

Ruthenium Olefin Metathesis Catalysts Containing Fluoride

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ABSTRACT: The reaction of the ruthenium complex *cis*-**Caz-1** with silver fluoride affords the first example of an active olefin metathesis pre-catalyst containing fluoride ligands. The *cis* geometry of the precursor complex is key to the successful fluoride exchange reaction. Computational studies highlight the stability of the new Ru-F species, due to push-pull interactions between fluoride and L-type ligands (L: N-heterocyclic carbene, phosphite). Insights into the isomerization process from *trans*-**Caz-1** to *cis*-**Caz-1** are given. Fluoride exchange reactions were performed involving *cis*- and *trans*-**Caz-1** complexes. Catalytic tests showcase the excellent activity of the Ru-F containing complexes.

KEYWORDS olefin metathesis, homogeneous catalysis, ruthenium, fluoride, halide exchange.

Introduction

The introduction of fluorine atoms in molecules can drastically change their physical and chemical properties.¹ Organofluorine compounds are nowadays employed in the agrochemical and pharmaceutical industry, with an ever increasing demand for this class of compounds.² Fluorine has been introduced into metal-complexes as fluoride ligand.³ Late-transition-metal fluoride complexes represent a challenge in synthetic organometallic chemistry due to the hard-soft mismatch.^{2,4} As a result, only a limited number of examples of transition metal fluoride complexes (namely Pd,^{5a} Pt,^{5b} Ir,^{5c} Os^{5d-f} and Ru^{5e-k}) has been disclosed to date. Most synthetic protocols leading to M-F bond formation involve an oxidative addition of XeF₂ in anhydrous HF or reaction with Et₃N·3HF.^{4d,4f,5d,6} Oxidative addition of organofluoro compounds via C-F bond activation can be performed, but is somewhat limited to group 9-10 metals.⁷ An alternative strategy to access M-F compounds consists of halide exchange reactions that can be carried out under relatively mild reaction conditions, using reagents such as CsF,^{4c-d} AgF,^{4f} NMe₄F^{3h,4g} and [(Me₂N)₃S]⁺[Me₃SiF₂]⁻ (TASF).^{4h} Such synthetic methods have been applied to ruthenium, leading to fluoride complexes as shown in Figure 1. Caulton and co-workers have reported the synthesis of [Ru(F)(H)(CO)(P^tBu₂Me)₂] through halide exchange reactions using CsF.^{4c} More recently, Whittlesey and co-workers have shown that complexes of type [Ru(F)(H)(CO)L_n] (n = 2,3; L = PR₃, NHC) could be isolated using Et₃N·3HF as the fluorinating agent.⁸ In all complexes reported by Caulton and Whittlesey, a square pyramidal or an octahedral geometry is adopted with the fluoride ligand *trans* to the π-acceptor CO (Figure 1). A push-pull interaction between the fluoride (here acting as a π-donor) and the *trans* carbonyl ligand is invoked to stabilize the Ru-F bond.

Difluoride Ru clusters such as [RuF₂(CO)₃]₃⁴ developed by Wilson and co-workers, and derivatives obtained by substitution of carbonyls with phosphines^{5f} and N-heterocyclic carbenes (NHC)^{5h} were reported by Hope and co-workers. The reactivity of the 18e⁻ difluoride complexes [RuF₂(CO)₂L₂] (L = PR₃, NHC) toward Lewis acids (LA) e.g. PF₅, BF₃ and B(C₆F₅)₃ led to the corresponding 16e⁻ cationic species, where the counterion has a stabilizing effect on the complex.^{5g-h} All reports on Ru-carbonyl complexes contrast with the cationic monofluoride and the neutral difluoride species developed by Mezzetti and co-workers (Figure 1).^{3g-h}

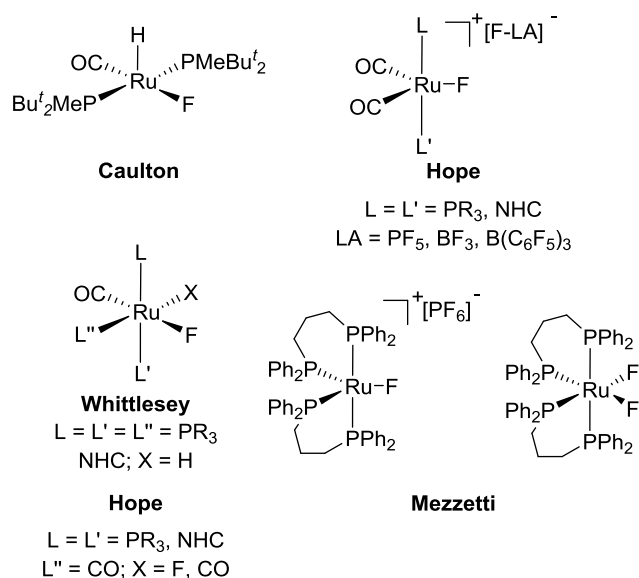


Figure 1. Ruthenium fluoride complexes.

This last cationic complex was obtained through halide exchange of $[\text{RuCl}(\text{dppp})_2]\text{PF}_6$ with TIF (dppp = 1,3-bis(diphenylphosphino)propane), and further reacted with NMe_4F to yield the neutral difluoride species. In these complexes, the fluoride ligand is described as a poor π -donor ligand, resulting in a simple electrostatic interaction between a cationic ruthenium species and fluoride. To the best of our knowledge, no other type of Ru complex bearing a F ligand has been reported to date. Complexes that would be of great interest would be Ru-F containing congeners of alkene metathesis active systems. Indeed, kinetic studies by Grubbs and co-workers showed that the catalytic activity of complexes of the type $[\text{RuX}_2(\text{SIMes})(=\text{CHPh})]$ ($\text{X} = \text{Cl}, \text{Br}, \text{I}$, SIMes = *N*, *N'*-bis[2,4,6-(trimethyl)phenyl]imidazolidin-2-ylidene) decreases in the order $\text{Cl} > \text{Br} > \text{I}$, suggesting a possibly higher efficiency for the fluoride analogues.⁹ Computational studies on the formation of ruthena(IV)cyclobutanes from 1st and 2nd generation Grubbs pre-catalysts and norborn-2-ene have illustrated a similar trend of reactivity for dihalides complexes ($\text{F} > \text{Cl} > \text{Br} > \text{I}$), predicting the best activity of difluoride species among olefin metathesis pre-catalysts.¹⁰ Despite this insight into possible reactivity, whereas bromide/iodide/carboxylate versions of Grubbs and Hoveyda-Grubbs type complexes have been extensively studied,^{9,11} no fluoride version has, to the best of our knowledge, been reported to date. A few failed attempts using HF or AgF suggest that these methodologies or Grubbs/Hoveyda-Grubbs type complexes are not suitable for the synthesis of Ru-F species for olefin metathesis.¹² Recently, we have developed a new class of Ru-olefin metathesis catalysts that displays an unusual *cis*-geometry and leads to outstanding stability and activity in olefin metathesis reactions.¹³ It appeared therefore of great interest to evaluate the ability of such complexes to undergo chloride exchange with fluoride. Herein, we report our findings on chloride exchange reactions using a number of olefin metathesis pre-catalysts.

