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Joint News Release

Successful research at catalysis laboratory

- BASF and the University of Heidelberg extend cooperation at the Catalysis Research Laboratory (CaRLa)

BASF and the University of Heidelberg will jointly continue operating their Catalysis Research Laboratory (CaRLa) for a further three years. The partners signed the appropriate contract to extend the research cooperation until 2022. At CaRLa, researchers work on issues relating to homogeneous catalysis.

The scientific managers, Prof. Dr. A. Stephen K. Hashmi from the Institute of Organic Chemistry at the University of Heidelberg and Dr. Thomas Schaub from BASF SE, agree that “The joint catalysis laboratory offers the ideal conditions for the rapid transfer of knowledge from basic research to industry.” Eight projects started by CaRLa have been transferred in the meantime to BASF’s research units to further develop them specifically for industrial applications since 2015.

The current research work focuses primarily on efficient and resource-conserving synthesis methods, including methods using carbon dioxide (CO₂) or renewable resources as starting materials. One example is the production of sodium acrylate from ethylene and CO₂. Sodium acrylate is an important starting material for superabsorbents, which are used in diapers and other hygiene products. If this new process proves to be stable and energetically beneficial on a larger scale, CO₂ would replace around 30% of the fossil feedstock in the superabsorber compared to the current production method.

To date, more than 80 researchers from 22 different countries have worked at CaRLa. Their work is reflected in 82 scientific papers published in renowned journals. Furthermore, CaRLa has submitted 28 patent applications. Clearly, CaRLa stands for a successful cooperation of academic and industrial research.

The Catalysis Research Laboratory is a “Industry on Campus” project. With this concept, the University of Heidelberg pursues new ways of scientific cooperation with industry. As a result, the focus lies on long-term and strategically oriented projects of basic research. CaRLa is financed as part of a Private Public Partnership between BASF and the University of Heidelberg.

About BASF

At BASF, we create chemistry for a sustainable future. We combine economic success with environmental protection and social responsibility. The approximately 122,000 employees in the BASF Group work on contributing to the success of our customers in nearly all sectors and almost every country in the world. Our portfolio is organized into six segments: Chemicals, Materials, Industrial Solutions, Surface Technologies, Nutrition & Care and Agricultural Solutions. BASF generated sales of around €63 billion in 2018. BASF shares are traded on the stock exchange in Frankfurt (BAS) and as American Depositary Receipts (BASFY) in the U.S. Further information at www.basf.com.

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