

*Electronic Supplementary Information*

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## Evaluation of electron or charge transfer processes between chromenylium-based fluorophores and protonated-deprotonated aniline

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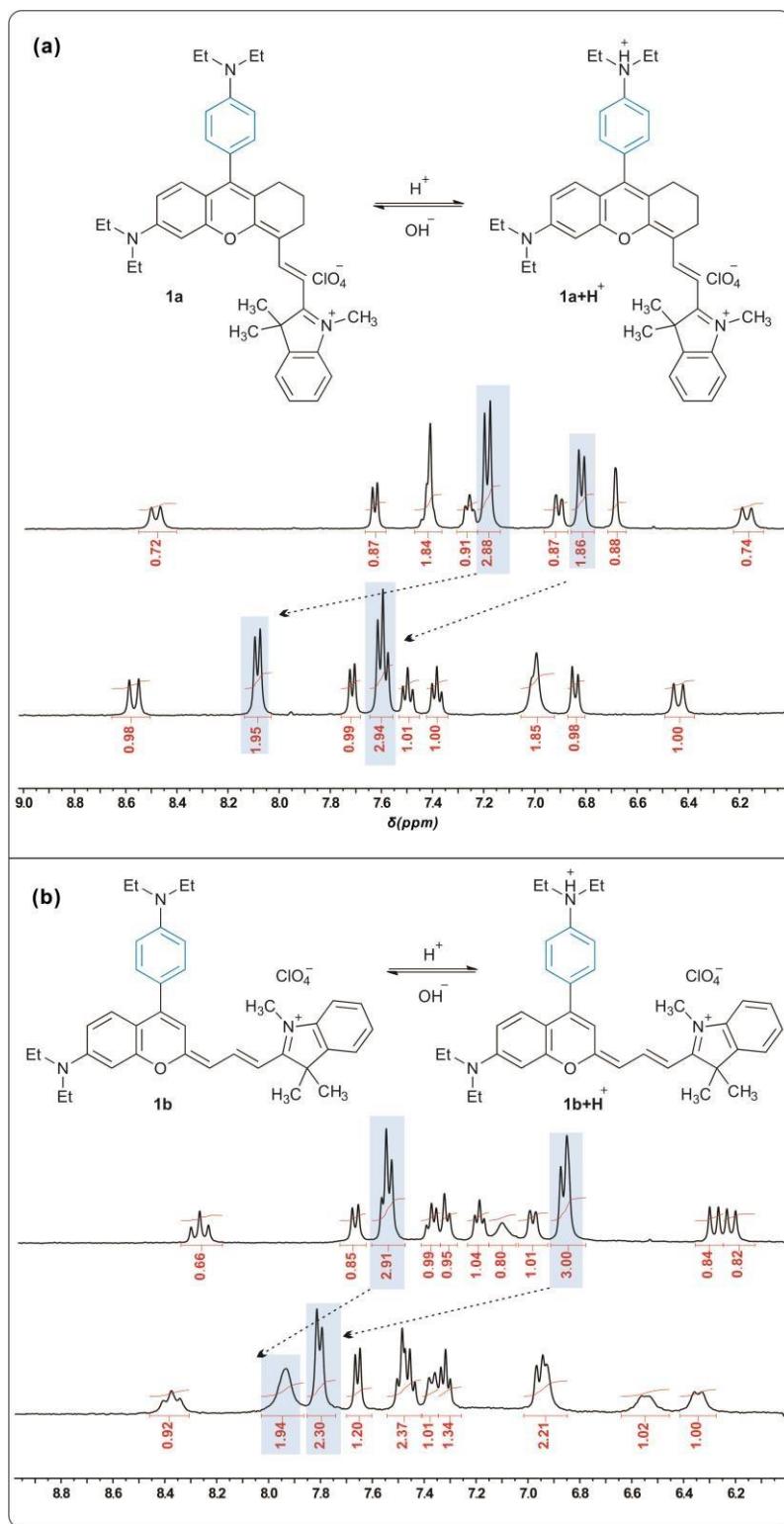
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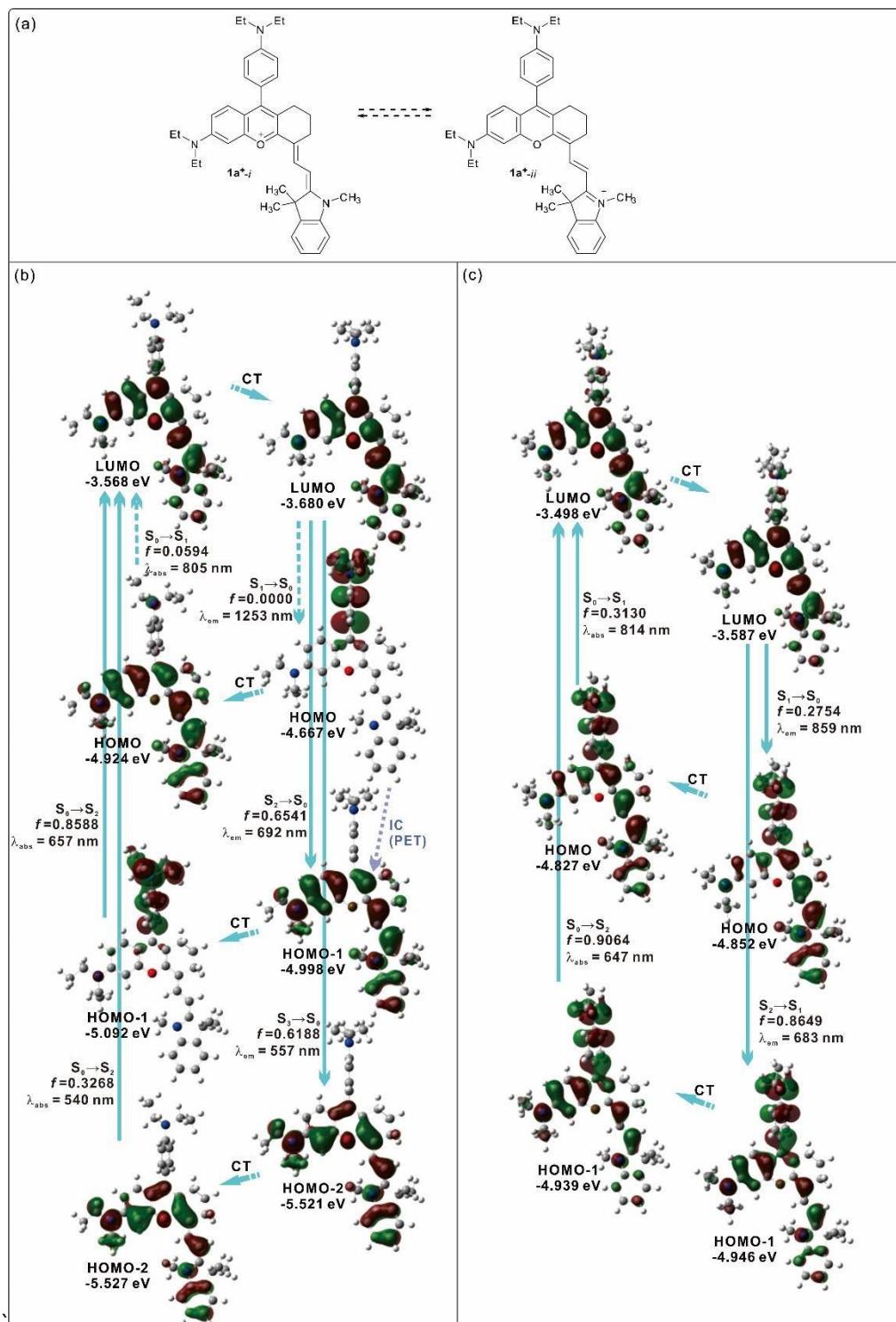
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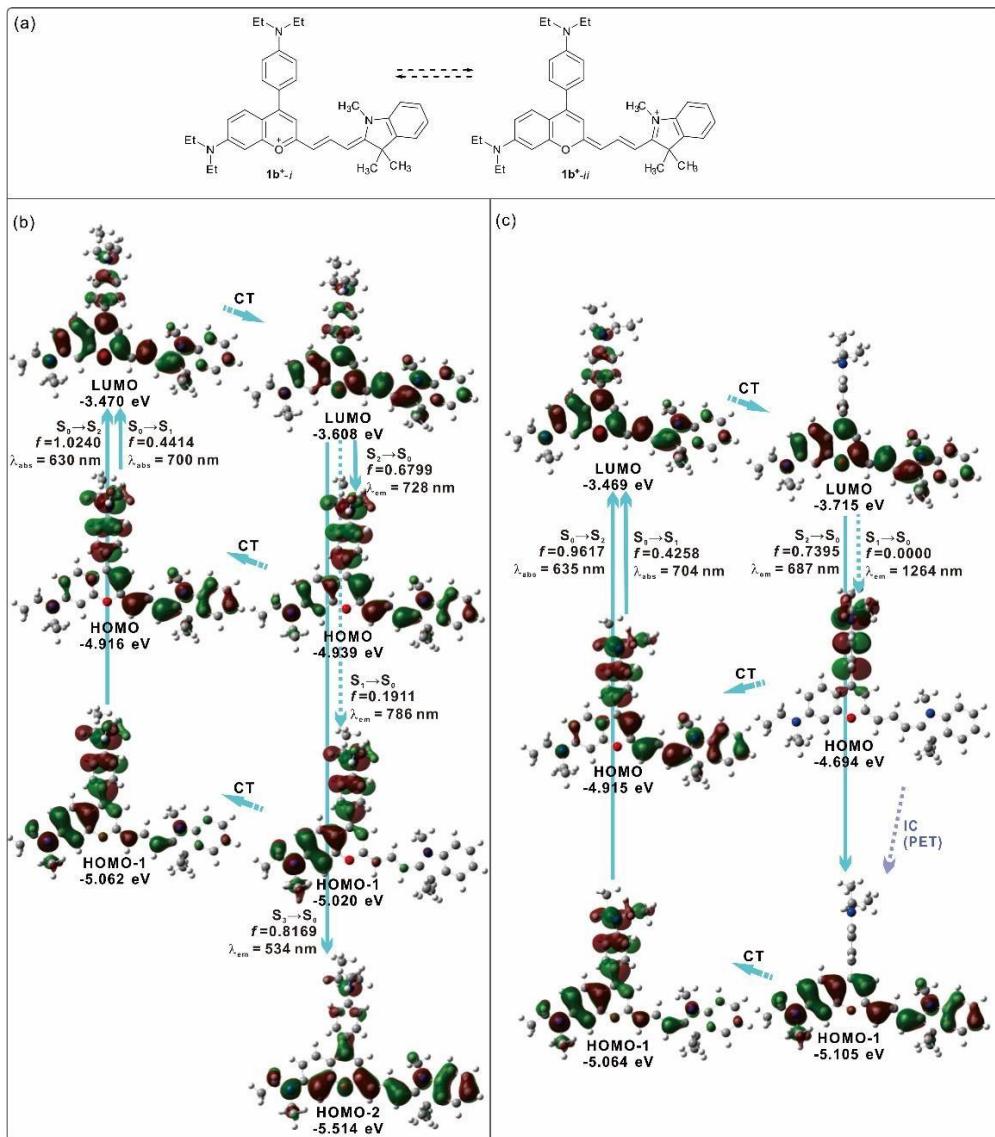
## 1. Figures