Results and Discussion

Chloride exchange with AgF. The reactivity of various commercially available pre-catalysts with AgF as a fluoride source was initially examined (Figure 2).

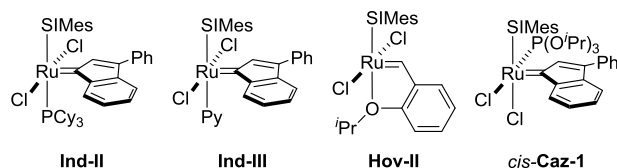


Figure 2. Olefin metathesis pre-catalysts tested in Cl exchange.

The reaction of **Ind-II**, **Ind-III** and **Hov-II** with AgF showed no conversion of the starting material after 1 h (Table 1, entries 1-3). In contrast, under the same reaction conditions, the phosphite-containing complex **trans-Caz-1** leads to 10% conversion of the starting material into the mono-fluorinated species (Table 1, entry 4). With longer reaction time (24 h), 53% of **trans-Caz-1** was converted into a Ru-F species (Table 1, entry 5). Monitoring this reaction for a few hours showed a reaction-

rate similar to the one involved in the *trans-cis* isomerization of the complex.¹⁴ We therefore reasoned that isomerization might be required before chloride exchange. If such were the case, the *cis*-complex should show a superior reactivity. **Cis-Caz-1** was thus reacted with AgF. A very rapid reaction occurred with a 76% conversion leading to the same fluorinated product obtained from **trans-Caz-1** (Table 1, entry 6). Using 2 equivalents of AgF, full conversion of the starting material was observed with both mono- and difluoride products formed. Using only 20% excess of AgF leads to the selective formation of the mono-fluorinated product (Table 1, entries 7 and 8). Increasing the amount of AgF to 2.4 equivalents leads to the quantitative formation of the difluoride species (Table 1, entry 9).

Table 1. Chloride exchange with AgF.^a

$[\text{Ru}]\text{Cl}_2 + n\text{AgF} \xrightarrow{\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2, \text{rt}, 1 \text{ h}} [\text{Ru}]\text{Cl}_{2-n}\text{F}_n + n\text{AgCl}$					
Entry	Pre-catalyst	AgF equiv.	$[\text{Ru}]\text{Cl}_2$ species ^b	$[\text{Ru}]\text{ClF}$ species ^b	$[\text{Ru}]\text{F}_2$ species ^b
1	Ind-II	1	100	n.r.	n.r.
2	Ind-III	1	100	n.r.	n.r.
3	Hov-II	1	100	n.r.	n.r.
4	<i>trans</i> -Caz-1	1	90	10	-
5	<i>trans</i> -Caz-1	1	47 ^c	53 ^c	-
6	<i>cis</i> -Caz-1	1	24	76	-
7	<i>cis</i> -Caz-1	1.2	-	>99	-
8	<i>cis</i> -Caz-1	2	-	21	79
9	<i>cis</i> -Caz-1	2.4	-	-	>99

^aReaction conditions: Complex (0.01 mmol), AgF (1-2.4 equiv.), CD_2Cl_2 (0.6 mL), rt, 1 h. ^bConversion (%) determined by ¹H NMR. ^c24 h.

Synthesis of $[\text{Ru}(\text{Cl})(\text{F})(\text{Ind})(\text{SIMes})\{\text{P}(\text{O}^i\text{Pr})_3\}]$, **Caz-1_F.** **Caz-1_F** was quantitatively obtained by reaction of 1 equivalent of *cis*-Caz-1 with 1.2 equivalents of AgF. The ¹H NMR spectrum contains a characteristic doublet at 8.93 ppm assigned to the indenylidene (Ind) H⁷ proton, which is shifted downfield compared to the signal observed for *cis*-Caz-1. In the ³¹P-{¹H} NMR spectrum, a doublet is observed at 131.4 ppm (²J_{PF} = 286 Hz), corresponding to the phosphite ligand. This signal is also shifted downfield compared to the ³¹P signal of the starting material.^{13a} In the ¹⁹F-{¹H} NMR spectrum, a doublet at -217.2 ppm (²J_{PF} = 286 Hz) is found. These data are consistent with a *trans* disposition of the fluorine and phosphite ligands. The ¹³C-{¹H} NMR spectrum contains a doublet at 289.6 ppm (²J_{CP} = 25.5 Hz) and a doublet at 209.1 ppm (²J_{CP} = 16.0 Hz) corresponding to the carbene carbon atom of the indenylidene and of the *N*-heterocyclic carbene, respectively. The structure was unambiguously confirmed by single crystal X-ray diffraction (Figure 3).¹⁵

Caz-1_F presents a slightly distorted square pyramidal geometry with the indenylidene unit sitting at the apical position. Hydrogen bonding (dashed line) between H⁷ of the indenylidene ring and the fluorine atom is observed, which might explain the smaller C_{Ind}-Ru-F angle (102.82(13)°) observed compared to the dichloride analogue (104.3(2)°).^{13a} Similar intramolecular F...H interac-

tions have also been observed by Hope and co-workers.^{5f}

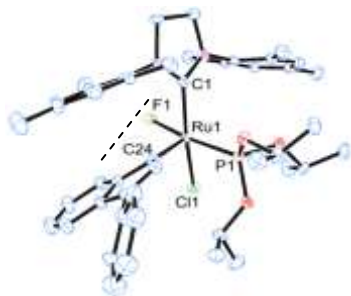


Figure 3. Molecular structure of **Caz-1_F**. All solvent molecules and hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity. Thermal ellipsoids are shown at the 50% probability level.

