present resin mixture into laminate products. In another embodiment a continuous press is used for such a pressing operation.

The laminates thus obtained preferably have a thickness varying from 0.2 mm to 50 mm, but in particular from 0.5 mm to 25 mm.

The laminates obtained according to the present invention can be used indoors as well as outdoors. The application in the construction area relates to the cladding of buildings, for example interior walls, exterior walls, ceilings and facades. The indoor application relates to the manufacturing of furniture, worktops and table tops, storage compartments such as lockers and various other products. Examples of furniture are table tops, laboratory tables, kitchen work tops, nightstands, hot

plates, countertops, benches, chairs, or stools, as well as tables, such as coffee tables, dining tables, cocktail tables, conference tables, side tables, picnic tables, or outdoor tables.

5 The present invention is further described in the following examples, together with the appended figures, which do not limit the scope of the invention in any way. Preferred features of each aspect of the invention are as for each of the other aspects *mutatis mutandis*. Embodiments of the present invention are described as mentioned in more detail with the aid of examples of embodiments, together with the appended figures, the only purpose of which is to illustrate the invention and are
10 in no way intended to limit its extent.

The present invention also relates to a method for manufacturing a laminate comprising of preparing a core layer and pressing said core layer in a press using an elevated temperature and an elevated pressure, wherein a resin mixture comprising a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin obtained according to the method
15 according to the present invention as discussed above is used for impregnating said core layer.

In an embodiment of the present method for manufacturing a laminate the core layer comprises of one or more prepregs made of wood fibres.

20 In an embodiment of the present method for manufacturing a laminate the core layer comprises of a stack of resin impregnated papers, wherein said papers are preferably made with saturation base kraft papers.

In an embodiment of the present method for manufacturing a laminate the core layer comprises of a combination of prepregs and impregnated papers, wherein said prepregs are preferably made of wood fibres and wherein the impregnated
25 papers are preferably made with saturation base kraft papers.

In an embodiment the impregnated papers are positioned as an outer-layer of the core-material, whilst having prepreg(s) in the middle.

In another embodiment the prepregs and impregnated papers are interlaced, preferably in such a way that said impregnated papers are positioned
30 between said prepregs, wherein said impregnated papers are optionally positioned as an outer-layer of the core-material.

In another embodiment the core layer is combined with one or more decorative layers, wherein said decorative layer is positioned on one side or on both side of core-layers.

In another embodiment one or more decorative layers are based on decorative paper saturated using thermosetting resin like melamine-formaldehyde resin.

- 5 In another embodiment one or more decorative layers are coated using acrylic resin hardened using either UV-curable or EB-curable system.

Method for Viscosity Measurements

In the examples a Brookfield LVT was used to measure the viscosity. Once the temperature of the samples had been adjusted to 20°C, their viscosities were measured using the appropriate spindle and rpm settings.

5 Method for pH determination

Samples were adjusted to 20°C and their pH was measured by inserting a calibrated pH electrode/meter.

Method for free formaldehyde determination (HPLC)

10 The sample was accurately weighed out (200 mg) into a 50 ml volumetric flask and made up to the mark with methanol. Once dissolved and a homogeneous solution is formed, 2 ml are then pipette to a second 50 ml volumetric flask. This was then approximately half filled with distilled water and 2 ml of DNPH (2,4-dinitrophenolhydrazine) solution were then added. It was then filled to the mark with more distilled water and homogenised. The DNPH reacts with formaldehyde to form
15 a derivative that is chromophoric. A small amount (circa 4 ml) is removed and passed through a 0.2 µm filter before being readied for injection onto the HPLC column. (NB: the first 2 ml of filtrate or so go to waste, whilst the remainder goes into a sample vial that is loaded onto the HPLC carousel).

The HPLC used a waters Nova-Pak C18, 4µm 3.9x20mm pre-column, and
20 a waters Nova-Pak C18, 4µm 4.6x150mm main-column. The eluent was isocratic, 70% methanol:30% aqueous sodium formate buffer pH 4.5. The aqueous buffer consists of 4.3 g of sodium hydroxide plus 4.75 ml of formic acid in 2.5 litres of HPLC grade water. Both the methanol and the pH 4.5 aqueous buffer were degassed before being used as an eluent. After running the samples, the chromatograms were
25 then evaluated and the free formaldehyde of the sample was then calculated. For each sample the determination is done twice. Note standards with formaldehyde and DNPH were also prepared and run for calibration purposes.

Method for free Phenol determination

30 The sample was accurately weighed out (200mg) into a 50ml volumetric flask and made up to the mark with methanol. Once dissolved and a homogeneous solution is formed, a small amount (circa 4ml) is removed and passed through a 0.2µm filter before being readied for injection onto the HPLC column. (NB: the first 2ml of filtrate or so go to waste, whilst the remainder goes into a sample vial that is loaded onto the HPLC carousel). The HPLC used a waters Nova-Pak C18, 4µm

3.9x20mm pre-column, and a waters Nova-Pak C18, 4µm 4.6x150mm main-column. The elution program was as described in Table 1.

Table 1: Elution program for free phenol determination

Retention Time (min)	methanol	aqueous formate pH4.5	sodium buffer	Type of elution
0 to 5	7%	93%		Isocratic
5 to 30	100%	0%		Gradient
30 to 40	100%	0%		Isocratic
40 to 50	7%	93%		Gradient

The aqueous buffer consists of 4.3 g of sodium hydroxide plus 4.75 ml of formic acid in 2.5 litres of HPLC grade water. Both the methanol and the pH 4.5 aqueous buffer were degassed before being used as an eluent. After running the samples, the chromatograms were then evaluated and the free phenol of the sample was then calculated. For each sample the determination is done twice. Note standards with phenol were also prepared and run for calibration purposes.

Method for SEC analysis

The SEC measurements were performed in 0.1 M NaOH eluent using PSS MCX 1000 & 100000 Å columns with a precolumn. The samples were diluted with 0.1 M NaOH solution and filtered (0.45µm) prior to measurement. Molar mass distributions were calculated with the use of polystyrene sulphonate standards. A photo diode array set at 280nm was used as the detector.

Method for 2D HSQC NMR

Samples were freeze dried and then dissolved in D₂O (90 mg/ml). 2D (¹H – ¹³C) HSQC NMR measurements were performed using a Bruker Avance III 600MHz with double resonance and QCI cryoprobe. To evaluate the extent of methylation (-CH₂OH) during lignin activation, the signal intensities were normalized relative to the signal from the lignin methoxy (MeO-) groups.

Examples 4 to 10 (Kraft Lignin Activation: variance with pH)

A 3000 ml glass reactor configured for reflux under atmospheric conditions was used. It also had an electric motor and anchor stirrer that was set to a stirring rate of 400rpm. Furthermore the reactor was double walled, so that heating could be provided by a recirculating thermostatically controlled oil bath. The reactor

also had cooling coils through which cold water could pass. This arrangement allowed good control of the experiment's temperature.

To this reactor materials were added; and specifically for the Kraft Lignin Activation Examples 4-10, the materials and quantities are listed in Tables 2 and 3.

- 5 Note, the data shown in Table 2 are to be regarded as raw materials for present step i), namely providing a liquid lignin having free active hydrogen positions.

Table 2: Preparation of liquid lignin

10		Step 1: Liquid Lignin Preparation							
		Example	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		Target pH	10.0	9.0	11.0	8.0	12.0	6.0	13.0
15		Raw Material							
	A	Demineralised water [1]	1207. 68	1243. 60	1207. 68	1243. 68	1207. 68	1267. 68	1207. 68
	B	KOH 47% [1]	76.00	40.00	76.00	40.00	76.00	16.00	76.00
	C	Kraft Lignin 67.22% [2]	565.3 2	565.3 2	565.3 2	565.3 2	565.3 2	565.3 2	565.3 2
20	D	KOH 47% [2]	0.00	7.28	34.39	2.03	83.87	0.00	120.1 0
	E	Demineralised water [2]	151.0 0	143.7 2	116.6 1	148.9 7	67.13	151.0 0	30.90

Table 3: lignin activation

Step 2: Lignin Activation								
Example	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Target pH	10.0	9.0	11.0	8.0	12.0	6.0	13.0	
Raw Material								
Liquid Lignin (after removal of retained sample)	1907. 82	1886. 05	1890. 04	1881. 60	1897. 38	1894. 40	1908. 53	
F	Formalin 55%	73.23	72.40	72.55	72.22	72.83	72.72	73.26

The following procedure was used for Examples 4-10. To the reactor, (A) demineralised water [1] and (B) KOH 47% [1] were charged. The temperature was then adjusted to 75°C, where upon (C) the kraft lignin powder was charged. This was allowed to dissolve over 1 hr at 75°C. A 100 g sample is then taken, weighed and cooled to 20°C in an ice bath. For each example there is a target pH, these are indicated in Table 2. The pH of the sample is measured, and if necessary the pH is adjusted by the dropwise addition of KOH 47% under stirring – the amount of KOH 47% needed for this is noted and used to calculate the amounts for materials (D) KOH 47% [2] and (E) demineralised water [2]. The adjusted sample is returned to the reactor and materials (D) and (E) are then charged. The mixture is allowed to stir at 75°C for a further 1hr.

Note, the calculations of weights for (D) and (E) are as follows:

(D) KOH 47%[2] = (KOH 47% to adjust sample pH)/(sample)*((water[1])+(KOH[1])+(Kraft Lignin) –(sample))

(E) water[2] = 2000-((water[1])+(KOH[1])+(Kraft Lignin)+(KOH[2]))

The temperature of the experimental example was then adjusted to 75°C. (F) Formalin 55% is then charged to the reactor, and a timer is started. Note the formalin charge is based on 96.3% liquid lignin preparation and 3.7% formalin 55%. The temperature is maintained for 4 hr and samples are taken at 10 min, 30 min, 60 min, 120 min, and 240 min – for further characterisation and analysis. These analyses and their results will discussed hereafter.

Examples 11 to 15 (Kraft Lignin Activation: variance in temperature)

Examples 11 to 15, are in line with the experimental procedures of Example 4 but with different hold temperatures for the 2nd step - lignin activation.

Step 1 - the liquid lignin preparation is performed as in Example 4, with a target pH of 10. The temperature is then adjusted to that specified in Table 4 and a retained "liquid lignin sample" is taken. The formalin charge (F) is then calculated and dosed to the reactor; again this is based on 96.3% liquid lignin preparation and 3.7% formalin 55%. Once charged, a timer is started, the specified temperature maintained, and samples taken at 10 min, 30 min, 60 min, 120 min, and 240 min. The samples were further characterised and analysed. These analyses and their results will discussed hereafter.