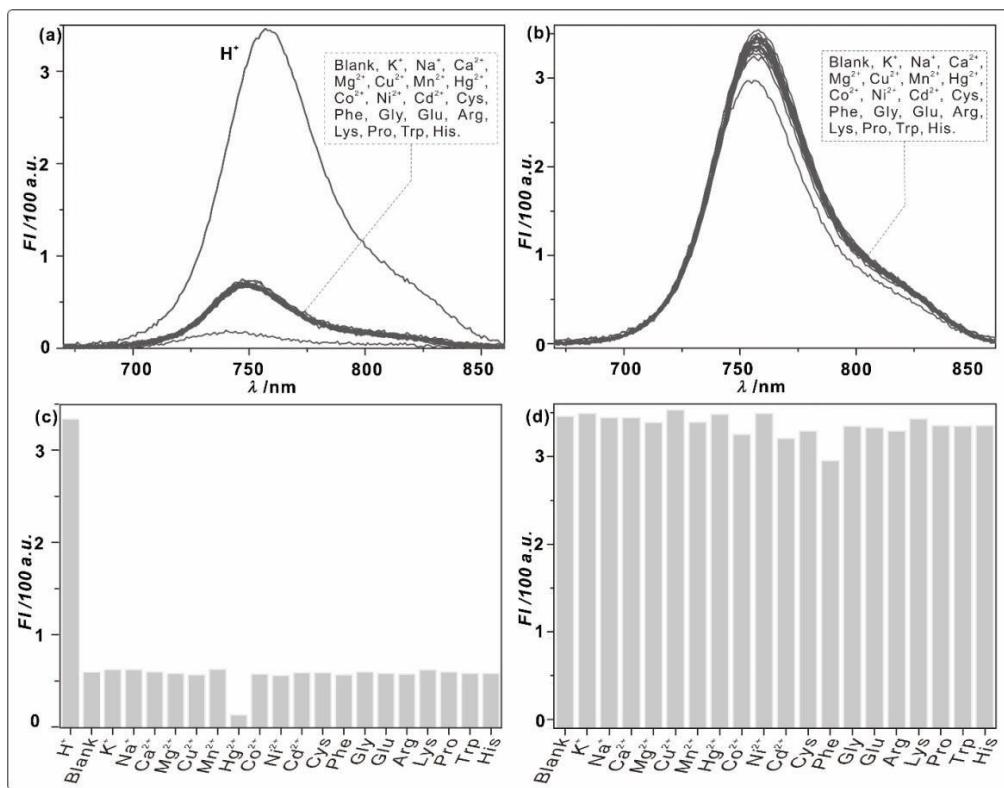
**Fig. S1**  $^1\text{H}$  NMR of dyes **1a-b** in  $\text{DMSO}-d_6$  (top) and the acidic condition (bottom). (a) dye **1a**; (b) dye **1b**.



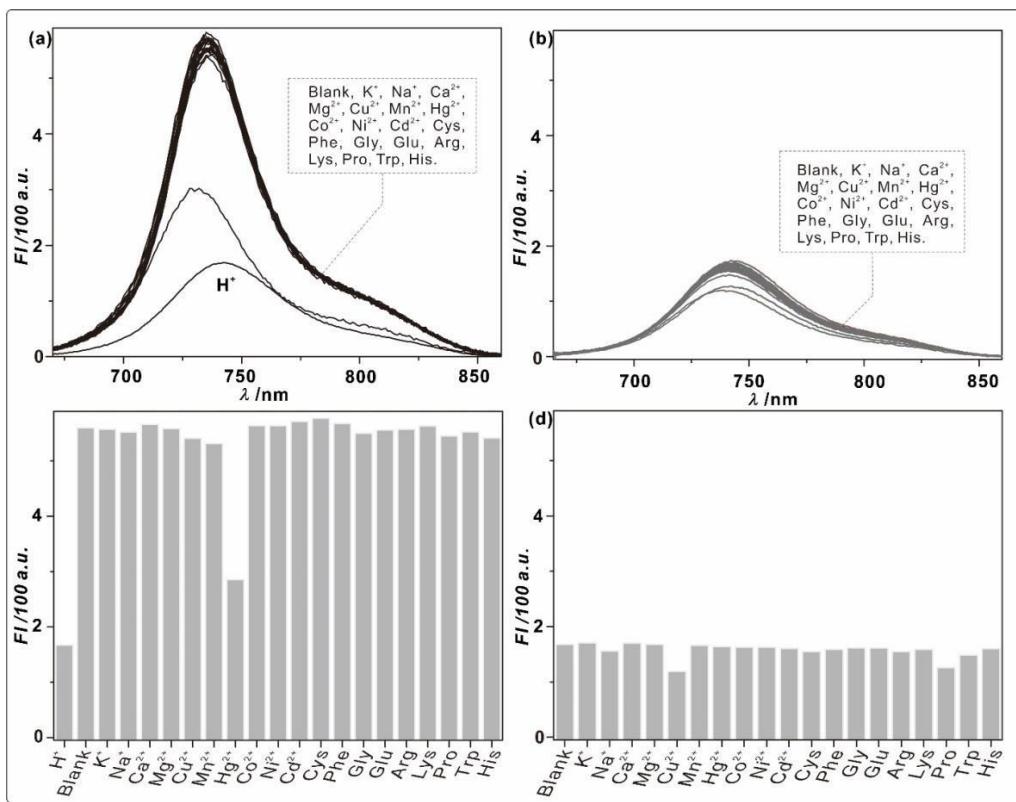
**Fig. S2** The resonance equilibrium of  $1a^+$  (a) and frontier molecular orbitals (FMOs) involved in the vertical excitation and emission of dyes  $1a^{+‐i}$  (b) and  $1a^{+‐ii}$  (c). CT stands for conformation transformation. Excitation and radiative processes are represented by solid lines and the nonradiative processes by dotted lines. For details please refer to Tables S2 and S3.