Synthesis of [RuF₂(Ind)(SIMes){P(O'Pr)₃}], Caz-1_{F2}. The difluorinated complex **Caz-1_{F2}** was quantitatively obtained by reaction of *cis*-**Caz-1** with 2.4 equivalents of AgF. The ¹H NMR spectrum contains a characteristic doublet at 9.02 ppm corresponding to the indenylidene H⁷ proton, which is shifted downfield compared to **Caz-1_F** (8.93 ppm) and *cis*-**Caz-1** (8.87 ppm).^{13a} In the ³¹P-{¹H} NMR spectrum, a doublet at 131.5 ppm (²J_{PF} of 286 Hz) corresponding to the phosphite ligand is observed. This signal is also shifted downfield compared to the ³¹P signal of **Caz-1_F** and *cis*-**Caz-1**.^{13a} The ¹⁹F-{¹H} NMR spectrum contains a doublet at -217.7 ppm (²J_{PF} = 286 Hz) corresponding to the fluoride *trans* to the phosphite, and a broad singlet at -237.2 ppm corresponding to the second fluoride, which is *cis* to the phosphite ligand. The ¹³C-{¹H} NMR was recorded at 223 K. The spectrum contains two broad signals at 287.0 ppm and 211.1 ppm corresponding to the carbene carbon atom of the indenylidene and of the *N*-heterocyclic carbene, respectively. The structure of the complex was confirmed by X-ray diffraction on single crystal (Figure 4).¹⁶ A similar interaction (dashed line) between H⁷ of indenylidene ring and the fluorine atom *trans* to the phosphite is observed, presumably responsible for the relatively small C_{Ind}-Ru-F angle (103.39(17)°) compared to the dichloride analogue (104.3(2)°).^{13a} Both complexes display a distorted square pyramidal geometry with the phosphite ligand *cis* to the NHC (P-Ru-C_{NHC} angles being 97.66(10)° and 97.82(14)° for **Caz-1_F** and **Caz-1_{F2}**, respectively) (Table 2).

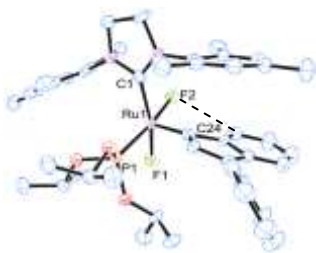


Figure 4. Molecular structure of **Caz-1_{F2}**. All solvent molecules and hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity. Thermal ellipsoids are shown at the 50% probability level.

In both complexes, the Ru-F bond is significantly shorter than the Ru-Cl. For all complexes, comparable Ru-C (NHC and indenylidene) bond lengths are found, while Ru-P bond distances show some disparity. The latter decreases in the following order: *cis*-**Caz-1** > **Caz-1_F** > **Caz-1_{F2}**, which reflects the electronegativity of F vs Cl.

Table 2. Selected bond distances (Å), angles (°)(esd).

	<i>cis</i> - Caz-1 ^{13a}	Caz-1_F	Caz-1_{F2}
Ru(1)-X _{transP}	2.4036(18)	2.029(3)	2.017(3)
Ru(1)-X _{transNHC}	2.3974(19)	2.3837(12)	2.035(4)
Ru(1)-P(1)	2.249(2)	2.2426(11)	2.2263(16)
Ru(1)-C(24)	2.067(7)	2.059(4)	2.053(6)
Ru(1)-C(1)	1.881(8)	1.864(5)	1.846(6)
P(1)-Ru(1)-C(24)	100.6(19)	97.66(10)	97.82(14)
P(1)-Ru(1)-C(1)	90.5(2)	90.19(12)	89.95(15)
C(24)-Ru(1)-C(1)	98.7(3)	97.09(17)	96.1(3)

Chloride exchange and isomerization studies. Braddock and co-workers have reported a study using Hoveyda-Grubbs pre-catalysts of the type [RuX₂(SIMes)(=CH-2-(*i*-PrO)-C₆H₄)] where X is Cl, Br, CF₃CO₂ and C₂F₅CO₂.^{11d} When reacting two complexes containing different pairs of anionic ligands (1:1 molar ratio), a statistical mixture of 1:2:1 was obtained, where a novel complex with mixed anions is in equilibrium with the starting materials (pseudodegenerate ligand exchange).^{11d} This encouraged us to investigate the ability of our dichloro and difluoro-species to be involved in such an exchange (Table 3).

Table 3. Fluoride exchange reactions.

Entry	Complex	Time (h)	Conversion to Caz-1_F (%) ^a
1	Caz-1_{F2} + <i>cis</i> - Caz-1	0.5	>99
2	Caz-1_{F2} + <i>trans</i> - Caz-1	0.5	30
3		1.5	40
4		24	>99

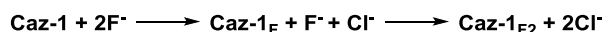
^aDetermined by ¹H NMR.

When the dichloride species *cis*-**Caz-1** was mixed with **Caz-1_{F2}**, rapid and quantitative reaction was observed, with the mono-fluorinated compound being the only product formed (Table 3, entry 1), which is in marked contrast with the Braddock findings. Furthermore, complete fluorination of *trans*-**Caz-1** can be achieved, requiring longer reaction time (Table 3, entry 4). This is of great interest considering that the formation of this compound from *trans*-**Caz-1** was found problematic when

using the AgF-promoted Cl exchange route (Table 1, entries 4 and 5). In addition, comparison of the rate of isomerization of *trans*-**Caz-1** to *cis*-**Caz-1** with the rate of fluorination of *trans*-**Caz-1** by **Caz-1**_{F2} showed that the latter process is faster, which is again in contrast with the results obtained with AgF.¹⁷ These results prompted us to investigate the fluorination of **Ind-II**, **Ind-III** and **Hov-II** using **Caz-1**_{F2}. Unfortunately, no selective formation of fluorinated compounds was observed in these instances.¹⁸

Computational Studies. Insights into the stability of the Ru complexes isolated in this work and their corresponding *trans*-species were obtained using a computational DFT approach (Table 4).¹⁹ As can be seen in Table 4, the energy values are clearly affected by the relative stability of the free chloride and free fluoride anions in solution.

Table 4. Energetics (kcal/mol) of the chloride exchange reactions.



