Beryllium Science & Technology Association

Brussels, 10 February 2023

BeST contribution to call for evidence for an EU space strategy for security and defence

Introduction

Given the growing strategic importance of space, EU policymakers have called for an EU space strategy for security and defence. Consequently, the European Commission has launched a call for evidence.

BeST's comments

Considering the importance of the topic, BeST submits the following comments in reference to the potential measure addressing dependencies of the EU space sector on critical technologies, raw materials and supply chains:

- **Access and supply to raw materials**

The EU space strategy for security and defence should consider policy actions to secure the access and supply of the raw materials of relevance for the space sector. These materials are used in the sector due to their unmatched and unique combination of properties which allow them to adapt to the specific conditions in space. This means that these materials cannot be replaced. Beryllium, for example, is used due to its lightness, unmatched stiffness, low thermal expansion, which makes it resistant to changing shape in extreme temperatures, excellent optical reflectivity and high thermal conductivity. Securing the supply of these materials is therefore of fundamental importance for the EU's space strategy for security and defence.

- **Competing applications and sectors**

The critical and strategic materials used in the space sector are also often used in a wide range of competing applications and sectors. As the EU does not have sufficient and secure supply of these materials, the different industrial sectors are often competing to secure the needed supply of the materials. This should be acknowledged and considered by policymakers when developing the EU's strategy. Beryllium, for example, has many defence and aerospace applications, and therefore is considered a strategic material of vital importance for the sector. The production of beryllium for the defence, space and military sectors is directly connected to the commercial applications of beryllium. Indeed, the revenues of the latter allow to offset the costs associated with the former. Consequently, policy actions curtailing the use of beryllium in commercial actions will potentially jeopardise the availability of the material for the defence sector.

Conclusions

BeST encourages EU policymakers to coordinate and develop regulatory and non-regulatory frameworks able to secure the raw materials necessary for all relevant industrial sectors, including the space sector, to allow the EU to remain competitive at international level and maintain as well as improve EU security and defence.

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About BeST

The Beryllium Science and Technology Association (BeST) represents the manufacturers, suppliers and users of beryllium metal, beryllium containing alloys and beryllium oxide ceramics in the EU market. BeST has the objective of promoting sound policies, regulations, science and actions related to the safe use of beryllium and to serve as an expert resource for the international community on the benefits and criticality of beryllium applications. It is also the objective of BeST to promote good practices in the workplace to protect workers handling beryllium containing materials.

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