

BeST's comments on Safe and Sustainable by Design

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 use of beryllium and to serve as an expert resource for the international community on the benefits and criticality of beryllium applications.

Introduction

The safe and sustainable by design (SSbD) criteria for chemicals and materials aims to assess the overall sustainability of the use of a particular chemical/material in specific applications and contribute to achieving the objectives included in the EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability (CSS).

Comments

Considering the discussions during the stakeholder workshop held on 22 March 2022 and the documents disclosed to stakeholders on the SSbD criteria, BeST submits the following key messages:

- **Risk-based approach must be preferred** – The cut-off approach where substances classified as hazardous are automatically considered as a non-SSbD materials is overly simplistic and counterproductive. Indeed, hazard classifications under the CLP do not reflect the concrete occurrence of risks associated with the use of a material and do not allow the identification of differing potential health outcomes for different forms of the same basic substance, such as the differences in health risks between soluble and insoluble forms. A risk-based approach should therefore be preferred, confirming that a substance proven to be safe is also by default a SSbD-material.
- **Avoiding unintended consequences** – The framework, as currently developed, would result in unnecessary substitution and unintended consequences. Indeed, over the years, industry has implemented effective and efficient risk management measures allowing the safe use of hazardous materials in strategic and commercial applications. By introducing the cut-off criteria based on hazard alone, the current framework will negatively impact the status of a material safely used in applications.
- **Feasibility of the framework** –The combination of chemical/material processing assessment, human health and environment assessment and environmental sustainability life-cycle assessment is overly ambitious and will be difficult and costly to implement, especially for SMEs. A more feasible and realistic framework, streamlining resources and considering parallel regulatory actions, i.e. CLP Review, Essential Use Concept, Safe Use Concept, etc., should therefore be considered.

Conclusions

BeST stresses, once again, the need for a coherent and balanced approach. Several regulatory actions stemming from the CSS, including the essential use concept, are currently being developed in parallel and it is of utmost importance that these are developed in coordination, coupled with proper impact assessments to determine benefits and drawbacks.

These regulatory actions must be attentive to the needs of EU industry, consumers and society to guarantee industry and innovation in the EU, resilient EU supply chains, societal wellbeing and achievement of the overall objectives of the EU's Green Deal.