Isomer	Caz-1 + 2F ⁻	Caz-1 _F + F ⁻ + Cl ⁻	Caz-1 _{F2} + 2Cl ⁻
<i>cis</i>	0.0	-18.9	-32.6
<i>trans</i>	+6.8	-7.3	-17.9
<i>trans</i> - <i>cis</i>	+6.8	+11.6	+14.7

Focusing on the *cis* complexes, the replacement of one chloride ligand of *cis*-**Caz-1** by one fluoride ligand, leading to **Caz-1**_F + Cl⁻, is favored by 18.9 kcal/mol (Table 4). In agreement with the experiments, the most stable isomer of **Caz-1**_F presents the fluoride ligand *trans* to the P(OⁱPr)₃ ligand. The isomer with the fluoride ligand *trans* to the NHC ligand is 11.6 kcal/mol higher in energy. Substitution of the second chloride atom in the *trans* isomer, *i.e.* the one with the P(OⁱPr)₃ ligand *trans* to the NHC ligand, is less favored than the substitution of the second chloride in the *cis* isomer (see Table 4). However, it is worth noting that in **Caz-1** the *cis* isomer is only 6.8 kcal/mol more stable than the *trans* isomer, while in **Caz-1**_F and **Caz-1**_{F2} this preference increases to 11.6 and 14.7 kcal/mol, respectively. Finally, combination of the energy values of the three *cis* species in Table 4 indicates that the formation of 2 mol of **Caz-1**_F by mixing 1 mol of *cis*-**Caz-1** and 1 mol of **Caz-1**_{F2} is favored by 5.2 kcal/mol. Overall, these results are consistent with the experimental data showing that when *cis*-**Caz-1** is reacted with 1 equivalent of AgF, only **Caz-1**_F is formed, and when *cis*-**Caz-1** is reacted with *cis*-**Caz-1**_{F2} only **Caz-1**_F is still obtained. A better understanding of the relative strength of the different Ru-halide bonds in these systems was achieved with bond snapping energy calculations (BSE) which is the energy required for the dissociation of the Ru-X bond (see Table 5). In these calculations the geometry of the [Ru] fragment is kept rigid, and we calculated both homolytic and heterolytic BSEs, which means fragmenting the complex into radical and neutral [Ru]• and X• fragments, or into cationic [Ru]⁺ and anionic X⁻ fragments, respectively. The BSEs in Table 5 indicate that all the Ru-F BSEs are stronger than the BSE for the corresponding Ru-Cl bond, independently from homo or heterolytic fragmentation of the complexes. This

allows us to conclude that the Ru-F bond is stronger than the corresponding Ru-Cl bond. More specifically, the data reported in Table 5 clearly indicate that the Ru-F bonds in *cis*-**Caz-1**_{F2} are roughly 12-18 kcal/mol stronger than the corresponding Ru-Cl bonds in *cis*-**Caz-1**. Moreover, for the same complexes, the Ru-halide bond *trans* to the P(OⁱPr)₃ ligand is from 3 to 10 kcal/mol weaker than the Ru-halide bond *trans* to the NHC ligand (comparing entries 9 and 10 as well as entries 1 and 2 in Table 5), suggesting that it is the Ru-halide bond *trans* to the P atom that undergoes dissociation. Focusing on *cis*-**Caz-1**_F, the Ru-Cl bond is weaker than the Ru-F bond, comparing entries 3 and 4 in Table 5, despite the chloride ligand being *trans* to the NHC ligand. Finally, the strength of the Ru-Cl bond *trans* to the NHC ligand is nearly the same in *cis*-**Caz-1** and *cis*-**Caz-1**_F, comparing entries 1 and 3 in Table 5. Focusing on *trans*-**Caz-1**, in agreement with our previous work,²⁰ calculations indicate that the Ru-Cl bond is stronger when it is *trans* to another Cl atom rather than to a P atom, comparing entries 2 and 5 in Table 5.

Table 5. Ru-X bond snapping energy (BSE) in CH₂Cl₂ (kcal/mol).

	Pre-catalyst	Atom	Heterolytic BSE	Homolytic BSE
1	<i>cis</i> - Caz-1	Cl <i>trans</i> to NHC	31.5	79.0
2	<i>cis</i> - Caz-1	Cl <i>trans</i> to P	21.7	84.3
3	<i>cis</i> - Caz-1 _F	Cl <i>trans</i> to NHC	30.9	85.1
4	<i>cis</i> - Caz-1 _F	F <i>trans</i> to P	40.6	110.4
5	<i>trans</i> - Caz-1	equivalent Cl	36.0	92.8
6	<i>trans</i> - Caz-1 _{F2}	equivalent F	47.5	116.1
7	<i>trans</i> - Caz-1 _F	F <i>trans</i> to Cl	47.2	114.1
8	<i>trans</i> - Caz-1 _F	Cl <i>trans</i> to F	37.4	97.2
9	<i>cis</i> - Caz-1 _{F2}	F <i>trans</i> to NHC	43.5	110.2
10	<i>cis</i> - Caz-1 _{F2}	F <i>trans</i> to P	40.3	113.7

To gauge if the increased strength of the Ru-F bond relative to the Ru-Cl bond is electrostatic in nature or is due to increased back-donation from the F ligand to the Ru center through a push-pull effect induced by the π-acid phosphite, we performed an energy decomposition analysis (EDA) of the Ru-X bond in *cis*-**Caz-1** and *cis*-**Caz-1**_{F2} (see Table 6). We briefly remind the reader that the total BSE can be decomposed into three main terms, $\text{BSE} = E_{\text{El}} + E_{\text{Pauli}} + E_{\text{Orb}}$. E_{El} accounts for stabilizing electrostatic interaction between the two fragments, E_{Pauli} accounts for repulsion between doubly filled molecular orbitals on the two fragments, and E_{Orb} accounts for stabilizing interaction between filled orbitals on one fragment with empty orbitals on the other fragment. Since the EDA is performed on the intrinsic strength of the Ru-X bond, which does not depend on the environment that can only stabilize the two fragments, the EDA is performed in the gas-phase. Focusing on *cis*-**Caz-1** and *cis*-**Caz-1**_{F2}, the data reported in Table 6 indicate that the increased strength of the Ru-F bond in *cis*-**Caz-1**_{F2} compared to the Ru-Cl bond in *cis*-**Caz-1** is almost 50%-50% shared between the orbital and the electrostatic terms, since both are roughly 14-15 kcal/mol stronger in *cis*-**Caz-1**_{F2} com-

pared to *cis*-**Caz-1**. None of the two terms is clearly dominant. The repulsive Pauli term is instead rather similar. This suggests that the increased strength of the Ru-F bond is equally a consequence of an increased ionic character of the bond, due to the higher electronegativity of the F atom, and of an increased orbital interaction, that can be probably correlated to back-donation from the F ligand to the Ru center through a push-pull effect. Comparison between *cis*-**Caz-1**_{F2} and *cis*-**Caz-1**_F indicates that the halide *trans* to the NHC ligand has a small impact on the Ru-F bond *trans* to the phosphite.