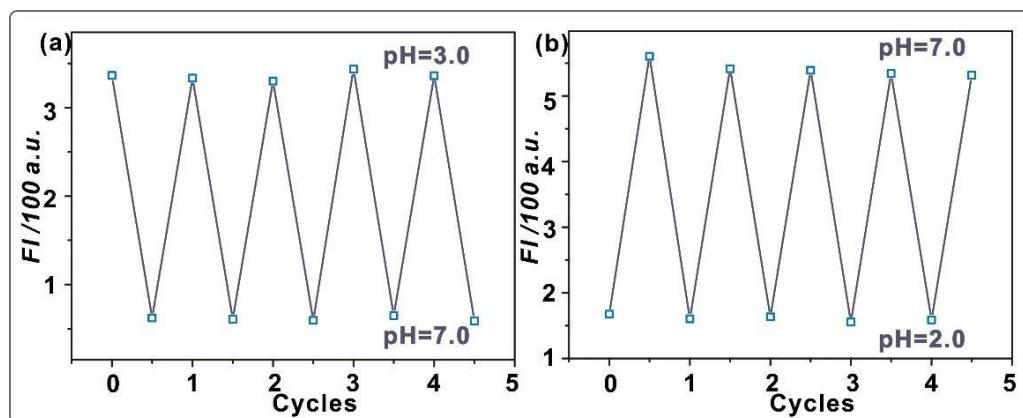
**Fig. S3** The resonance equilibrium of **1b<sup>+</sup>** (a) and frontier molecular orbitals (FMOs) involved in the vertical excitation and emission of dyes **1b<sup>+</sup>-i** (b) and **1b<sup>+</sup>-ii** (c). CT stands for conformation transformation. Excitation and radiative processes are represented by solid lines and the nonradiative processes by dotted lines. For details please refer to Tables S2 and S3.



**Fig. S4** Fluorescence responses of dye **1a** (10  $\mu$ M) to different analytes, K<sup>+</sup> (100 mM), Na<sup>+</sup> (100 mM), Ca<sup>2+</sup> (0.5 mM), Mg<sup>2+</sup> (0.5 mM), Cd<sup>2+</sup> (0.3 mM), Cu<sup>2+</sup> (0.3 mM), Co<sup>2+</sup> (0.3 mM), Hg<sup>2+</sup> (0.3 mM), Mn<sup>2+</sup> (0.3 mM), Ni<sup>2+</sup> (0.3 mM), Cys (0.1 mM), Phe (0.1 mM), Gly (0.1 mM), Glu (0.1 mM), Arg (0.1 mM), Lys (0.1 mM), Pro (0.1 mM), Try (0.1 mM) and His (0.1 mM) were included: (a, c) tested in Britton-Robinson Buffer (pH = 7.0); (b, d) tested in Britton-Robinson Buffer (pH = 3.0).