Table 4: Lignin activation temperatures for examples 11 to 15

Step 2: Lignin Activation						
	Example	11	12	13	14	15
15	<i>Target lignin activation temperature</i>	98°C	85°C	70°C	65°C	60°C
	<i>Target pH</i>	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0

20 Examples 16 and 17 (Lignosulphonate Activation)

The experimental procedures in Example 16 are similar to those mentioned in Example 4 but with the kraft lignin substituted by sodium Lignosulphonate. Example 17 is a repeat of 16, but without the KOH addition; thus giving an example with lower pH. For both, the same reactor and experimental steps were used as in the previous examples. The materials used are specified in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5: Raw materials for Step 1 – liquid lignin preparation

Step 1: Liquid Lignin Preparation			
	Example	16	17
	<i>Target pH</i>	<i>10.0</i>	<i>8.4</i>
	Raw Material		
A	Demineralised water [1]	1360.67	1360.67
B	KOH 47% [1]	0.00	0.00
C	Sodium lignosulphonate 92.16%	412.33	412.33
D	KOH 47% [2]	7.34	0.00
E	Demineralised water [2]	219.66	227.00

Table 6: Raw materials for Step 2 – lignin activation

Step 2: Lignin Activation			
	Example	16	17
	<i>Target pH</i>	<i>10.0</i>	<i>9.0</i>
	Raw Material		
	Liquid Lignin (after removal of retained sample)	1907.82	1886.05
F	Formalin 55%	73.23	72.40

The following procedure was used for Example 16. To the reactor, (A) demineralised water [1] is charged. The temperature was then adjusted to 75°C, where upon (C) the sodium lignosulphonate powder was charged. This was allowed to dissolve over 1hr at 75°C. A 100 g sample was then taken, weighed and cooled to 20°C in an ice bath. The pH of the sample was measured, and then adjusted by the dropwise addition of KOH 47% under stirring – the amount of KOH 47% needed for this was noted and used to calculate the amounts for materials (D) KOH 47% [2] and (E) demineralised water [2]. The adjusted sample was returned to the reactor and materials (D) and (E) were then charged. The mixture was then allowed to stir at 75°C for a further 1 hr.

At 75°C, (F) Formalin 55% was then charged to the reactor, and a timer is started. Note the formalin charge is based on 96.3% step 1 liquid lignin preparation and 3.7% formalin 55%. The temperature is maintained for 4 hr and samples are taken at 10 min, 30 min, 60 min, 120 min, and 240 min. The samples were further characterised and analysed. These analyses and their results will be discussed hereafter.

For Example 17, no KOH was added. Since sodium lignosulphonate is soluble in water its natural pH was taken for the experiment - this happened to be 8.4.

Example 18 (Kraft Lignin Activation: variance in formalin)

In the previous Examples, the formalin dosing had been based on 1 g of formaldehyde (100%) for 9 g of dry lignin. In Example 18, a lower formaldehyde dosing is used; namely 1 g of formaldehyde (100%) for 12 g of dry lignin. In other respects it is like Example 4. See Tables 7 and 8 for weights of materials used.

Table 7: Raw materials for Step 1 – liquid lignin preparation

Step 1: Liquid Lignin Preparation		
	Example	18
	<i>Target pH</i>	<i>10.0</i>
	Raw Material	
A	Demineralisd water [1]	1360.67
B	KOH 47% [1]	0.00
C	Sodium lignosulphonate 92.16%	412.33
D	KOH 47% [2]	7.34
E	Demineralised water [2]	219.66

Table 8: Raw materials for Step 2 – lignin activation

Step 2: Lignin Activation		
	Example	18
	<i>Target pH</i>	<i>10.0</i>
	Raw Material	
	Liquid Lignin (after removal of retained sample)	1907.82
F	Formalin 55%	73.23

Again samples were taken at 10 min, 30 min, 60 min, 120 min and 240 min. The samples were further characterised and analysed. These analyses and their results will be discussed hereafter.

Example 20 (Lignin Phenol Formaldehyde Resin: No Lignin Activation and No Phenol Methylation Step)

To a 3000 ml reactor were charged; demineralised water 1207.68 g, KOH 47% 76.00 g, and Antifoam agent 4.00 g. The reactor was configured for atmospheric reflux and the stirrer set at 400 rpm. The batch was then adjusted to 75°C. Once 75°C was reached, kraft lignin powder 565.32 g were charged to the reactor and allowed to dissolve over 1 hr at 75°C. A 100 g sample was then taken and cooled to 20°C to check the quality of the dissolution and the pH (target = 10). Note: If necessary the sample pH is adjusted and from this the amount of KOH required for adjustment of the rest of the batch is calculated. In this experiment no further adjustment was necessary and the sample was simply returned to the batch.

A second charge of demineralised water 147 g was then charged to the reactor, and the temperature readjusted to 75°C. The batch was then held for a further 1 hr, after which time a 92.34 g sample, "liquid lignin retained sample" was taken. This meant that 1907.66 g of liquid lignin remained in the reactor. The lignin phenol formaldehyde resin example is intended to have a 50:50 lignin:phenol content, and 1 g formaldehyde for every 9 g of lignin. Additionally the phenol will also require further formaldehyde for cross linking – specifically in this example at molar ratio of F/P = 0.9.

After performing the necessary calculations, 362.46 g of phenol 100% are charged to the reactor, followed by 262.86 g of formaldehyde 55%. The batch was then heated to 90°C (via exothermal and oil jacket heating) for the condensation reaction to take place; samples were taken at regular time intervals after reaching 90°C – every 10 minutes – until a total condensation time of 80 minutes was reached. The batch was then cooled and discharged from the reactor.

Example 21 (Lignin Phenol Formaldehyde Resin: with Lignin Activation, but No Phenol Methylolation Step)

To a 3000 ml reactor were charged; demineralised water 1207.68 g, KOH 47% 76.00 g, and Antifoam agent 4.00 g. The reactor is configured for atmospheric reflux and the stirrer set at 400 rpm. The batch was then adjusted to 75°C. Once 75°C was reached, kraft lignin powder 565.32 g was charged to the reactor and allowed to dissolve over 1 hr at 75°C. A 100g sample was then taken and cooled to 20°C to check the quality of the dissolution and the pH (target = 10). Note: If necessary the sample pH is adjusted, and from this the amount of KOH required for adjustment of the rest of the batch is calculated. In this experiment no further adjustment was necessary and the sample was simply returned to the batch.

A second charge of demineralised water 147 g was then charged to the reactor, and the temperature readjusted to 75°C. The batch was then held for a further 1 hr, after which time a 123.93 g sample, "liquid lignin retained sample" was taken. This meant that 1876.07 g of liquid lignin remained in the reactor. The lignin phenol formaldehyde resin example is intended to have a 50:50 lignin:phenol content, and 1 g formaldehyde for every 9 g of lignin. Additionally the phenol will also require further formaldehyde for cross linking – specifically in this example at molar ratio of F/P = 0.9.

After performing the necessary calculations, 72.01 g of formaldehyde 55% were charged to the reactor (this equates to 1 g CH₂O for every 9 g of lignin). The batch was then held at 75°C for 1 hr – this being the lignin activation step.

After the lignin activation, 356.46 g of phenol 100% was charged to the reactor. A second charge of formaldehyde 55% (note - molar ratio F/P = 0.9) 186.50 g was then made to the reactor. After which the batch was heated to 90°C (via exothermal and oil jacket heating) for the condensation reaction to take place. Samples were taken at regular time intervals after reaching 90°C – every 10 minutes – until a total condensation time of 80 minutes was reached. The batch was then cooled and discharged from the reactor.

Example 22 (Lignin Phenol Formaldehyde Resin: with Lignin Activation and Phenol Methylolation Steps)

To a 3000 ml reactor were charged; demineralised water 1207.68 g, KOH 47% 76.00 g, and Antifoam agent 4.00 g were charged. The reactor is configured for

atmospheric reflux and the stirrer set at 400 rpm. The batch was then adjusted to 75°C.

Once 75°C was reached, kraft lignin powder 565.32 g was charged to the reactor and allowed to dissolve over 1 hr at 75°C. A 100 g sample was then taken and cooled to 20°C to check the quality of the dissolution and the pH (target = 10). Note: If necessary the sample pH is adjusted, and from this the amount of KOH required for adjustment of the rest of the batch is calculated. In this experiment no further adjustment was necessary and the sample was simply returned to the batch.

A second charge of demineralised water 147 g was then charged to the reactor, and the temperature readjusted to 75°C. The batch was then held for a further 1 hr, after which time a 100.00 g sample, "liquid lignin retained sample" was taken. This meant that 1900.00 g of liquid lignin remained in the reactor. The lignin phenol formaldehyde resin example is intended to have a 50:50 lignin:phenol content, and 1 g formaldehyde for every 9 g of lignin. Additionally the phenol will also require further formaldehyde for cross linking – specifically in this example at molar ratio of $F/P = 0.9$. After performing the necessary calculations, 72.93 g of formaldehyde 55% were charged to the reactor (this equates to 1 g CH_2O for every 9 g of lignin). The batch was then held at 75°C for 1hr – this being the lignin activation step.

After the lignin activation, 361.01 g of phenol 100% was charged to the reactor and the temperature brought back to 75°C. A second charge of formaldehyde 55% (note - molar ratio $F/P = 0.9$) 188.88 g was then made to the reactor, but this time via a peristaltic pump – so as to allow dosing over a time period of 60 minutes whilst maintaining a batch temperature of 75°C. Once the formaldehyde had be dosed, the batch was held at 75°C for a further 60 min – this was the methylolation step.

After the methylolation step, the batch was sampled (i.e. "End of Methylolation Step") and then heated to 90°C and held there for the condensation step. The batch was sampled at the beginning of the condensation and then again every ten minutes, until a total condensation time of 80 minutes had elapsed. The batch was then cooled and discharged from the reactor.

Examples 23 and 24 – Manufacturing of HPL compact panels 6 mm

Based on the principles and processing described in this patent, and the proof given by the earlier examples, a Lignin Formaldehyde Resin (LPF) recipe was

developed using both the described “lignin activation step” and the “phenol methylation step”. The recipe contained equal parts kraft lignin and phenol by weight (i.e. one could say that 50% of the phenol had been replaced with lignin). An alkali hydroxide was used as a catalyst. This LPF resin was Example 23.

5 The same recipe was repeated, but without the “lignin activation step” and without “the phenol methylation” step. In effect all ingredients were charged and the batch was taken to the condensation phase. This was Example 24.

Examples 23 and 24 are analogous to Examples 22 (10 minutes condensation) and 20 (30 minutes condensation) respectively, but with proprietary recipe details. They
10 therefore had similar free phenol and free formaldehyde.

Examples 23 and 24 were used to impregnate kraft paper, using an impregnation line facility, to give comparable nominal target grammages and volatiles. These impregnated papers were then used to make 6mm thick HPL compact panels using a laboratory press and our normal proprietary press cycle.

15 The Table 9: below provides an overview of the Examples; 4-18, & 20-22.

Table 9 - an overview of the laboratory examples and the samples taken.