Table 6. Decomposition analysis of the bond snapping energy of selected Ru-X bonds in the gas-phase. The total bond snapping energy is decomposed as: $-BSE = E_{El} + E_{Pauli} + E_{Orb}$. All values in kcal/mol.

	E_{El}	E_{Pauli}	E_{Orb}	-BSE
<i>cis</i> -Caz-1	-154.7	117.5	-77.9	-115.0
<i>cis</i> -Caz-1 _{F2}	-168.3	122.7	-92.6	-138.1
<i>cis</i> -Caz-1 _F	-168.0	119.2	-94.0	-142.8

Catalytic studies in ring-closing metathesis (RCM).

The catalytic activities of both **Caz-1**_{F2} and **Caz-1**_F were first examined in the ring-closing metathesis (RCM) of the challenging substrate *N,N*-bis(2-methylallyl)tosylamide **1**, and compared with the catalytic activity of the dichloro-analogue *cis*-**Caz-1**. As thermal activation is required to efficiently promote such a reaction, a first comparative study at different temperatures was carried out (Figure 5).^{13,21} As can be seen in Figure 5, while the mono-fluoride performs very well, the difluoride analogue leads to poor conversion to **2** (max. 33% at 110°C). Comparison of *cis*-**Caz-1** with its monofluoride analogue **Caz-1**_F shows that, while the catalytic activity of the dichloride derivative reaches its maximum at 90°C (79%), the activity of the mono-fluoride derivative carries on increasing with temperature (84% at 120°C). This result is even more striking if we compare the catalytic profile of the ring-closing reaction of the three complexes at 110°C (Figure 6). Under such conditions, *cis*-**Caz-1** has a rapid rate of reaction, followed by a rapid catalyst deactivation (87% conversion within 15 min) while **Caz-1**_F has an induction period of ca. 3 minutes and reaches 93% conversion within 40 minutes. On the other hand, the difluoro-species, **Caz-1**_{F2}, is poorly active under such reaction conditions (6% conversion after 2 h, and 21% after 24h).²² It should be noted that *cis*-**Caz-1** outperformed other commercially available pre-catalysts (such as **Ind-II**, **Hov-II** and **Ind-III**) in the RCM of substrate **1** under similar conditions,^{13a,13c} thus suggesting that **Caz-1**_F could be a serious contender for this transformation.

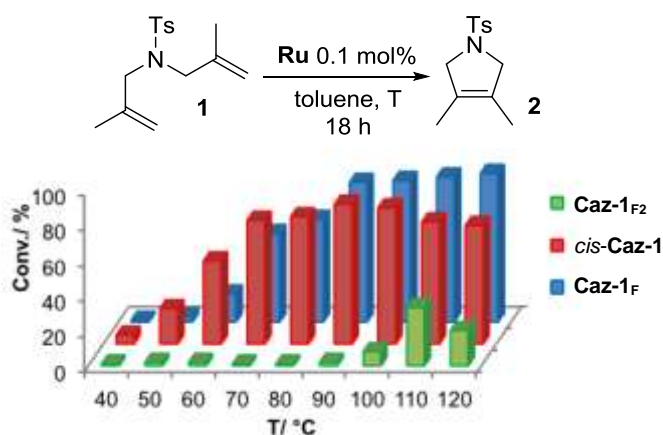


Figure 5. Temperature dependence in the RCM investigated.

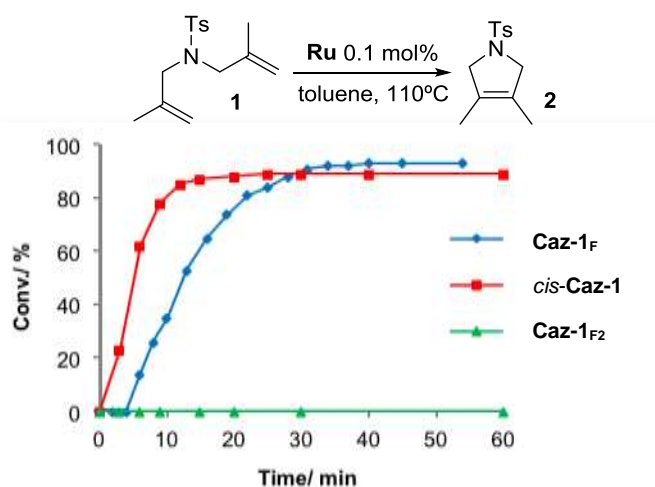


Figure 6. Reaction profiles of *cis*-**Caz-1**, **Caz-1**_F and **Caz-1**_{F2} in the RCM of **1** (lines are visual aids and not curve fits).

In order to shed light on the formation of the catalytically active species, further DFT calculations were undertaken. For this purpose, we investigated the possible mechanism leading to formation of the classic 14e⁻ intermediate, with the Ru atom presenting a vacant coordination position *trans* to the NHC ligand for substrate coordination. Starting from the *cis* isomers, two mechanisms can be envisaged. The first corresponds to concerted *cis* to *trans* isomerization of the complex with the phosphite still coordinated to the Ruthenium, followed by phosphite dissociation. The second corresponds to dissociation of the phosphite from the *cis* isomer, followed by isomerization of the resulting 14e⁻ intermediate, presenting one halide *trans* to the NHC ligand, to the most stable 14e⁻ intermediate with a vacant coordination site *trans* to the NHC ligand.