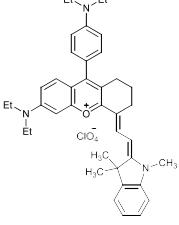
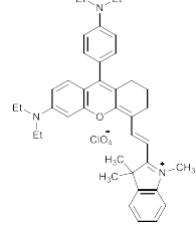
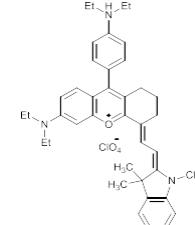
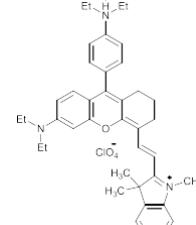
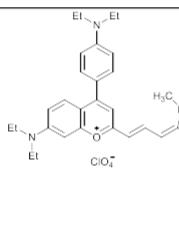
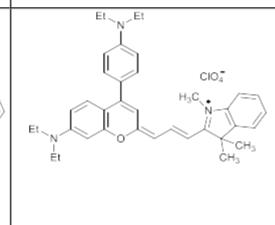
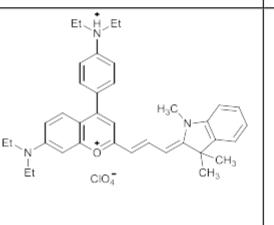
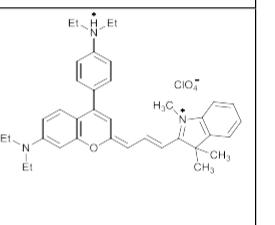
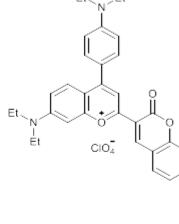
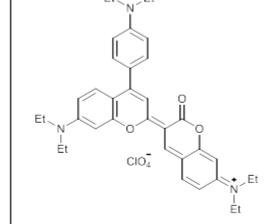
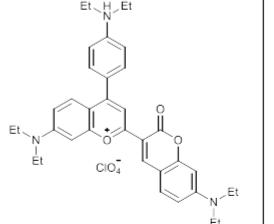
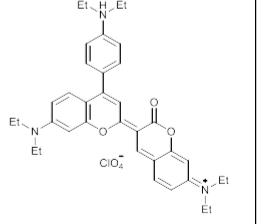
**Fig. S5** Fluorescence responses of dye **1b** (10  $\mu\text{M}$ ) to different analytes,  $\text{K}^+$  (100 mM),  $\text{Na}^+$  (100 mM),  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  (0.5 mM),  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$  (0.5 mM),  $\text{Cd}^{2+}$  (0.3 mM),  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  (0.3 mM),  $\text{Co}^{2+}$  (0.3 mM),  $\text{Hg}^{2+}$  (0.3 mM),  $\text{Mn}^{2+}$  (0.3 mM),  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  (0.3 mM), Cys (0.1 mM), Phe (0.1 mM), Gly (0.1 mM), Glu (0.1 mM), Arg (0.1 mM), Lys (0.1 mM), Pro (0.1 mM), Try (0.1 mM) and His (0.1 mM) were included: (a, c) tested in Britton-Robinson Buffer (pH = 7.0); (b, d) tested in Britton-Robinson Buffer (pH = 2.0).



**Fig. S6** The reversible optical responses of dyes **1a-b** at different pH conditions: (a) dye **1a**; (b) dye **1b**.

## 2. Tables

**Table S1.** Stability of different conjugated structures of dyes **1a<sup>+</sup>-c<sup>+</sup>** and their protonated forms.

Structures				
Dye No.	<b>1a<sup>+</sup>-i</b>	<b>1a<sup>+</sup>-ii</b>	<b>1a<sup>+</sup>-i + H<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>1a<sup>+</sup>-ii + H<sup>+</sup></b>
HF(hartree)	-1793.0302226	-1793.0418659 <b>stable</b>	-1793.4811741 <b>stable</b>	-1793.4792696
Structures				
Dye No.	<b>1b<sup>+</sup>-i</b>	<b>1b<sup>+</sup>-ii</b>	<b>1b<sup>+</sup>-i + H<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>1b<sup>+</sup>-ii + H<sup>+</sup></b>
HF(hartree)	-1676.268848	-1676.2689758 <b>stable</b>	-1676.7042854 <b>stable</b>	-1676.7042852 <b>stable</b>
Structures				
Dye No.	<b>1c<sup>+</sup>-i</b>	<b>1c<sup>+</sup>-ii</b>	<b>1c<sup>+</sup>-i + H<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>1c<sup>+</sup>-ii + H<sup>+</sup></b>
HF(hartree)	-1787.4815541 <b>stable</b>	-1787.4815541 <b>stable</b>	-1787.9135717 <b>stable</b>	-1787.9135717 <b>stable</b>

**Table S2** Selected parameters for the vertical excitation (UV-vis absorptions) of dyes **1a<sup>+</sup>-c<sup>+</sup>** and **1c<sup>+</sup>+H<sup>+</sup>** based on the optimized ground state geometries in water.