Example number	Example type	Target pH	Target T°C	CH2O(g) / Lignin(g)	pH	Viscosity (cP)	Free-Formaldehyde (%wt.) - HPLC	Free-Formaldehyde if no reaction (%wt.)- Calc.	Additional Comments
5	4 Lignin Activation: Kraft lignin	10.0	75.0	1/9	-	-	-	-	Mw Dist. (SEC) and NMR (2D HSQC) on samples; Liquid Lignin, 60 min Activation, and 120min Activation.
	Liquid lignin				10.07	18.6	<0.05%	0.00%	
	10 min. activation				9.90	19.2	1.55%	2.03%	
	30 min. activation				9.85	18.6	1.45%	2.03%	
	60 min. activation				9.82	20.4	1.27%	2.03%	
	120 min. activation				9.70	24.0	1.13%	2.03%	
10	5 Lignin Activation: Kraft lignin	9.0	75.0	1/9	-	-	-	-	
	Liquid lignin				8.60	13.8	<0.05%	0.00%	
	10 min. activation				8.46	13.2	1.64%	2.03%	
	30 min. activation				8.38	13.8	1.66%	2.03%	
	60 min. activation				8.37	13.8	1.67%	2.03%	
	120 min. activation				8.23	13.2	1.56%	2.03%	
15	6 Lignin Activation: Kraft lignin	11.0	75.0	1/9	-	-	-	-	
	Liquid lignin				11.23	17.4	<0.05%	0.00%	
	10 min. activation				11.04	16.8	1.07%	2.03%	
	30 min. activation				10.98	18.0	0.91%	2.03%	
	60 min. activation				10.96	19.2	0.75%	2.03%	
	120 min. activation				10.90	22.2	0.60%	2.03%	
20	7 Lignin Activation: Kraft lignin	8.0	75.0	1/9	-	-	-	-	
	Liquid lignin				8.11	12.0	<0.05%	0.00%	
	10 min. activation				8.01	12.6	1.65%	2.03%	
	30 min. activation				7.98	12.0	1.65%	2.03%	
	60 min. activation				7.91	12.6	1.64%	2.03%	
	120 min. activation				7.67	13.2	1.60%	2.03%	
25	8 Lignin Activation: Kraft lignin	12.0	75.0	1/9	-	-	-	-	
	Liquid lignin				12.21	12.6	<0.05%	0.00%	
	10 min. activation				12.08	14.4	0.78%	2.03%	
	30 min. activation				12.04	15.0	0.57%	2.03%	
	60 min. activation				11.89	15.0	0.44%	2.03%	
	120 min. activation				11.94	17.4	0.28%	2.03%	
30	9 Lignin Activation: Kraft lignin	6.0	75.0	1/9	-	-	-	-	It is a "muddy" dispersion.
	Liquid lignin				5.98	12.0	<0.05%	0.00%	
	10 min. activation				5.89	10.8	2.01%	2.03%	
	30 min. activation				5.82	12.0	2.06%	2.03%	
	60 min. activation				5.88	10.2	2.02%	2.03%	
	120 min. activation				5.80	10.2	2.07%	2.03%	
35	10 Lignin Activation: Kraft lignin	13.0	75.0	1/9	-	-	-	-	
	Liquid lignin				13.09	12.0	<0.05%	0.00%	
	10 min. activation				12.65	12.6	0.68%	2.03%	
	30 min. activation				12.69	13.8	0.49%	2.03%	
	60 min. activation				12.68	13.2	0.32%	2.03%	
	120 min. activation				12.66	16.2	0.18%	2.03%	

Table 9 continued - an overview of the laboratory examples and the samples taken.

Example number	Example type	Target pH	Target T°C	CH ₂ O(g) / Lignin(g)	pH	Viscosity (cP)	Free-Formaldehyde (%wt.) - HPLC	Free-Formaldehyde if no reaction (%wt.) - Calc.	Additional Comments
5	Lignin Activation: Kraft lignin	10.0	98.0	1/9	-	-	-	-	
	Liquid lignin				10.2	18.0	<0.05%	0.00%	
	10 min. activation				9.93	20.4	1.18%	2.03%	
	30 min. activation				9.9	28.2	0.82%	2.03%	
	60 min. activation				9.84	58.2	0.66%	2.03%	
	120 min. activation				9.72	805.2	0.47%	2.03%	
	240 min. activation								
10	Lignin Activation: Kraft lignin	10.0	85.0	1/9	-	-	-	-	
	Liquid lignin				10.2	17.4	0.07%	0.00%	
	10 min. activation				10.01	19.2	1.54%	2.03%	
	30 min. activation				9.92	22.8	1.30%	2.03%	
	60 min. activation				9.88	25.2	1.11%	2.03%	
	120 min. activation				9.81	43.2	0.94%	2.03%	
	240 min. activation								
15	Lignin Activation: Kraft lignin	10.0	70.0	1/9	-	-	-	-	
	Liquid lignin				10.14	16.8	<0.05%	0.00%	
	10 min. activation				10.01	16.2	1.62%	2.03%	
	30 min. activation				9.97	18.0	1.54%	2.03%	
	60 min. activation				9.96	19.8	1.44%	2.03%	
	120 min. activation				9.84	22.2	1.28%	2.03%	
	240 min. activation								
20	Lignin Activation: Kraft lignin	10.0	65.0	1/9	-	-	-	-	
	Liquid lignin				9.98	18.0	<0.05%	0.00%	
	10 min. activation				9.81	18.0	1.67%	2.03%	
	30 min. activation				9.71	17.4	1.65%	2.03%	
	60 min. activation				9.70	18.0	1.53%	2.03%	
	120 min. activation				9.57	22.8	1.41%	2.03%	
	240 min. activation								
25	Lignin Activation: Kraft lignin	10.0	60.0	1/9	-	-	-	-	
	Liquid lignin				10.00	16.8	<0.05%	0.00%	
	10 min. activation				10.00	16.8	1.69%	2.03%	
	30 min. activation				9.98	18.0	1.66%	2.03%	
	60 min. activation				9.94	18.0	1.56%	2.03%	
	120 min. activation				9.86	19.2	1.46%	2.03%	
	240 min. activation								
30	Lignin Activation: Sodium Lignosulphonate	10.0	75.0	1/9	-	-	-	-	Mw Dist. (SEC) and NMR (2D HSQC) on samples; Liquid Lignin, 60 min Activation, and 120min Activation.
	Liquid lignin				9.61	9.0	<0.05%	0.00%	
	10 min. activation				9.48	9.6	1.64%	2.03%	
	30 min. activation				9.38	9.6	1.58%	2.03%	
	60 min. activation				9.26	9.0	1.54%	2.03%	
	120 min. activation				8.98	9.0	1.44%	2.03%	
	240 min. activation				8.51	10.2	1.38%	2.03%	
35	Lignin Activation: Sodium Lignosulphonate	8.4	75.0	1/9	-	-	-	-	
	Liquid lignin				8.4	11.4	<0.05%	0.00%	
	10 min. activation				8.32	11.4	1.80%	2.03%	
	30 min. activation				8.33	11.6	1.79%	2.03%	
	60 min. activation				8.23	10.5	1.77%	2.03%	
	120 min. activation				8.12	11.7	1.70%	2.03%	
	240 min. activation								
40	Lignin Activation: Kraft lignin	10.0	75.0	1/12	-	-	-	-	
	Liquid lignin				10.9	18.0	<0.05%	0.00%	
	10 min. activation				9.98	18.0	1.10%	1.54%	
	30 min. activation				10.01	19.2	0.98%	1.54%	
	60 min. activation				9.99	19.2	0.89%	1.54%	
	120 min. activation				9.87	21.6	0.72%	1.54%	
	240 min. activation				9.53	33.0	0.49%	1.54%	

Table 9 continued - an overview of the laboratory examples and the samples taken.

Example number	Example type	Target pH	Target η^a	CH ₂ O(g) / Lignin(g)	pH	Viscosity (cP)	Free-Formaldehyde (%wt.) - HPLC	Free-Formaldehyde if no reaction (%wt.) - Cok.	Free-Phenol (%wt.)
5	20 LPF Resin: no lignin activation and no phenol	10.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Liquid lignin				9.98	18.6	-	0.00%	-
	10 min. condensation				8.82	29.4	2.76%	5.71%	7.22%
	20 min. condensation				8.89	33.4	1.97%	5.71%	6.94%
	30 min. condensation				8.91	37.8	1.31%	5.71%	5.98%
	40 min. condensation				8.89	43.2	0.97%	5.71%	5.17%
	50 min. condensation				8.90	52.8	0.75%	5.71%	4.72%
	60 min. condensation				8.91	60.0	0.58%	5.71%	4.41%
	75 min. condensation				8.91	66.5	0.43%	5.71%	4.07%
	80 min. condensation				8.89	68.4	0.38%	5.71%	3.76%
10	21 LPF Resin: with lignin activation but no phenol	10.0	-	1/9	-	-	-	-	-
	Liquid lignin				10.14	19.2	-	0.00%	-
	10 min. condensation				8.95	30.6	2.96%	5.71%	7.51%
	20 min. condensation				8.91	33.0	2.12%	5.71%	6.70%
	30 min. condensation				8.89	39.6	1.63%	5.71%	6.17%
	40 min. condensation				8.87	43.2	1.27%	5.71%	5.68%
	50 min. condensation				8.85	49.2	1.01%	5.71%	5.30%
	60 min. condensation				8.83	57.0	0.82%	5.71%	4.92%
	75 min. condensation				8.83	67.8	0.66%	5.71%	4.57%
	80 min. condensation				8.82	73.8	0.54%	5.71%	4.24%
15	22 LPF Resin: with lignin activation and phenol	10.0	75.0	1/9	-	-	-	-	-
	Liquid lignin				10.10	13.6	-	0.00%	-
	Methylation				8.76	39.0	2.15%	5.71%	6.62%
	15 min. condensation				8.79	48.0	1.48%	5.71%	5.70%
	20 min. condensation				8.76	55.2	1.13%	5.71%	5.17%
	30 min. condensation				8.79	64.8	0.96%	5.71%	4.71%
	40 min. condensation				8.79	76.2	0.71%	5.71%	4.33%
	50 min. condensation				8.77	79.8	0.60%	5.71%	3.98%
	60 min. condensation				8.77	81.6	0.49%	5.71%	3.71%
	75 min. condensation				8.78	78.8	0.43%	5.71%	3.96%
	80 min. condensation				8.76	62.8	0.34%	5.71%	3.19%

^a Samples from LPF Resin examples 20 – 22 that had their Mw distributions measured (SEC analysis). They were selected based on a free phenol normalisation > 3.7%

Aside – the pH of the liquid lignins should have matched the target pH exactly; however since the amount of alkali is based on the adjustment of a small sample, and its subsequent scale up and hold for an additional hour whereby the lignin macromolecule can further “open up”, some tolerance was allowed. Furthermore the inventive steps of the patent can still be illustrated without compromise.

Table 10: Molecular weight distribution parameters for samples taken from Examples 4 and 16.

