Oxidation and luminescence quenching of europium doped BaMgAl$_{10}$O$_{17}$ probed by HERFD-XANES

Lucia Amidani$^1$, K. Korthout$^2$, J. J. Joos$^2$, M. van der Linden$^{1,3}$, H. F. Sijbom$^2$, A. Meijerink$^4$, D. Poelman$^2$, P. F. Smet$^2$, P. Glatzel$^1$

$^1$European Synchrotron Radiation Facility, 38043 Grenoble, France
$^2$Lumilab, Department of Solid State Sciences, Ghent University, Belgium
$^3$Inorganic Chemistry and Catalysis, Debye Institute for Nanomaterials Science, Utrecht University, The Netherlands
$^4$Condensed Matter and Interfaces, Debye Institute for Nanomaterials Science, Utrecht University, The Netherlands

lucia.amidani@esrf.fr

Eu-doped BaMgAl$_{10}$O$_{17}$ (BAM) is an excellent inorganic phosphor. Its luminescence efficiency is however severely degraded during prolonged vacuum-ultraviolet (VUV) excitation. Furthermore, the degradation process at the atomic level is not yet fully understood. To shed light on this process, we simultaneously employed X-rays as an equivalent but accelerated source of damage, as an excitation source of luminescence and as an element-selective probe of both dopants and host-lattice chemical species.

We investigated commercial samples of Eu doped and Mn, Eu co-doped BAM. We measured High-Energy Resolution Fluorescence Detected (HERFD)-XANES at Eu and Ba L$_3$-edges and at Mn K-edge. The X-ray induced radio-luminescence (RL) and the HERFD-XANES spectra were simultaneously acquired while progressive damage was induced.

The evolution of the RL spectra confirms that the degradation induced by X-rays and by VUV irradiation are equivalent. The HERFD-XANES reveals that Ba and Mn are stable under the X-ray beam, while Eu$^{2+}$ undergoes a rapid oxidation to Eu$^{3+}$. We found that the correlation between Eu oxidation and RL intensity decay is non-linear and that a significant fraction of Eu$^{2+}$ resists to irradiation, implying that an additional mechanism is responsible for the quenching of the remaining Eu$^{2+}$. A kinetic Monte Carlo simulation indicates that the creation of defects acting as killer centers in the vicinity of a photo-oxidized Eu$^{3+}$ can reproduce the dynamics observed on RL and Eu oxidation.

By simultaneously degrading and probing Eu-doped BAM we found [1] that the degradation process is due to oxidation of the luminescence impurities combined with the formation of killer centers that quench the luminescence of the remaining Eu$^{2+}$.