A nemato-elastic phase-field model for liquid crystal elastomers

Omkar Nadgir* and Marc-André Keip

University of Stuttgart
Institute of Applied Mechanics (CE)
Pfaffenwaldring 7, 70569 Stuttgart, Germany
e-mail: omkar.nadgir@mechbau.uni-stuttgart.de
web page: www.mechbau.uni-stuttgart.de/ls1

ABSTRACT

Nematic liquid crystal elastomers are soft materials that are characterized by a heterogeneous microstructure [1]. They are made of crosslinked polymeric backbones and attached nematic mesogens [2]. When these materials are cooled down below a certain temperature, they exhibit an isotropic–nematic phase transition. The phase transition is accompanied by large spontaneous deformations, which makes them prototype candidates for the design of soft actuators.

This talk presents a coupled nemato-elastic phase-field model for liquid crystal elastomers that builds upon two main ingredients. First, we account for nematicity through the definition of a suitable order parameter, whose evolution is predicted by the phase-field theory [3]. Second, we consider a neo-classical Warner-Terentjev elastic energy for the elastic part of the problem [1]. The resulting large-deformation model is implemented within a finite element framework and a series of numerical simulations is given. The examples demonstrate crucial characteristics of nematic elastomers such as isotropic–nematic phase transition and the creation of stripe domains under applied stretch [4, 5].

REFERENCES