According to calculations, the barrier for the concerted *cis*-*trans* isomerization of the phosphite coordinated species is 35.0, 42.1 and 42.3 kcal/mol for **Caz-1**, **Caz-1**_F and **Caz-1**_{F2}, respectively, leading to the *trans* isomers at 6.8, 11.6 and 14.7 kcal/mol above the corresponding *cis* isomer (see Table 4). To complete this pathway, phos-

phite dissociation from the *trans* isomers costs 6.1, 6.0 and 3.9 kcal/mol (*trans-Caz-1*, *trans-Caz-1_F* and *trans-Caz-1_{F2}*, respectively). As for the step-wise activation mechanism, we were not able to locate a stable geometry for the 14e⁻ intermediate with a halide *trans* to the NHC ligand. In all cases, this intermediate collapsed to the most stable geometry with the two halides in *trans* to each other. This suggests that phosphite dissociation from the *cis* isomer triggers, and is concerted with, the rearrangement of the Ru moiety to the most stable 14e⁻ intermediate with the vacancy *trans* to the NHC ligand. We thus located the transition state for this process, and we found barriers of 28.8, 35.8 and 37.1 for **Caz-1**, **Caz-1_F** and **Caz-1_{F2}**, respectively. Comparison between the two mechanisms thus indicates that the most likely mechanism for activation of the *cis* complexes consists in the dissociation of the phosphite with concerted isomerization of the Ru-moiety to generate the 14e⁻ intermediate with a vacant coordination position *trans* to the Ru atom. Furthermore, the trend in the energy of the transition states for phosphite dissociation from the *cis* complexes, easier for **Caz-1** and more difficult for **Caz-1_{F2}**, is consistent with the trend observed for the metathesis activity of Figures 5 and 6. As a remark, we note that we are somewhat overestimating the barrier for phosphite dissociation for **Caz-1_F**, which should be closer to the barrier calculated for **Caz-1**.

Finally, the beneficial effect of using a fluorinated aromatic solvent was examined for all three complexes (Figure 7). As previously suggested by DFT calculations,²³ an aromatic solvent molecule can stabilize the 14e⁻ species by direct coordination to the Ru center. The same calculations indicated that fluorinated aromatic solvent molecules interact remarkably more strongly than their non-fluorinated counterpart, and this result was correlated to the higher catalytic activity of Ru-catalysts in olefin metathesis. This is consistent with the results depicted in Figure 7, as in all cases, catalytic activity is improved when the reaction is carried out in perfluorotoluene.

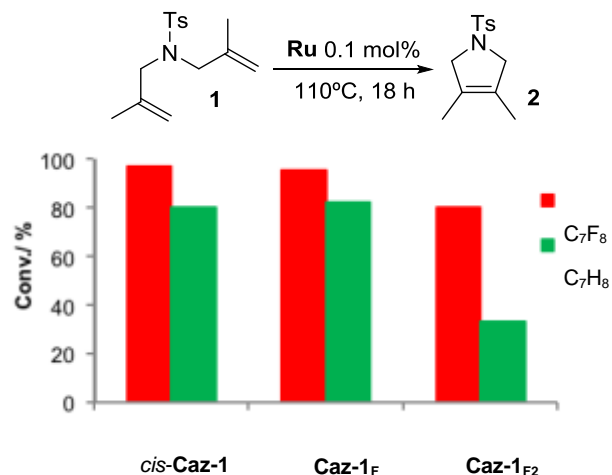
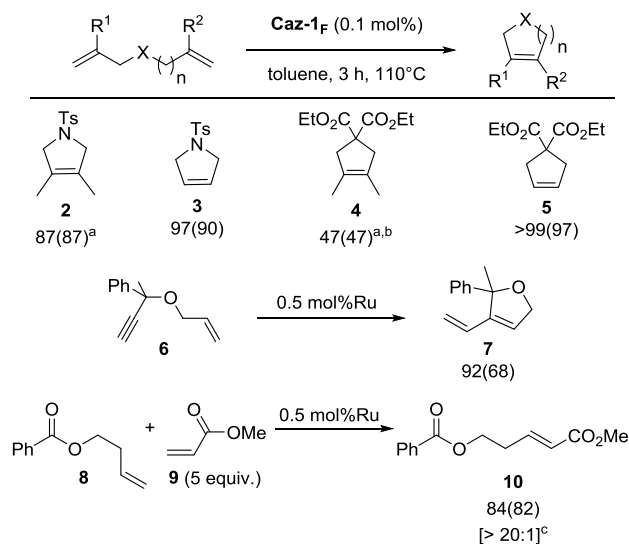


Figure 7. RCM properties of Ru-F pre-catalysts and *cis*-**Caz-1** in toluene and perfluorotoluene under inert atmosphere.

Scope of the reaction. The catalytic efficiency of the mono-fluoride complex was next investigated, in a conventional solvent (toluene), at 110°C (Figure 8). **Caz-1_F**

proved highly active at 0.1 mol% for hindered and unhindered malonate and tosylate derivatives. With 0.5 mol% loading, **Caz-1_F** enables enyne metathesis of **6**, as well as the efficient and selective cross-metathesis of **8** with **9**.



Reaction conditions: **Caz-1_F** (0.1 mol%), substrate (0.25 mmol), toluene (0.5 mL), 3 h, 110°C, under Ar; average of 2 runs; conversions were determined by GC; isolated yield in parentheses; ^areaction in neat substrate; ^b0.5 mol% Ru, isolated as mixture, NMR yield; ^c*E/Z* ratio determined by ¹H NMR.

Figure 8. Scope of the reaction employing **Caz-1_F**.

Conclusion

The synthesis of the first Ru-F pre-catalysts for olefin metathesis reactions has been presented. *Cis*-**Caz-1** reacts with AgF under mild conditions - rather than HF or equivalent reactants - affording isolable Ru-F species. Both **Caz-1_F** and **Caz-1_{F2}** display the same *cis* geometry as their chloride precursor. In analogy to what has been observed by Caulton and co-workers with carbonyl complexes, a push-pull interaction involving the fluoride ligand (π-donor) and L-type ligands (π-acceptor) is invoked to stabilize the complexes (F-Ru(II)-P(OR)₃ bonding). Fluoride exchange reactions involving **Caz-1_{F2}** with *cis*-**Caz-1** and *trans*-**Caz-1** were performed. The selectivity toward only one product (**Caz-1_F**) rather than an equilibrium mixture supports the push-pull effect in the F-Ru(II)-P(OR)₃ bonding as a driving force for the process. Computational studies confirmed the stability of these complexes when compared to *cis*-**Caz-1**, with **Caz-1_{F2}** being the most stable. The stability of the *cis* pre-catalysts influences their catalytic activity. A larger energy barrier was observed for **Caz-1_F** experimentally and in the computational study compared to *cis*-**Caz-1**. Nevertheless, both pre-catalysts display similar reactivity in olefin metathesis. **Caz-1_{F2}** is less active than the former pre-catalysts due to its higher stability in the *cis* form and the very small amount of active species generated. The effect of fluorinated solvents in catalysis was investigated. An overall enhancement of the catalytic activity was observed even for **Caz-1_{F2}**, supporting the hypothesis of a stabilization of the NHC-Ru species by the fluorinated