SEC Analysis	Example 4			Example 16		
	Mn (g/mol)	Mw (g/mol)	PD	Mn (g/mol)	Mw (g/mol)	PD
Liquid Lignin	1802	3798	2.1	2156	9632	4.5
Activated lignin 60min	1988	4402	2.2	2255	10316	4.6
Activated lignin 120min	2051	4764	2.3	2300	10543	4.6

Table 11: Molecular weight distribution parameters for samples taken from Examples 20 (30min condensation), 21 (40min condensation) & 22 (10min condensation).

SEC Analysis		Mn (g/mol)	Mw (g/mol)	PD
selection based on a free phenol normalisation $\approx 5.7\%$	Example 20 (30min condensation)	737	3039	4.1
	Example 21 (40min condensation)	750	3253	4.3
	Example 22 (10min condensation)	749	3561	4.8

Table 12: Summary of 2D HSQC NMR analysis for Examples 4 and 16

		Liquid Lignin	60min. activation	120min. activation
Example 4 (Kraft)	Methylol (-CH ₂ OH) signal	No signal	Strong signal	Slightly stronger signal
	Guaiacyl unit G5 active hydrogen signal	Strong signal	Weak signal	Slightly weaker signal
Example 16 (Na Lignosulphonate)	Methylol (-CH ₂ OH) signal	No signal	Strong signal	Slightly stronger signal
	Guaiacyl unit G5 active hydrogen signal	Strong signal	Weak signal	Slightly weaker signal

Table 13: Examples 23 (LPF resin with activation and methylation step) and 24 (LPF resin with only a condensation step), 6mm HPL compact panel testing.

		EN-438 pt2 compliant product specification	Example 23 Lignin activation and methylation steps	Example 24 No lignin activation and no methylation step
Resistance to immersion in boiling water	Thickness Increase	<2%	Significantly below 2%	Above 2%
	Mass increase	<2%	Significantly below 2%	Above 2%
	Visual ≥ 4		5	4

Examples 4 to 10 – Lignin activation step and variance in pH

With reference to the earlier section and Table 9 we see that for Examples 4 to 10 (wherein the sample lignin activation recipe and procedure are the same apart from a variation in potassium hydroxide concentration and the consequent pH parameter associated with it) that the formaldehyde concentration decreases with the hold time of the activation step, and that the rate of this decrease is related to how alkaline the batch is (i.e. how high the pH is).

By abstracting the results from Table 9 and plotting a chart, free formaldehyde (%) versus activation time (minutes), the dependency of the reaction kinetics on pH conditions can be seen more clearly. Figure 1 illustrates this.

It can be seen that for Kraft lignin, the higher the pH is, the faster the reaction is with formaldehyde, leading to its consequent drop in concentration with time. Specifically we can note that at pH6, and therefore logically at pH's below this, there is hardly any reaction. As the pH increases the reaction kinetics improve, with the change in reaction rate appearing to be most sensitive in the region pH 8 to 12, and in particular between pH 9 and 11. Increasing the pH further from 12 to 13 results in a less dramatic rate increase.

For an impregnation resin, the examples with higher charges of alkali (e.g. potassium hydroxide) are less preferred since with higher pH's it can lead to fast reaction kinetics, not only for the lignin activation but also for the methylation and condensation reactions with phenol and formaldehyde. It is then more difficult to control the degree of condensation, and there is a greater risk of over condensing

the resin. With such an over condensed resin it is then more difficult to impregnate kraft paper due to the higher molecular weight. Furthermore even if the paper is successfully impregnated, its activity is perhaps higher than desired, leading to excessive advancement of the resin curing in the impregnation line's drying section.

- 5 This would lead to poor resin flow and poor HPL panel pressing. Additionally, an excessive amount of alkali (e.g. potassium hydroxide) can lead to excessive salt content within the laminate, and a potential to fail in water resistance tests; for example swelling during submergence in boiling water.

10 Examples 4, & 11 to 15 – Lignin activation step and variance in lignin activation temperature

Again, with reference to the earlier section and Table 9 we see that for Examples 4, and 11 to 15 (wherein the sample lignin activation recipe and procedure are the same apart from a variation in the lignin activation temperature) that the formaldehyde concentration decreases with the hold time of the activation step, and
15 that the rate of this decrease is related to how high the temperature is.

By abstracting the results from Table 9 and plotting a chart, free formaldehyde (%) verses activation time (minutes), the dependency of the reaction kinetics on temperature can be seen more clearly. Figure 2 illustrates this.

It can be seen that for kraft lignin, higher temperatures result in a faster
20 reaction with formaldehyde, with its consequent drop in concentration with time. The lower temperatures, give greater control over the methylation reaction, however below 60°C it is perhaps too slow to be preferred for most commercial resin manufactures. At higher temperatures, the condensation reaction starts to become significant; by looking at the viscosity results from table 9, we see there is a
25 significant increase after 85°C – indicative of chain polymerisation and molecular weight build up.

Table 14: Activation Temperature (°C) vs. Viscosity after 120min Activation (cP)

30

Example Number	Activation Temperature (°C)	Viscosity after 120min Activation (cP)
15	60	19.2
14	65	22.8
13	70	22.2
4	75	24.0
12	85	43.2
11	98	805.2

Polymerisation of the already large lignin molecules, leads to difficult paper impregnation. The resin cannot penetrate into the pores or between the fibres of the paper, or flow adequately during pressing.

Therefore it is preferred to perform the lignin activation at temperatures that are advantageous to methylation but not to condensation polymerization; i.e. between 50°C and 80°C and more preferably between 60°C and 80°C, and even more preferably between 65°C and 80°C.

Examples 16 & 17 – Activation of sodium lignosulphonate, and its comparison with Example 4.

Again, with reference to the earlier section and Table 9 we see that for Examples 16 and 17, a commercial sodium lignosulphonate was also tested. Sodium lignosulphonate is inherently soluble in water and requires no alkali to solubilise it. Therefore, with Example 17 no potassium hydroxide was added – this was to test its lowest pH condition, which was pH = 8.4. Example 16, had its pH adjusted to ≈ 10 so that it can be compared to Example 4.

Table 9 lists the results of the samples taken from Examples 4, 16 & 17. Figure 3 illustrates their change in formaldehyde concentration during the activation step.

In both Examples 16 and 17 there was hardly any change in viscosity, but there was some reduction in formaldehyde concentration – this being more noticeable at pH ~ 10 . It indicates that the lignin activation can occur with other lignin raw materials, and not just with kraft lignin.

SEC analysis was also performed on “liquid lignin”, “60min. activation” and “120min. activation” samples from Examples 4 and 16. The results can be seen in Table 10. There is some marginal increase in molecular weight during the lignin activation, but not much, and this is interpreted as more functionalization of the lignin macromolecule (i.e. introduction of methylol groups) and its associated change in hydrodynamic volume, rather than the polymerisation of the lignin. It can be seen more clearly in Figure 4; where the molecular weight distributions of the six samples are plotted.

It can also be seen how the Kraft lignin has a lower molecular weight distribution than the sodium lignosulphonate.

Additional to the SEC analysis, the samples “liquid lignin”, “60min. activation” and “120min. activation” from Examples 4 and 16 were examined by 2D HSQC NMR.

What was particularly interesting about the spectra obtained, was that signals were seen for the methylol group (-CH₂OH) and the aromatic active hydrogens. Table 12 shows qualitatively the most important results. From these spectra, it was confirmed that the desired methylation of lignin, at sites with active hydrogens, does indeed occur.

The signal for the methylol group (-CH₂OH) is absent from the spectra of the two liquid lignins (i.e. kraft [Example 4] and Sodium lignosulphonate [Example 16]). Then after the addition of formaldehyde (1g CH₂O on 9g dry lignin) and after holding at 75°C, pH10 for 1hour, the methylol group (-CH₂OH) signal can be seen with both lignin types (i.e. kraft [Example 4] and Sodium lignosulphonate [Example 16]). Furthermore, by holding at 75°C, pH 10 for an additional hour it was observed with both lignin types that the methylol group signal strengthened. It should be noted that this methylol group signal appeared to be stronger with kraft lignin (Example 4) than with lignosulphonate (Example 16); this matches the observation regarding the consumption of formaldehyde as made by HPLC analysis, at 75°C pH 10, and as shown by Figure 3 - that the kraft lignin sample reacted with formaldehyde more readily than the lignosulphonate sample did with formaldehyde.

As previously stated, it was noted that in the 2D NMR HSQC spectra there were regions for the aromatic active hydrogens on lignin. These as were associated with Guaiacyl units (G) and p-Hydroxyphenyl units (H), and in particular there were regions that could be associated with;

- active hydrogens H2 & H6
- active hydrogen G6
- active hydrogens G5, H3 & H5
- active hydrogen G2

In the liquid lignin samples (both "Kraft" and "lignosulphonate"), the signal associated with H2 and H6 was much lower than the signals from G2 and G6. It could therefore be stated that guaiacyl units (G) were far more abundant than p-Hydroxyphenyl units (H) in both of the lignin types tested. It then followed logically that the signal for the region G5, H3 & H5 was predominantly coming from G5.

In the activated lignin samples (both "Kraft" and "lignosulphonate"), we see a very strong reduction in the G5, H3 & H5 signal. This signal reduction is slightly more after 120 minutes activation than 60 minutes activation, and is more significant in the kraft lignin example than the lignosulphonate example.

In summary:

- the lignin methylol signal seen in the 2D NMR is proportional to the amount of formaldehyde consumed in the lignin activation step
- the lignin methylol signal is inversely proportional to the G5, H3 & H5 signal region, which suggests that methylation is taking place predominantly at these positions.
- The "Lignin Activation" step, is a methylation of the lignin, which is in effect a functionalization of the lignin, with only a marginal increase in molecular weight.
- Since it is the lignin active hydrogens that have been methylated in the two different lignin types, it is logical to one skilled in the art that any liquid lignin possessing active hydrogen could be used and therefore suitably activated for use in a lignin phenol formaldehyde (LPF) resin synthesis.

Example 18 and its comparison with Example 4 – Lignin activation: 1g CH₂O on 12g of Lignin vs 1g on 9g of Lignin.

Building on the discussion regarding "Step 2 – Lignin Activation", the stoichiometry of formaldehyde to lignin can be based on the mass of dry lignin that the mixture contains; and more specifically - the moles of active hydrogen sites that the said lignin contains. The formaldehyde can be added; i) in a stoichiometric 1:1 molar ratio with the active hydrogens, ii) in a stoichiometric excess i.e. >1:1 so as to aid the reaction kinetics and to optionally provide a certain amount pre-dosing of formaldehyde prior phenol addition, or iii) in a stoichiometric deficiency i.e. <1:1 so as to provide a lower formaldehyde resin.

Example 18, uses a lower amount of formalin compared to Example 4; i.e. 1g of formaldehyde on 12g of lignin instead of 1g of formaldehyde on 9g. The results from samples taken during this activation experiment can be seen in Table 9 and are plotted in figure 5.