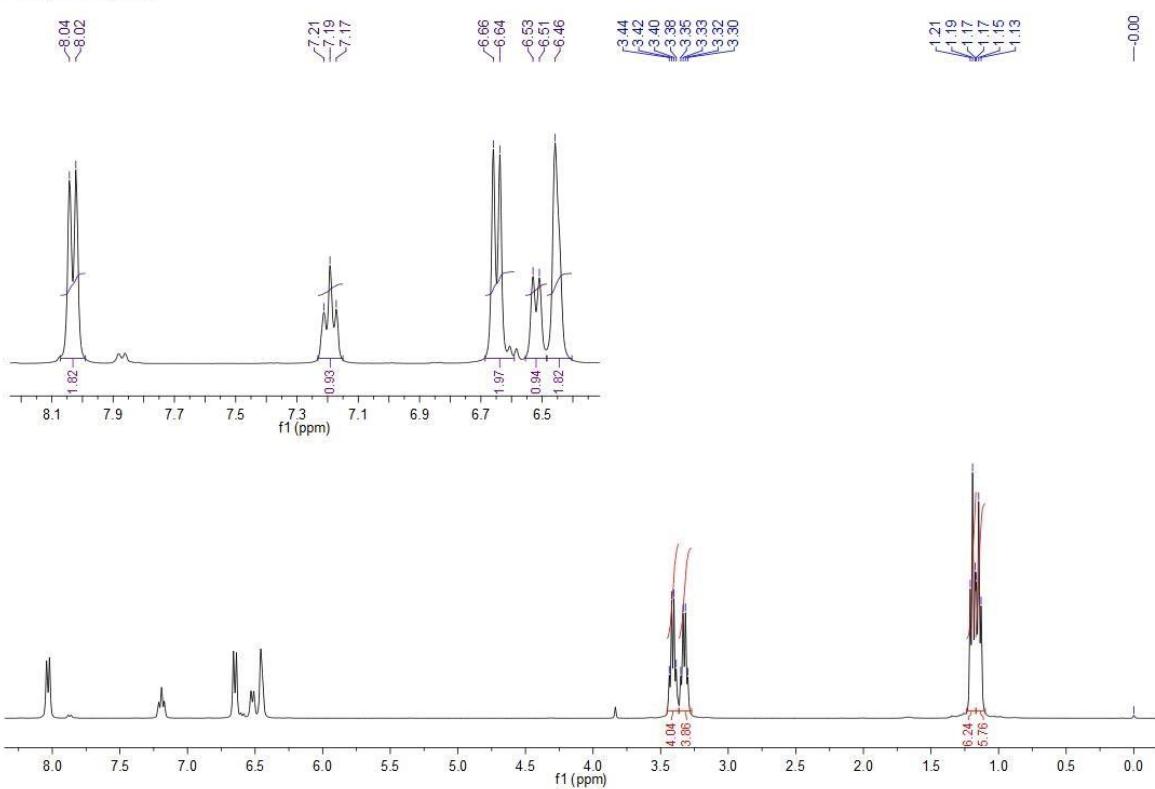
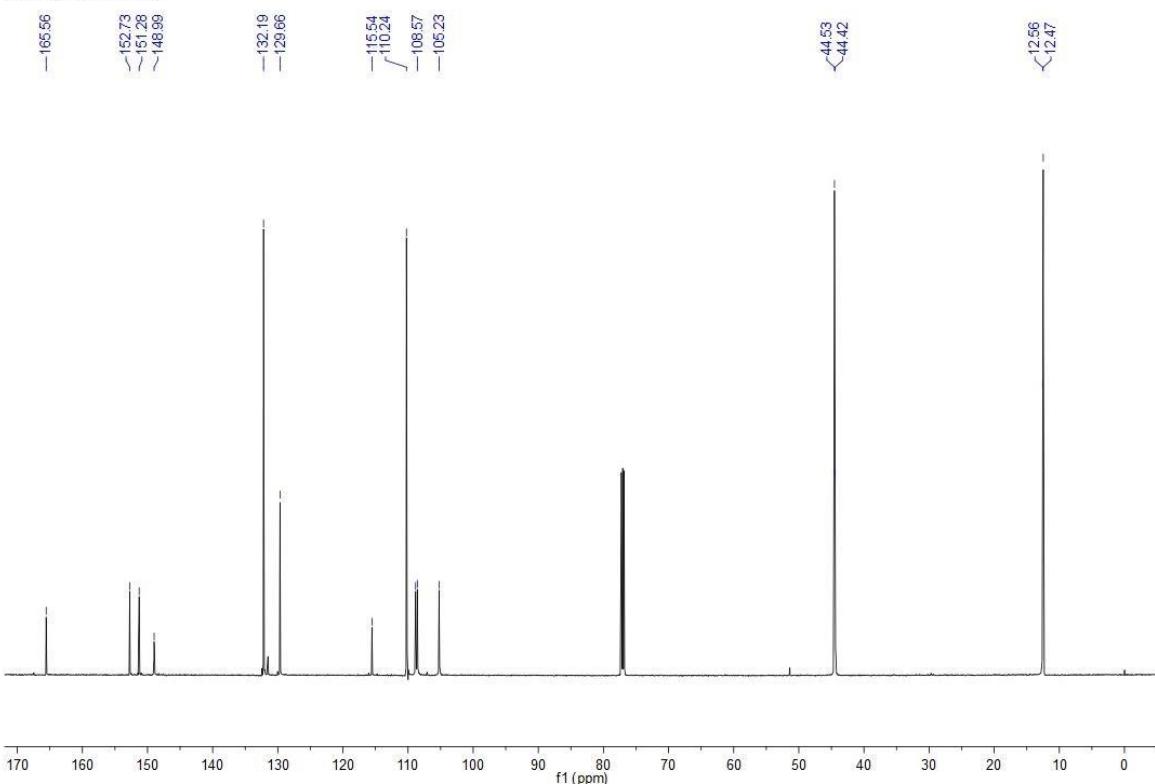
dyes	Electronic transitions	Excitation energy		$\lambda_{\text{exp.}}/\text{nm}$	$f^a$	Composition <sup>b</sup>	CI <sup>c</sup>
		E/eV	$\lambda/\text{nm}$				
<b>1a<sup>+-i</sup></b>	$S_0 \rightarrow S_1$	1.54	805	719	0.0594	H-1→L	0.68998
						H→L	-0.15369
		1.89	657			H-2→L	0.17744
	$S_0 \rightarrow S_2$				0.8588	H-1→L	0.15168
						H→L	0.66923
		2.30	540			H-2→L	0.64913
	$S_0 \rightarrow S_3$				0.3268	H→L	-0.17332
						H→L+1	-0.21105
<b>1a<sup>+-ii</sup></b>	$S_0 \rightarrow S_1$	1.52	814	719	0.3130	H-1→L	0.47843
						H→L	0.52001
		1.92	647		0.9064	H-2→L	-0.13695
	$S_0 \rightarrow S_2$					H-1→L	0.51057
						H→L	-0.47092
		2.34	530		0.1881	H-2→L	0.65193
						H-1→L+1	0.10090
						H→L+1	-0.21809
<b>1b<sup>+-i</sup></b>	$S_0 \rightarrow S_1$	1.77	700	702	0.4414	H-1→L	-0.44875
						H→L	0.54037
		1.97	630		1.0240	H-2→L	0.15884
	$S_0 \rightarrow S_2$					H-1→L	0.51829
						H→L	0.44391
		2.35	527		0.1316	H-2→L	0.62009
						H→L+1	-0.30807
<b>1b<sup>+-ii</sup></b>	$S_0 \rightarrow S_1$	1.76	704	702	0.4258	H-1→L	0.44039
						H→L	0.54760
		1.95	635		0.9617	H-2→L	0.16250
	$S_0 \rightarrow S_2$					H-1→L	0.52590
						H→L	-0.43315
		2.34	529		0.1490	H-2→L	0.62225
						H→L+1	0.29875
<b>1c<sup>+-i, 1c<sup>+-ii</sup></sup></b>	$S_0 \rightarrow S_1$	1.76	703		0.5880	H-1→L	-0.14753
						H→L	0.67363
	$S_0 \rightarrow S_2$	1.89	656	583	0.9505	H-1→L	0.13549
						H→L	0.67754
<b>1c<sup>+-i + H<sup>+</sup></sup></b>	$S_0 \rightarrow S_1$	1.84	674	668	0.9585	H-1→L	0.16885
						H→L	0.69856
	$S_0 \rightarrow S_2$	2.11	588		0.1557	H-1→L	0.64355
						H→L	-0.27374