solvent rather than the fluorination of active species during the reaction. The catalytic results reported here are not as superior as predicted by literature reports having computationally addressed *trans*-Ru-F species. In the present work, the *cis*-geometry of the species has an influence on the activity of the complexes, resulting in different catalytic properties compared to the hypothetical *trans*-Ru-F species. Although the search for a viable synthetic route leading to this species still remains elusive, the present experimental / computational study clearly highlights that this goal is indeed a worthy one. Efforts in this direction and in directions leading to longer living and more active metathesis catalysts are ongoing in our laboratory.

EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

[Ru(CI)F(Ind)(SIMes){P(OⁱPr)₃}], Caz-1_F. Under an inert atmosphere of argon, AgF (52.2 mg, 0.41 mmol) was added to a solution of *cis*-Caz-1 (303 mg, 0.34 mmol) in dichloromethane (10 mL).²⁴ The reaction mixture was stirred for 24 h at room temperature in the absence of light. The solution was filtered, the solvent was removed *in vacuo* leading to the product as a pale-brown solid in a quantitative yield (295 mg, 99%). ¹H NMR (CD₂Cl₂, 400 MHz): δ (ppm) = 0.57 (d, ³J_{HH} = 5.9 Hz, 3H, CH-CH₃), 0.75 (d, ³J_{HH} = 6.0 Hz, 3H, CH-CH₃), 0.90 (d, ³J_{HH} = 5.8 Hz, 3H, CH-CH₃), 1.10 (d, ³J_{HH} = 6.0 Hz, 3H, CH-CH₃), 1.38 (d, ³J_{HH} = 6.1 Hz, 3H, CH-CH₃), 1.44 (d, ³J_{HH} = 6.2 Hz, 3H, CH-CH₃), 1.60 (s, 3H, mesityl CH₃), 1.83 (s, 3H, mesityl CH₃), 2.33 (s, 3H, mesityl CH₃), 2.51 (s, 3H, mesityl CH₃), 2.62 (s, 3H, mesityl CH₃), 2.69 (s, 3H, mesityl CH₃), 3.26 (m, 1H, CH-CH₃), 3.47-3.58 (m, 1H, carbene H⁴), 3.80-4.03 (m, 3H, carbene H⁴H⁵), 4.26 (m, 1H, CH-CH₃), 4.76 (m, 1H, CH-CH₃), 6.03 (s, 1H, mesityl CH), 6.32 (s, 1H, indenylidene H²), 6.51 (s, 1H, mesityl CH), 7.02 (s, 1H, mesityl CH), 7.04 (s, 1H, mesityl CH), 7.15 (d, ³J_{HH} = 7.2 Hz, 1H, indenylidene H⁴), 7.29-7.37 (m, 2H, indenylidene H⁵ and H⁶), 7.37-7.42 (m, 2H, indenylidene H¹⁰), 7.43-7.49 (m, 1H, indenylidene H¹¹), 7.67 (d, ³J_{HH} = 7.2 Hz, 2H, indenylidene H⁹), 8.93 (d, ³J_{HH} = 7.1 Hz, 1H, indenylidene H⁷). ¹³C-{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃ 100.6 MHz) δ (ppm) = 17.9 (s, mesityl CH₃), 18.9 (s, mesityl CH₃), 19.1 (s, mesityl CH₃), 20.5 (s, mesityl CH₃), 20.7 (s, mesityl CH₃), 21.2 (s, mesityl CH₃), 24.1 (s, CH-CH₃), 24.2 (s, CH-CH₃), 24.35 (s, CH-CH₃), 24.4 (s, CH-CH₃), 24.5 (s, CH-CH₃), 24.6 (s, CH-CH₃), 51.6 (s, carbene C⁴H), 51.8 (s, carbene C⁵H), 68.8 (d, ²J_{CP} = 11.4 Hz, CH-CH₃), 69.9 (d, ²J_{CP} = 9.3 Hz, CH-CH₃), 72.6 (bs, CH-CH₃), 117.3 (s, indenylidene C⁴H), 127.5 (s, indenylidene C⁹H), 128.6 (s, indenylidene C¹¹H), 129.1 (s, indenylidene C¹⁰H), 129.4 (s, indenylidene C⁶H), 129.6 (s, indenylidene C⁵H), 129.7 (s, mesityl CH), 130.1 (s, mesityl CH), 130.4 (s, mesityl CH), 130.5 (s, indenylidene C⁷H), 134.5 (s, C^{IV}), 135.3 (s, C^{IV}), 136.3 (s, C^{IV}), 136.8 (s, C^{IV}), 137.0 (s, C^{IV}), 138.1 (bs, 2 C^{IV}), 138.7 (s, C^{IV}), 139.0 (s, C^{IV}), 139.8 (d, ³J_{CP} = 14.6 Hz, indenylidene C²), 140.2 (s, C^{IV}), 141.6 (m, indenylidene C^{7a}), 142.9 (s, C^{IV}), 209.1 (d, ²J_{CP} = 16.0 Hz, carbene C²), 289.6 (d, ²J_{CP} = 25.5 Hz, indenylidene C¹). ³¹P-{¹H} NMR (CD₂Cl₂, 162 MHz) δ (ppm) = 131.4 (d, ²J_{PF} = 286 Hz, P(OⁱPr)₃). ¹⁹F-{¹H} NMR (CD₂Cl₂, 282.2 MHz) δ (ppm) = -217.2 (d, ²J_{PF} = 286 Hz, F). Elem. anal.: Calcd. for C₄₅H₅₇ClF₂N₃O₃PRu: C, 62.81; H, 6.68; N, 3.26. Found: C, 62.72; H, 6.59; N, 3.16.