Example 4 is 1g CH₂O on 9g of Lignin whilst Example 18 is less at 1g CH₂O on 12g of Lignin. (Free formaldehyde measured by the 2,4 DNPH HPLC method).

In Example 18 the amount of formaldehyde added is 1.54% of the batch mass, and therefore is the expected concentration that would be measured if no reaction were to occur. As can be seen though from Figure 5, there is a strong correlation between the Examples 4 and 18. The slopes are the same shape -

Example 18 appears to be merely shifted downwards – indicating the kinetics are much the same.

Examples 20, 21 & 22 – Lignin Formaldehyde Resins (LPF)

The Examples 20, 21 & 22 were comparable in terms of raw materials charged, and the resin condensation stage (90°C). The differences between these examples though were:

- Example 20 – No lignin activation step & No phenol methylolation step. i.e. Liquid lignin + phenol + formaldehyde and allowed to exotherm to the condensation temperature.
- Example 21 – Lignin activation step (1hr 75°C), but No phenol methylolation step.
- Example 22 – Lignin activation step (1hr 75°C) & phenol methylolation step (1hr continuous formalin dosing followed by 1hr hold, all at 75°C).

For each resin, samples were taken of the liquid lignin and at 10 minute intervals during the condensation stage. Additionally for Example 22, a sample was taken at the end of the phenol methylolation stage. The analytical results for these samples can be seen in Table 9, the parameters measured being; pH, Viscosity, Free formaldehyde % (titrino and HPLC), and free phenol %.

These results were studied, with the aim of finding one sample from each of the three Examples that had a similar free phenol % results to those of the other (i.e. condensing to a specific free phenol). By “normalising” on a specific free phenol % content, it was then possible to run SEC analysis on these samples, and compare the three different processing routes on the resin’s molecular weight distribution.

The samples selected were;

- Example 20 (30 minute condensation) free phenol 5.68%
- Example 21 (40 minute condensation) free phenol 5.68%
- Example 22 (10 minute condensation) free phenol 5.70%

Table 11 contains the numeric results from the SEC analysis for these samples; Mn, Mw & PD. They are fairly similar, however it can be seen that Example 20 has the lowest Mn, Mw and polydispersity, whilst Example 22 has the highest Mn, Mw and polydispersity. This initially would seem to suggest that the example with the lignin activation step and the phenol methylolation step would have the worst behaviour regarding HPL / CPL laminate applications.

However, closer inspection of the graphical molecular weight distributions reveal features that actually support the invention and said use in HPL / CPL laminate applications. The Figure 6 illustrates these molecular weight distributions as derived from the SEC analysis, and the 4 important regions for the following interpretation and reasoning.

Block arrow "1" indicates a region of low molecular weight phenol formaldehyde resin species. However in this region it can be seen that Example 22 (with the lignin activation and phenol methylation steps) has an asymmetric peak dominated by the lowest molecular weight species, whereas Example 20 has a broader more symmetric peak indicating a shift to higher molecular weight PF species.

Furthermore, with Block arrow "2" we see a region indicative of medium molecular weight PF species. This is more differentiated, even though it is a shoulder on the area assigned to lignin. It shows that Example 22 has less medium molecular weight PF species than Example 20. Therefore, it can be stated that with respect to phenol formaldehyde resin species, Example 20 is higher Mw than Example 21, which is in turn higher than Example 22.

Block arrow "3" indicates the region of kraft lignin. Here Example 22 shows that the lignin component has a shift to higher Mw compared to that from Example 20. Compare this with the results from Examples 4 – "liquid lignin", "activated lignin 60min" and "activated lignin 120min" – they look very similar. The lignin in Example 20 has not had time to react with the formaldehyde and so has not been activated; the resin will perform poorly since the lignin is only a filler. With the activation step, the kraft lignin is methylolated and increases marginally in Mw. This can be seen with Example 21 and even more so in Example 22, since lignin activation continues to occur also during the phenol methylation step. This resin will perform much better in application, because the lignin is now a reactive component.

Block arrow "4" indicates the region of highest Mw species from the lignin – clearly as with block arrow "3" the lignin activation causes a shift to higher molecular weight due to functionalization and possibly by reaction of the lignin methylol groups with small PF resin species, which would also give rise to a cluster of reactive sites on the lignin macromolecule.

Examples 23 and 24 – Manufacturing of HPL compact panels 6 mm

With reference to the earlier section and Table 13, we see that for Examples 23 and 24 there was a clear pass or fail for the 6mm compact HPL laminates tested.

The laminates were tested according to EN-438. This comprises of several tests, of which one of the most demanding tests is the "resistance to immersion in boiling water". This is a good test for laminates, since failure can indicate; lack of crosslinking and cure, poor resin flow between papers on pressing, and poor
5 impregnation of the paper.

As can be seen in Table 13, Example 23 (LPF with lignin activation and phenol methylation steps) successfully passed this test, whilst Example 24 (LPF no lignin activation or phenol methylation steps) failed. Furthermore, Example 23 fulfilled all requirements of EN-438, such as dimensional stability at higher
10 temperatures, flexural strength, flexural modulus and density.

In summary, a clear advantage could be seen by having the lignin activation and phenol methylation steps, with which the present inventors found that it was possible to impregnate paper and make a EN438 compliant 6mm thickness compact HPL panel using a lignin phenol formaldehyde (LPF) resin with equal parts phenol
15 and lignin (i.e. 50% phenol replacement).

CONCLUSIES

1. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een geactiveerde ligninesamenstelling, omvattende de volgende stappen:
 - 5 i) het verschaffen van een vloeibaar lignine voorzien van vrije actieve waterstofposities,
 - ii) het verwarmen van voornoemd vloeibaar lignine tot een temperatuur in een gebied van 50 °C en 100 °C,
 - iii) het toevoegen van formaldehyde aan voornoemd, verwarmd vloeibaar

10 lignine onder roerderomstandigheden,
 - iv) het handhaven van de temperatuur van het mengsel volgens iii) in een gebied van 50 °C en 100 °C, gedurende een tijdsperiode van ten minste 10 minuten.
2. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een geactiveerde ligninesamenstelling volgens conclusie 1, waarbij het vloeibaar lignine voorzien van vrije actieve

15 waterstofposities een pH bezit van ten minste 6, bij voorkeur een pH in een gebied van 6 - 13, met name bij voorkeur in een gebied van 8 - 12, zelfs met name bij voorkeur in een gebied van 9 - 11.
3. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een geactiveerde ligninesamenstelling volgens een of meer van de conclusies 1 - 2, waarbij de temperatuur volgens stap ii) zich

20 bevindt in een gebied van 60 °C - 85 °C, bij voorkeur in een gebied van 65 °C - 80 °C.
4. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een geactiveerde ligninesamenstelling volgens een of meer van de conclusies 1 - 3, waarbij de temperatuur volgens stap iv) zich bevindt in een gebied van 60 °C - 85 °C, bij voorkeur in een gebied van 65 °C - 80 °C.
5. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een geactiveerde ligninesamenstelling

25 volgens een of meer van de conclusies 1 - 4, waarbij de tijdsperiode volgens stap iv) zich bevindt in een gebied van 15 minuten tot 4 uren, bij voorkeur in een gebied van 30 minuten - 2 uren.
6. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een geactiveerde ligninesamenstelling volgens een of meer van de conclusies 1 - 5, waarbij de toevoeging van formaldehyde aan

30 het verwarmde, vloeibaar lignine wordt uitgevoerd op een continue basis, of door een of meer doseringen formaldehyde.
7. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een geactiveerde ligninesamenstelling volgens een of meer van de conclusies 1 - 6, waarbij de hoeveelheid formaldehyde,

toegevoegd aan het verwarmde vloeibaar lignine, zich bevindt in een gebied dat geschikt is voor reactie met het lignine, op basis van de massa droog lignine dat het mengsel bevat.

8. Werkwijze volgens conclusie 7, waarbij formaldehyde wordt toegevoegd in een stoichiometrische 1:1 molaire verhouding met de actieve waterstoffen.

5 9. Werkwijze volgens conclusie 7, waarbij formaldehyde wordt toegevoegd in een stoichiometrische overmaat hoeveelheid van $> 1:1$.

10. Werkwijze volgens conclusie 7, waarbij formaldehyde wordt toegevoegd in een stoichiometrische ondermaat van $< 1:1$.

11. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een intermediair type lignine-fenolformaldehydars, omvattende de volgende stappen:

a) het verschaffen van een geactiveerde ligninesamenstelling verkregen volgens een of meer van de conclusies 1 - 10;

b) het eventueel verwarmen van voornoemde geactiveerde ligninesamenstelling van stap a) tot een temperatuur in een gebied van $50\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ - $90\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$;

15 c) het toevoegen van fenol aan voornoemde, geactiveerde ligninesamenstelling;

d) het instellen van de temperatuur van het mengsel van stap c) om te zijn binnen een gebied van $60\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ - $90\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$;

e) het toevoegen van formaldehyde aan voornoemd mengsel van stap d).

20 12. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een intermediair type lignine-fenolformaldehydars volgens conclusie 11, waarbij stap b) wordt uitgevoerd in een temperatuurgebied van $65\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ - $80\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$.

13. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een intermediair type lignine-fenolformaldehydars volgens een of meer van de conclusies 11 - 12, waarbij de toevoeging van formaldehyde volgens stap e) wordt uitgevoerd op een continue basis, of anderzijds door de stapsgewijze toevoeging van twee of meer doseringen formaldehyde.

14. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een intermediair type lignine-fenolformaldehydars volgens conclusie 13, waarbij de toevoeging van formaldehyde volgens stap e) plaatsvindt in een tijdsperiode tussen 20 en 150 minuten, bij voorkeur 30 minuten en 90 minuten.

15. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een intermediair type lignine-fenolformaldehydars volgens een of meer van de conclusies 11 - 14, waarbij de

temperatuur tijdens stap e) wordt gehandhaafd in een gebied van 60 °C - 90 °C, bij voorkeur in een gebied van 65 °C - 80 °C.

16. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een intermediair type lignine-fenolformaldehydohars volgens een of meer van de conclusies 11 - 15, waarbij de
5 hoeveelheid formaldehyde toegevoegd volgens stap e) is gerelateerd aan de hoeveelheid fenol toegevoegd volgens stap c) en de hoeveelheid residuaal vrij formaldehyde in het geactiveerde lignine, de combinatie van de hoeveelheid formaldehyde toegevoegd in stap e) samen met de hoeveelheid formaldehyde residuaal in het geactiveerde lignine indien
10 vergeleken met de hoeveelheid fenol toegevoegd in stap c) heeft betrekking op een molaire verhouding P:F in het gebied van 1,0:0,9 - 2,0, bij voorkeur in een gebied van 1,0:1,0 - 1,5.

17. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een lignine-fenolformaldehydohars volgens een of meer van de conclusies 11 - 16, waarbij op het mengsel, verkregen na stap e), een aanvullende stap f) van methyolering wordt uitgevoerd, voornoemde stap f) omvat het verwarmen en het handhaven van het mengsel op een temperatuur in het gebied van
15 50 °C - 80 °C, bij voorkeur 60 °C - 80 °C en met name 65 °C - 80 °C gedurende een tijdsperiode van ten minste 10 minuten, maar bij voorkeur ten minste 30 minuten.

18. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een lignine-fenolformaldehydohars volgens conclusie 17, waarbij stap f) van methyolering wordt gehandhaafd gedurende een tijdsperiode tussen 40 minuten en 120 minuten, bij voorkeur tussen 40 minuten en
20 70 minuten.

19. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een lignine-fenolformaldehydohars volgens een of meer van de conclusies 11 - 16, waarbij op het mengsel, verkregen na stap e), een aanvullende stap g) van condensatie wordt uitgevoerd, voornoemde stap g) omvat het verwarmen en het handhaven van het mengsel op een temperatuur hoger dan 80 °C, bij
25 voorkeur tussen 85 °C - 95 °C.

20. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een lignine-fenolformaldehydohars volgens conclusies 17 - 19, waarbij stap e) wordt gevolgd door stap f), en stap f) wordt gevolgd door stap g).

21. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een lignine-fenolformaldehydohars volgens
30 conclusies 17 - 18, waarbij het mengsel verkregen na stap f) wordt gekoeld.

22. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een lignine-fenolformaldehydohars volgens conclusie 19, waarbij het mengsel verkregen na stap g) wordt gekoeld.

23. Werkwijze voor het bereiden van een lignine-fenolformaldehyd-hars volgens conclusie 20, waarbij het mengsel verkregen na stap g) wordt gekoeld.

24. Werkwijze ter vervaardiging van een laminaat omvattende het vervaardigen van een kernlaag en het persen van voornoemde kernlaag in een pers onder toepassing van een verhoogde druk en een verhoogde temperatuur, met het kenmerk, dat een harsmengsel omvattende een lignine-fenolformaldehyd-hars verkregen volgens een of meer van de conclusies 17 - 23 wordt toegepast voor het impregneren van voornoemde kernlaag.

25. Werkwijze ter vervaardiging van een laminaat volgens conclusie 24, waarbij voornoemde kernlaag een of meer prepregs, vervaardigd uit houtvezels, omvat.

26. Werkwijze ter vervaardiging van een laminaat volgens conclusie 24, waarbij voornoemde kernlaag een stapel met hars geïmpregneerde papierlagen omvat.

27. Werkwijze ter vervaardiging van een laminaat volgens conclusie 26, waarbij voornoemde papierlagen bij voorkeur zijn vervaardigd met verzadiging base kraft papieren.

28. Werkwijze ter vervaardiging van een laminaat volgens conclusie 24, waarbij voornoemde kernlaag een combinatie van prepregs en geïmpregneerde papierlagen omvat.

29. Werkwijze ter vervaardiging van een laminaat volgens conclusie 28, waarbij voornoemde prepregs zijn vervaardigd uit houtvezels en waarbij de geïmpregneerde papierlagen bij voorkeur zijn vervaardigd met verzadiging base kraft papieren.

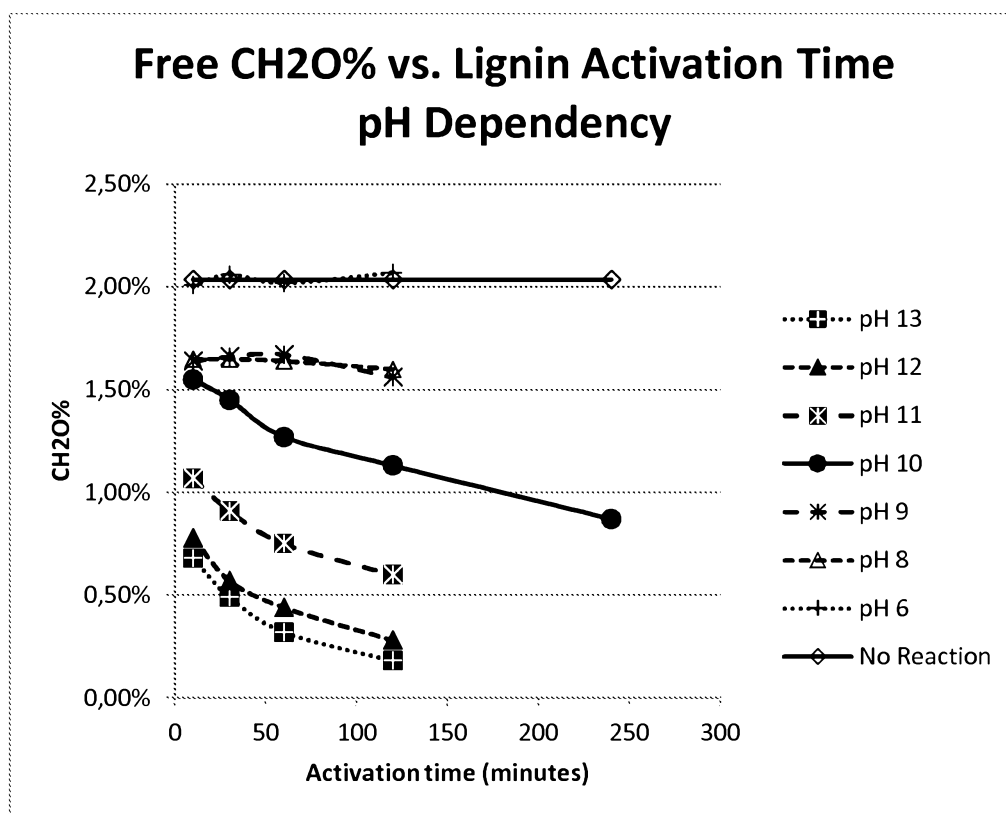
30. Werkwijze ter vervaardiging van een laminaat volgens conclusies 28 - 29, waarbij voornoemde geïmpregneerde papierlagen zijn gepositioneerd als een buitenste laag van het kernmateriaal, terwijl prepreg(s) zich in het midden bevindt (bevinden).

31. Werkwijze ter vervaardiging van een laminaat volgens conclusies 28 - 29, waarbij voornoemde prepregs en geïmpregneerde papierlagen afwisselend zijn gepositioneerd, bij voorkeur zodanig dat voornoemde geïmpregneerde papierlagen tussen voornoemde prepregs zijn gepositioneerd, waarbij voornoemde geïmpregneerde papierlagen eventueel als een buitenste laag van het kernmateriaal zijn gepositioneerd.

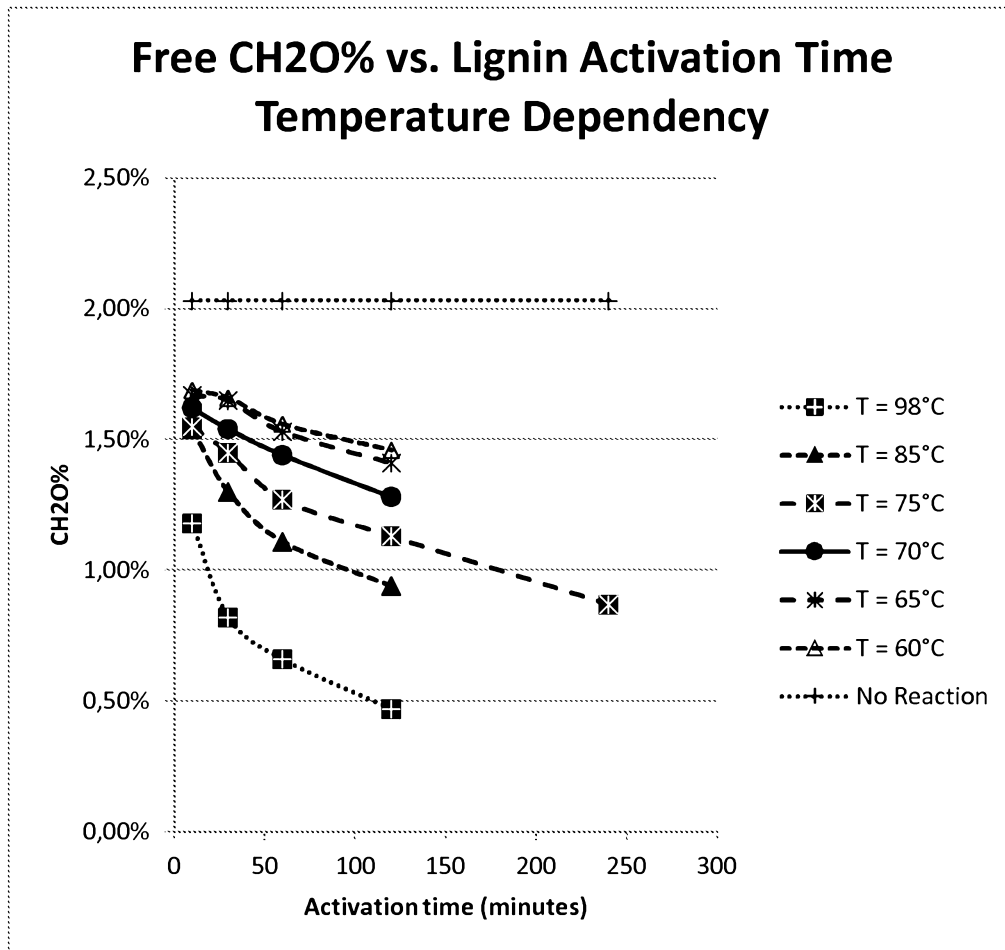
32. Werkwijze ter vervaardiging van een laminaat volgens conclusies 24 - 31, waarbij genoemde kernlaag wordt gecombineerd met een of meer decoratieve lagen, waarbij voornoemde decoratieve laag is gepositioneerd op één zijde of op beide zijden van kernlagen.

33. Werkwijze ter vervaardiging van een laminaat volgens conclusie 32, waarbij voornoemde een of meer decoratieve lagen zijn gebaseerd op decoratief papier verzadigd onder toepassing van thermohardend hars, zoals melamine-formaldehydohars.

34. Werkwijze ter vervaardiging van een laminaat volgens conclusie 32, waarbij
5 voornoemde een of meer decoratieve lagen zijn bedekt onder toepassing van acrylhars, gehard onder toepassing van een UV-hardbaar of EB-hardbaar systeem.