<sup>a</sup>Oscillator strength. <sup>b</sup>H stands for HOMO and L stands for LUMO. <sup>c</sup>Coefficient of the wave function for each excitations.

**Table S3** Selected parameters for emission related of dyes **1a<sup>+</sup>-c<sup>+</sup>** and **1c<sup>+</sup>+H<sup>+</sup>** based on the optimized lowest singlet excited state geometries in water.

dyes	Electronic transitions	Excitation energy E/eV      λ/nm		λ <sub>exp.</sub> /nm	f <sup>a</sup>	Composition <sup>b</sup>	Cl <sup>c</sup>	
<b>1a<sup>+</sup>-i</b>	S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>1</sub>	0.99	1253		0.0001	H→L	0.70704	
	S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>2</sub>	1.79	692	749	0.6541	H-2→L	0.24650	
						H-1→L	0.66110	
<b>1a<sup>+</sup>-ii</b>	S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>3</sub>	2.22	557		0.6188	H-2→L	0.63765	
						H-1→L	-0.25265	
<b>1a<sup>+</sup>-ii</b>	S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>1</sub>	1.44	859		0.2754	H-1→L	0.48779	
						H→L	0.51099	
<b>1b<sup>+</sup>-i</b>	S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>2</sub>	1.82	683	749	0.8649	H-1→L	0.50836	
						H→L	-0.48692	
<b>1b<sup>+</sup>-i</b>	S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>1</sub>	1.58	786		0.1911	H-1→L	0.64202	
						H→L	-0.28502	
	S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>2</sub>	1.70	728	736	0.6799	H-2→L	-0.21337	
<b>1b<sup>+</sup>-ii</b>						H-1→L	0.26429	
						H→L	0.61837	
	S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>3</sub>	2.32	534		0.8169	H-2→L	0.62598	
<b>1c<sup>+</sup>-i, 1c<sup>+</sup>-ii</b>						H→L	0.19000	
						H→L+1	0.25150	
	S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>1</sub>	0.98	1264		0.0000	H→L	0.70710	
<b>1c<sup>+</sup>-ii + H<sup>+</sup></b>	S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>2</sub>	1.80	687	736	0.7395	H-2→L	0.27270	
						H-1→L	0.64718	
<b>1c<sup>+</sup>-i + H<sup>+</sup></b>	S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>1</sub>	0.69	1804		0.0000	H→L	0.70710	
	S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>2</sub>	1.80	689	691	0.7900	H-2→L	0.19666	
<b>1c<sup>+</sup>-ii + H<sup>+</sup></b>						H-1→L	0.67687	
	S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>1</sub>	0.76	1641		0.0000	H→L	0.70709	
<b>1c<sup>+</sup>-ii + H<sup>+</sup></b>	S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>2</sub>	1.96	631	719	0.0078	H-2→L	0.69752	
						H-1→L	0.11469	
	S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>3</sub>	2.02	615		0.3000	H-2→L	-0.11572	
<b>1c<sup>+</sup>-i + H<sup>+</sup></b>						H-1→L	0.68645	
						S <sub>0</sub> →S <sub>8</sub>	0.4055	
							H→L+1	0.57753
							H→L+2	0.24345
<b>1c<sup>+</sup>-ii + H<sup>+</sup></b>							H→L+3	0.13786
							H→L+4	0.25217

<sup>a</sup>Oscillator strength. <sup>b</sup>H stands for HOMO and L stands for LUMO. <sup>c</sup>Coefficient of the wave function for each excitations.

**4. Appendix**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)**Fig. S7** <sup>1</sup>H NMR of **3**.<sup>13</sup>C NMR (151 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)**Fig. S8** <sup>13</sup>C NMR of **3**.