[RuF₂(Ind)(SIMes){P(OⁱPr)₃}], Caz-1_{F2}. Under inert atmosphere, AgF (104 mg, 0.82 mmol) was added to a solution of *cis*-Caz-1 (298 mg, 0.34 mmol) in dichloromethane (10 mL).²⁵ The reaction mixture was stirred for 24 h at room temperature in the absence of light. The solution was filtered, the solvent was removed *in vacuo* leading to the product as a pale-brown solid in a quantitative yield (280 mg, 98%). ¹H NMR (CD₂Cl₂, 400 MHz): δ (ppm) = 0.5-1.5 (m, 18H, CH-CH₃), 1.66 (s, 3H, mesityl CH₃), 1.83 (s, 3H, mesityl CH₃), 2.37 (s, 3H, mesityl CH₃), 2.40 (s, 3H, mesityl CH₃), 2.65 (s, 3H, mesityl CH₃), 2.68 (s, 3H, mesityl CH₃), 3.46-3.58 (m, 1H, carbene H⁴), 3.80-4.00 (m, 3H, carbene H⁴H⁵), 6.01 (s, 1H, mesityl CH), 6.38 (s, 1H, indenylidene H²), 6.43 (s, mesityl CH), 7.08 (s, 1H, mesityl CH), 7.09 (s, 1H, mesityl CH), 7.16 (d, ³J_{HH} = 7.1 Hz, 1H, indenylidene H⁴), 7.30 (dd, ³J_{HH} = 7.1 Hz, ³J_{HH} = 7.4 Hz, 2H, indenylidene H⁵), 7.35 (dd, ³J_{HH} = 7.1 Hz, ³J_{HH} = 7.4 Hz, 2H, indenylidene H⁶), 7.40 (dd, ³J_{HH} = 7.5 Hz, ³J_{HH} = 7.5 Hz, 2H, indenylidene H¹⁰), 7.47 (dd, ³J_{HH} = 7.2 Hz, ³J_{HH} = 7.4 Hz, 1H indenylidene H¹¹), 7.67 (d, ³J_{HH} = 7.5 Hz, 2H, indenylidene H⁹), 9.02 (d, ³J_{HH} = 7.0 Hz, 1H, indenylidene H⁷). The isopropyl protons were observed clearly at lower temperature: ¹H NMR (CD₂Cl₂, 400 MHz, 223 K): δ (ppm) = 3.16 (m, 1H, CH-CH₃), 3.50 (m, 1H, CH-CH₃), 4.64 (m, 1H, CH-CH₃). ¹³C-{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃ 100.6 MHz,) δ (ppm) = 17.5 (s, mesityl CH₃), 18.1 (s, mesityl CH₃), 18.6 (s, mesityl CH₃), 20.4 (s, mesityl CH₃), 20.8 (s, mesityl CH₃), 21.2 (s, mesityl CH₃), 23.6-24.7 (bs, 6 CH-CH₃), 51.4 (s, carbene C⁴H), 51.8 (s, carbene C⁵H), 117.0 (s, indenylidene C⁴H), 127.3 (s, indenylidene C⁹H), 128.3 (s, indenylidene C¹¹H), 129.0 (s, indenylidene C¹⁰H), 129.1 (s, indenylidene C⁶H), 129.3 (s, indenylidene C⁵H), 129.5 (s, mesityl CH), 130.1 (s, mesityl CH), 130.2 (s, mesityl CH), 130.3 (s, indenylidene C⁷H), 135.1 (s, C^{IV}), 135.7 (s, C^{IV}), 136.5 (s, C^{IV}), 136.7 (s, C^{IV}), 137.1 (s, C^{IV}), 137.9 (bs, 2 C^{IV}), 139.0 (s, C^{IV}), 139.1 (s, C^{IV}), 140.2 (d, ³J_{CP} = 14.3 Hz, indenylidene C²), 140.4 (s, C^{IV}), 141.3 (m, indenylidene C^{7a}), 142.1 (s, C^{IV}). Characteristic peaks were observed at lower temperature (more complicated spectrum due to limited rotation of the ligands): ¹³C-{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃ 100.6 MHz, 223K) δ (ppm) = 68.4 (d, ²J_{CP} = 10.2 Hz, CH-CH₃), 69.4 (d, ²J_{CP} = 7.4 Hz, CH-CH₃), 72.0 (bs, ²J_{CP} = 3.6 Hz, CH-CH₃), 211.1 (m, carbene C²), 287.0 (m, indenylidene C¹). ³¹P-{¹H} NMR (CD₂Cl₂, 162 MHz) δ (ppm) = 131.5 (d, ²J_{PF} = 286 Hz, P(OⁱPr)₃). ¹⁹F-{¹H} NMR (CD₂Cl₂, 376.3 MHz) δ (ppm) = -237.2 (br.s, F_{trans}NHC), -217.7 (d, ²J_{PF} = 286 Hz, F_{trans}Phosphite). Elem. anal.: Calcd. for C₄₅H₅₇F₂N₃O₃PRu: C, 64.04; H, 6.81; N, 3.32. Found: C, 64.03; H, 6.89; N, 3.39.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Procedures for catalysis, NMR spectra of complexes and catalysis products, procedures and NMR spectra for fluoride exchange reactions and isomerization study, crystallographic data and structure refinement for complexes **Caz-1_F** and **Caz-1_{F2}**, computational details. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>. Crystallographic data for complexes **Caz-1_F** and **Caz-1_{F2}** in CIF format can also be obtained free of charge from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data_request/cif (CCDC/911524-911525)

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors gratefully acknowledge the EC through the 7th framework program (grant CP-FP 211468-2 EUMET), the Royal Society (University Research Fellowship to CSJC) for financial support and Unicore for the gift of *cis-Caz-1*.

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- (15) CCDC-911524 contains the supporting crystallographic data for **Caz-1F**. These data can be obtained free of charge from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data_request/cif.
- (16) CCDC-911525 contains the supporting crystallographic data for **Caz-1F₂**. These data can be obtained free of charge from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data_request/cif.
- (17) See Supporting Information section 5 page S12.
- (18) See Supporting Information section 5.2 page S13.
- (19) See computational details in the Supporting Information.
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The reaction of *cis*-**Caz-1** with silver fluoride affords the first Ru-F pre-catalysts for olefin metathesis reactions. Catalytic studies with Ru-F species were performed and highlight the high catalytic efficacy of the mono-fluorinated pre-catalyst (**Caz-1_F**). DFT calculations help to rationalize the observed reactivity and stability of the novel complexes.