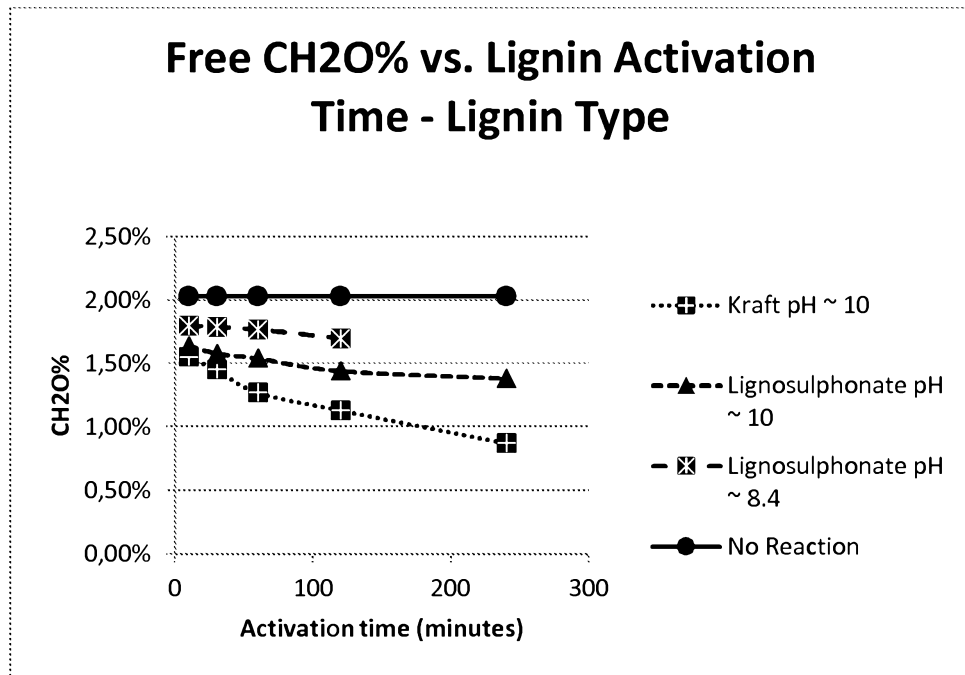


Lignin Activation with variation in pH
Fig. 1

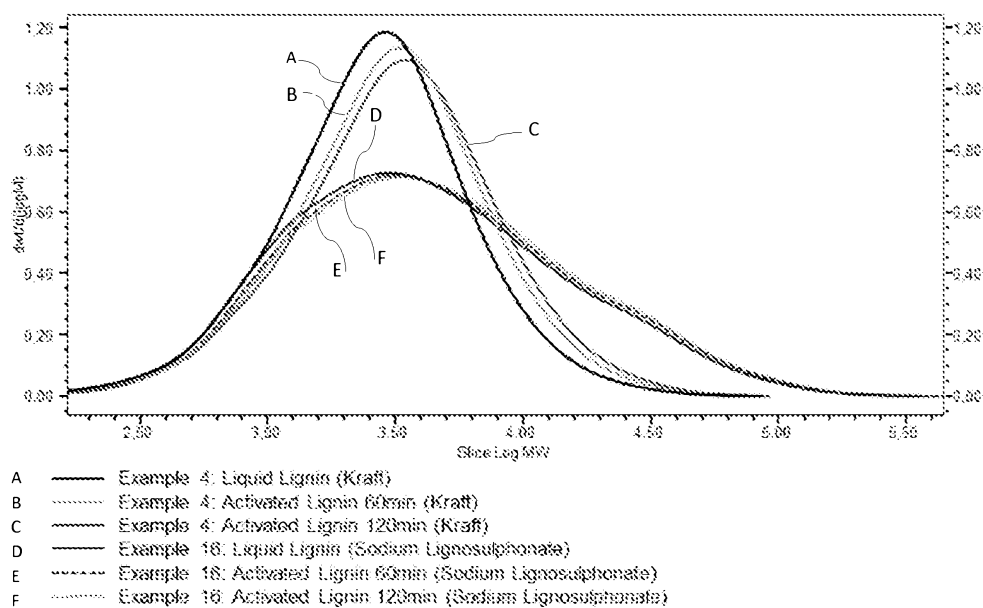


Lignin Activation with variation in temperature

Fig. 2

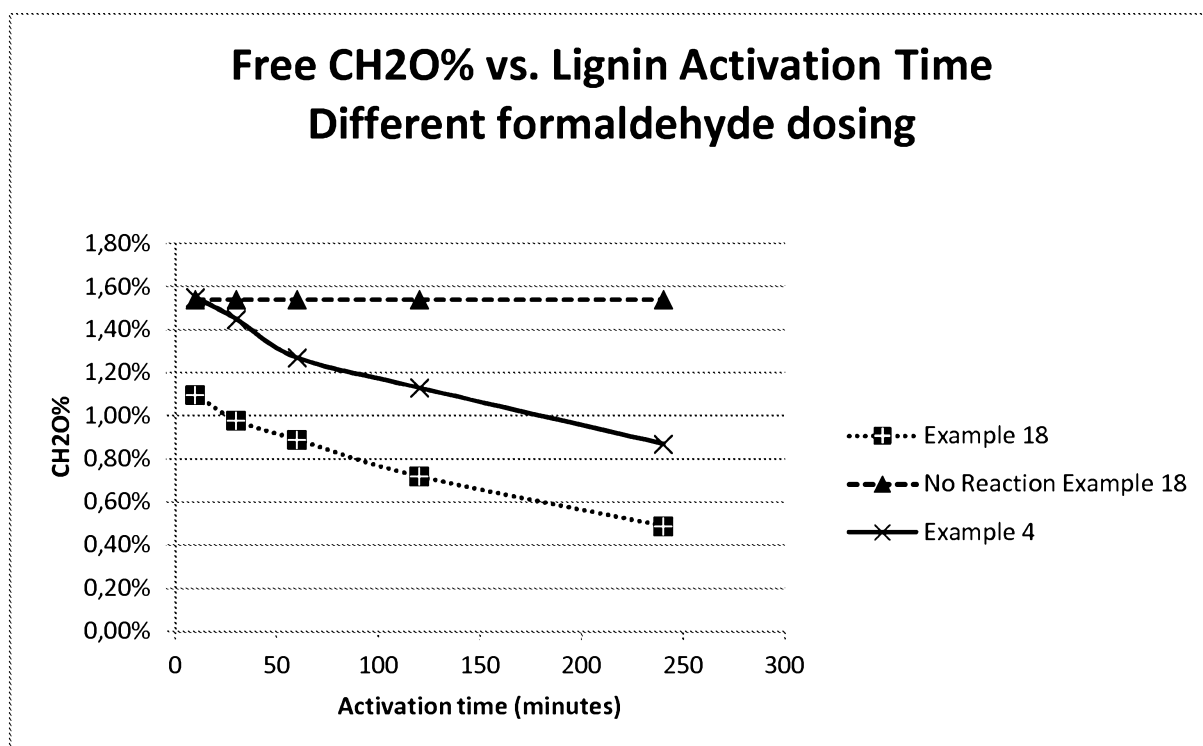


Lignin Activation: comparison between kraft lignin and sodium lignosulphonate
Fig. 3



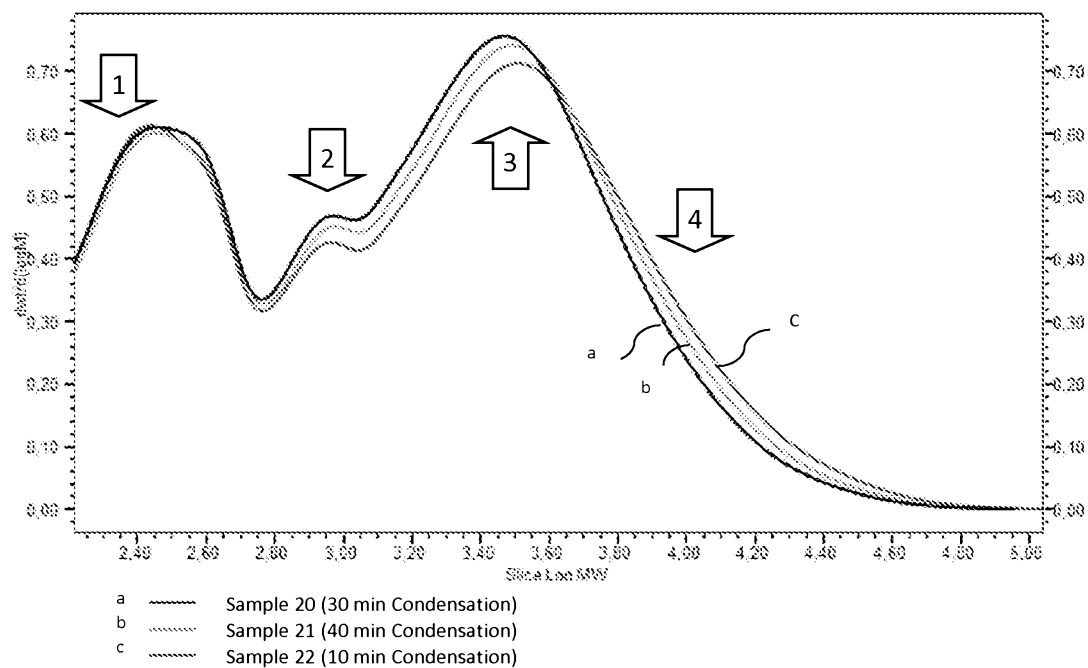
Molar mass distributions for examples 4 and 16 against PSS standards.

Fig. 4



Different charges of formaldehyde relative to the Kraft Lignin

Fig. 5



Molar mass distributions for examples 20, 21 & 22 – samples condensed to a free phenol of 5.7%
 (Aside: phenol is not seen as it has too low a molecular weight).

Fig. 6

A B S T R A C T

The present invention relates to a method for preparing an activated lignin composition. In addition, the present invention also relates to a method for further processing the thus activated lignin composition in a method for preparing a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin. Such a lignin-phenol formaldehyde resin can be used in the manufacturing of laminates by replacing the traditional synthetic phenol formaldehyde resin.



RAPPORT BETREFFENDE HET ONDERZOEK NAAR DE STAND VAN DE TECHNIEK

Octrooiaanvraag 2018722

Classificatie van het onderwerp ¹ : C08H 8/00; C07G 1/00	Onderzochte gebieden van de techniek ² : C08H, C07G
Computerbestanden: EPODOC, WPI	Omvang van het onderzoek: Volledig
Datum van de onderzochte conclusies: 5 mei 2017	Niet onderzochte conclusies: –

Van belang zijnde literatuur

Categorie ²	Vermelding van literatuur met aanduiding, voor zover nodig, van speciaal van belang zijnde tekstgedeelten of figuren.	Van belang voor conclusie(s)
D, X	WO 2013/144454 A (UPM KYMMENE CORP) 3 oktober 2013 * pagina 9, regels 3-10; voorbeeld 5 * - - -	1-16, 19, 22, 24-34
X	DE 4331656 A (RUETGERSWERKE AG) 15 september 1994 * voorbeeld 1 * - - -	1-4, 6, 7, 10
X	WO 2007/124400 A (GRENVALUE S A) 1 november 2007 * voorbeeld 19 * - - - - -	1-10
Datum waarop het onderzoek werd voltooid: 28 november 2017		De bevoegde ambtenaar: Dr. R. Boers Octrooicentrum Nederland, onderdeel van Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland

¹ Gedefinieerd volgens International Patent Classification (IPC).

² Verklaring van de categorie-aanduiding: zie apart blad.

Categorie van de vermelde literatuur:

- X: op zichzelf van bijzonder belang zijnde stand van de techniek
- Y: in samenhang met andere geciteerde literatuur van bijzonder belang zijnde stand van de techniek
- A: niet tot de categorie X of Y behorende van belang zijnde stand van de techniek
- O: verwijzend naar niet op schrift gestelde stand van de techniek
- P: literatuur gepubliceerd tussen voorrangs- en indieningsdatum
- T: niet tijdig gepubliceerde literatuur over theorie of principe ten grondslag liggend aan de uitvinding
- E: octrooiliteratuur gepubliceerd op of na de indieningsdatum van de onderhavige aanvraag en waarvan de indieningsdatum of de voorrangsdatum ligt voor de indieningsdatum van de onderhavige aanvraag.
- D: in de aanvraag genoemd
- L: om andere redenen vermelde literatuur
- &: lid van dezelfde octrooifamilie; corresponderende literatuur



AANHANGSEL

Behorende bij het Rapport betreffende het Onderzoek naar de Stand van de Techniek, Octrooiaanvraag 2018722

Het aanhangsel bevat een opgave van elders gepubliceerde octrooiaanvragen of octrooien (zogenaamde leden van dezelfde octrooifamilie), die overeenkomen met octrooigeschriften genoemd in het rapport. De opgave is samengesteld aan de hand van gegevens uit het computerbestand van het Europees Octrooibureau per 28 november 2017. De juistheid en volledigheid van deze opgave wordt noch door het Europees Octrooibureau, noch door Octrooicentrum Nederland gegarandeerd; de gegevens worden verstrekt voor informatiedoeleinden.

In het rapport genoemd octrooigeschrift		Datum van publicatie	Overeenkomende octrooigeschriften		Datum van publicatie
WO 2013144454	A1	03-10-2013	BR 112014010004	A2	25-04-2017
			CA 2856145	A1	03-10-2013
			CL 2014002586	A1	02-01-2015
			CN 104245799	A	24-12-2014
			EP 2758457	A1	30-07-2014
			EP 2993201	A1	09-03-2016
			EP 3211024	A1	30-08-2017
			ES 2567594	T3	25-04-2016
			ES 2635045	T3	02-10-2017
			FI 123936	B	31-12-2013
			FI 20125358	A	30-09-2013
			LT 2993201	T	25-08-2017
			PT 2993201	T	02-08-2017
			US 2014249271	A1	04-09-2014
			US 2016369141	A1	22-12-2016
			US 9464219	B2	11-10-2016
DE 4331656	A1	15-09-1994	(geen)		
WO 2007124400	A2	01-11-2007	CA 2646535	A1	01-11-2007
			EP 2013253	A2	14-01-2009
			US 2008021155	A1	24-01-2008



SCHRIFTELIJKE OPINIE

Octrooiaanvraag 2018722

Indieningsdatum: 14 april 2017	Vorrangsdatum:																
Classificatie van het onderwerp ¹ : C08H 8/00; C07G 1/00	Aanvrager: Trespa International B.V.																
Deze schriftelijke opinie bevat een toelichting op de volgende onderdelen: <table><tr><td>☒ Onderdeel I</td><td>Basis van de schriftelijke opinie</td></tr><tr><td>☐ Onderdeel II</td><td>Vorrang</td></tr><tr><td>☐ Onderdeel III</td><td>Vaststelling nieuwheid, inventiviteit en industriële toepasbaarheid niet mogelijk</td></tr><tr><td>☐ Onderdeel IV</td><td>De aanvraag heeft betrekking op meer dan één uitvinding</td></tr><tr><td>☒ Onderdeel V</td><td>Gemotiveerde verklaring ten aanzien van nieuwheid, inventiviteit en industriële toepasbaarheid</td></tr><tr><td>☐ Onderdeel VI</td><td>Andere geciteerde documenten</td></tr><tr><td>☐ Onderdeel VII</td><td>Overige gebreken</td></tr><tr><td>☒ Onderdeel VIII</td><td>Overige opmerkingen</td></tr></table>		☒ Onderdeel I	Basis van de schriftelijke opinie	☐ Onderdeel II	Vorrang	☐ Onderdeel III	Vaststelling nieuwheid, inventiviteit en industriële toepasbaarheid niet mogelijk	☐ Onderdeel IV	De aanvraag heeft betrekking op meer dan één uitvinding	☒ Onderdeel V	Gemotiveerde verklaring ten aanzien van nieuwheid, inventiviteit en industriële toepasbaarheid	☐ Onderdeel VI	Andere geciteerde documenten	☐ Onderdeel VII	Overige gebreken	☒ Onderdeel VIII	Overige opmerkingen
☒ Onderdeel I	Basis van de schriftelijke opinie																
☐ Onderdeel II	Vorrang																
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☒ Onderdeel VIII	Overige opmerkingen																
	De bevoegde ambtenaar: Dr. R. Boers Octrooicentrum Nederland, onderdeel van Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland																

¹ Gedefinieerd volgens International Patent Classification (IPC).

Onderdeel I Basis van de schriftelijke opinie

Deze schriftelijke opinie is opgesteld op basis van de op 5 mei 2017 ingediende conclusies.

Onderdeel V Gemotiveerde verklaring ten aanzien van nieuwheid, inventiviteit en industriële toepasbaarheid

1. Verklaring

Nieuwheid	Ja: Conclusie(s)	8-9, 13-34
	Nee: Conclusie(s)	1-7, 10, 11, 12
Inventiviteit	Ja: Conclusie(s)	17, 18, 20, 21, 23
	Nee: Conclusie(s)	8-9, 13-16, 19, 22, 24-34
Industriële toepasbaarheid	Ja: Conclusie(s)	1-34
	Nee: Conclusie(s)	-

2. Literatuur en toelichting

In het rapport betreffende het onderzoek naar de stand van de techniek worden de volgende publicaties genoemd:

- D1: WO 2013/144454 A (UPM KYMMENE CORP) 3 oktober 2013
- D2: DE 4331656 A (RUETGERSWERKE AG) 15 september 1994
- D3: WO 2007/124400 A (GRENVALUE S A) 1 november 2007

D1 openbaart (zie pagina 9, regels 3-10 en voorbeeld 5) een werkwijze voor het bereiden van een geactiveerde ligninesamenstelling omvattende het verschaffen van een basische (vloeibare) lignine oplossing in water (de gebruikelijke lignine oplossingen hebben een groot aantal vrije actieve waterstof atomen op de ortho en para posities van hun fenol groepen), het verwarmen van de oplossing tot ongeveer 75 °C en het toevoegen van formaldehyde. De samenstelling wordt vervolgens 1 uur geroerd om gehydroxymethyleerd lignine te verkrijgen.

De materie van conclusies 1-7 is derhalve bekend uit dit document en dus niet nieuw.

Conclusies 8-10 van de onderhavige aanvraag betreffen de stoichiometrische verhoudingen tussen de gebruikte reactieve waterstoffen (ortho/para) in de lignine en de hoeveelheid formaldehyde. Deze conclusies variëren van een overmaat aan aldehyde, een 1 op 1, tot een overmaat aan lignine. Van deze 3 mogelijkheden zijn er 2 nieuw ten opzichte van D1, echter deze 2 worden niet inventief bevonden aangezien een deskundige, naar gelang de eigenschappen van het polymeer dat hij wil verkrijgen, zal kiezen voor een van deze 3 mogelijkheden. Bovendien vermeldt de beschrijving (zie pagina 8, regels 14-22) geen andere bijzondere eigenschappen naast de eigenschappen die een deskundige op basis van zijn algemene vakkennis zou verwachten. De stoichiometrische keuzes van deze conclusies wordt derhalve als een willekeurige keuze gezien, welke geen inventiviteit kunnen verschaffen.

Vervolgens wordt met de gehydroxymethyleerde samenstelling (zie ook voorbeeld 5) een intermediair type lignine-fenolformaldehydohars ("binder composition") vervaardigd door aan de warme (75 °C) geactiveerde samenstelling fenol toe te voegen en vervolgens formaldehyde. Het mengsel wordt tot het bereiken van een bepaalde viscositeit verwarmd bij 70-90 °C.

De materie van conclusies 11 en 12 zijn daarmee bekend uit dit document en derhalve niet nieuw. De materie van conclusies 13-16 omvatten niet meer dan gebruikelijke werkwijze stappen binnen het betreffende vakgebied en worden derhalve niet inventief bevonden.

Ook de stappen om vanuit dit intermediaire hars een hars te verkrijgen volgens de conclusies 19 en 22 en om vervolgens hiermee een laminaat te vervaardigen volgens conclusies 24-34 wordt om dezelfde reden niet inventief bevonden.

D1 leert niet om na het verkrijgen van het intermediaire type hars wederom eerst een methyleringsstap uit te voeren alvorens het hars te vervaardigen. Evenmin volgt dit op een voor de hand liggende wijze uit dit document. De materie van conclusies 17 en 18 en de hiervan afhankelijke gedeelten van conclusies 20, 21, 23-34 wordt derhalve nieuw en inventief bevonden.

D2 openbaart (zie voorbeeld 1) een werkwijze voor het bereiden van een geactiveerde ligninesamenstelling omvattende het verschaffen van een basische (vloeibare) lignine oplossing in water (de gebruikelijke lignine oplossingen hebben een groot aantal vrije actieve waterstof atomen op de ortho en para posities van hun fenol groepen), het verwarmen van de oplossing tot 60 °C en het toevoegen van paraformaldehyde (een equivalent van formaldehyde). De samenstelling wordt vervolgens 8 uur geroerd om gehydroxymethyleerd lignine te verkrijgen.

De materie van conclusies 1-4, 6, 7 en 10 is derhalve bekend uit dit document en dus niet nieuw.

D3 (zie voorbeeld 19) openbaart een werkwijze voor het bereiden van een hoog reactieve lignine samenstelling omvattende het verschaffen van een basische (vloeibare) lignine oplossing in water (de gebruikelijke lignine oplossingen hebben een groot aantal vrije actieve waterstof atomen op de ortho en para posities van hun fenol groepen), het toevoegen van formaldehyde en het verwarmen van de oplossing tot 80-90 °C. De samenstelling wordt vervolgens 90-135 minuten geroerd om gehydroxymethyleerd lignine te verkrijgen.

De werkwijze verschilt met die in de onderhavige werkwijze in de volgorde van het toevoegen van formaldehyde en het verwarmen. Deze alternatieve volgorde wordt echter niet inventief bevonden. Hierdoor wordt de materie van conclusies 1-10 niet inventief bevonden.

Onderdeel VIII Overige opmerkingen

De volgende opmerkingen met betrekking tot de duidelijkheid van de conclusies, beschrijving, en figuren, of met betrekking tot de vraag of de conclusies nawerkbaar zijn, worden gemaakt:

De verdere voorkeuren in conclusies 2-5, 14-19 zijn niet beperkend voor deze conclusies.