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Display Report

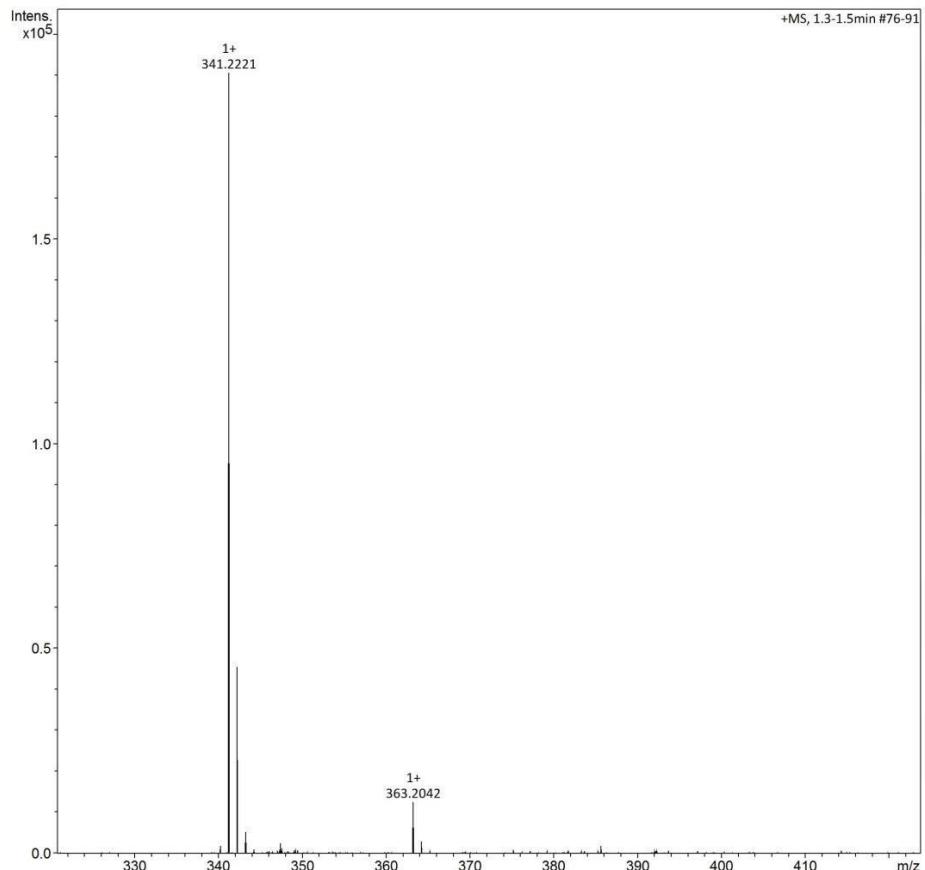
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Comment			

**Acquisition Parameter**

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Scan End	3000 m/z	Set Collision Cell RF	300.0 Vpp	Set Divert Valve	Waste



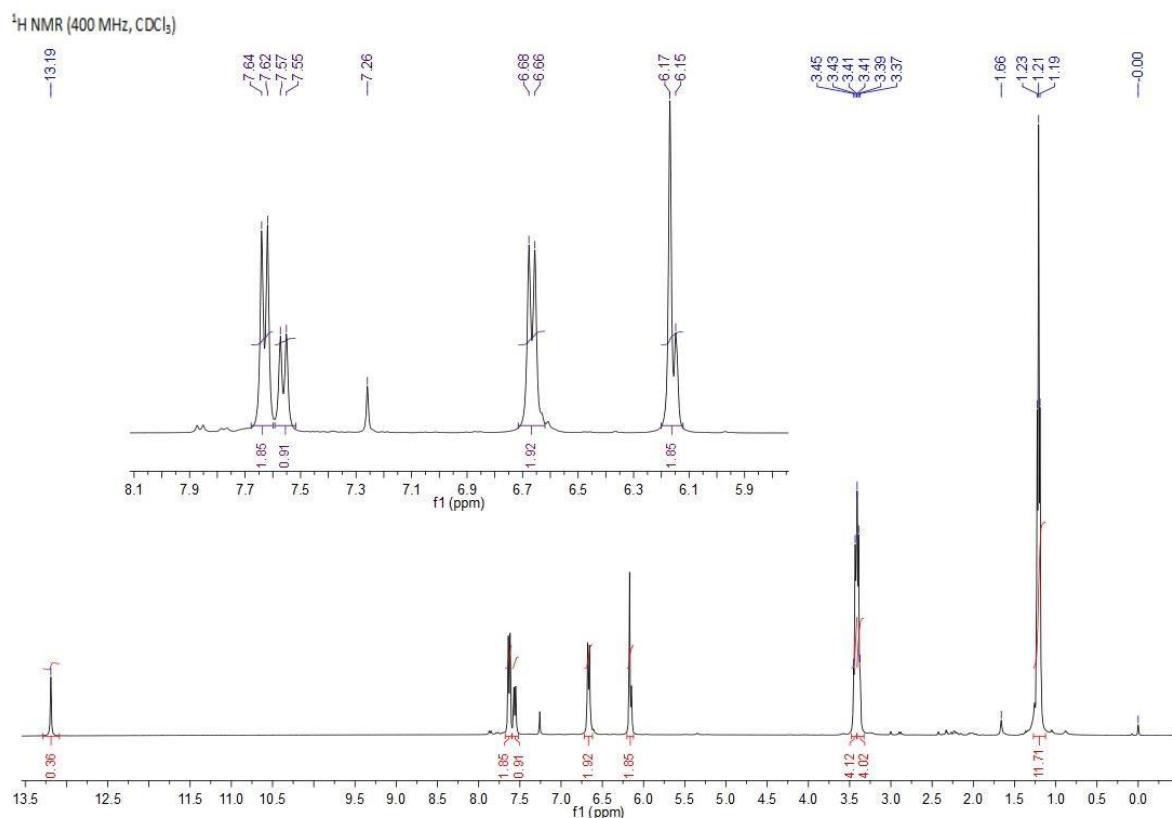
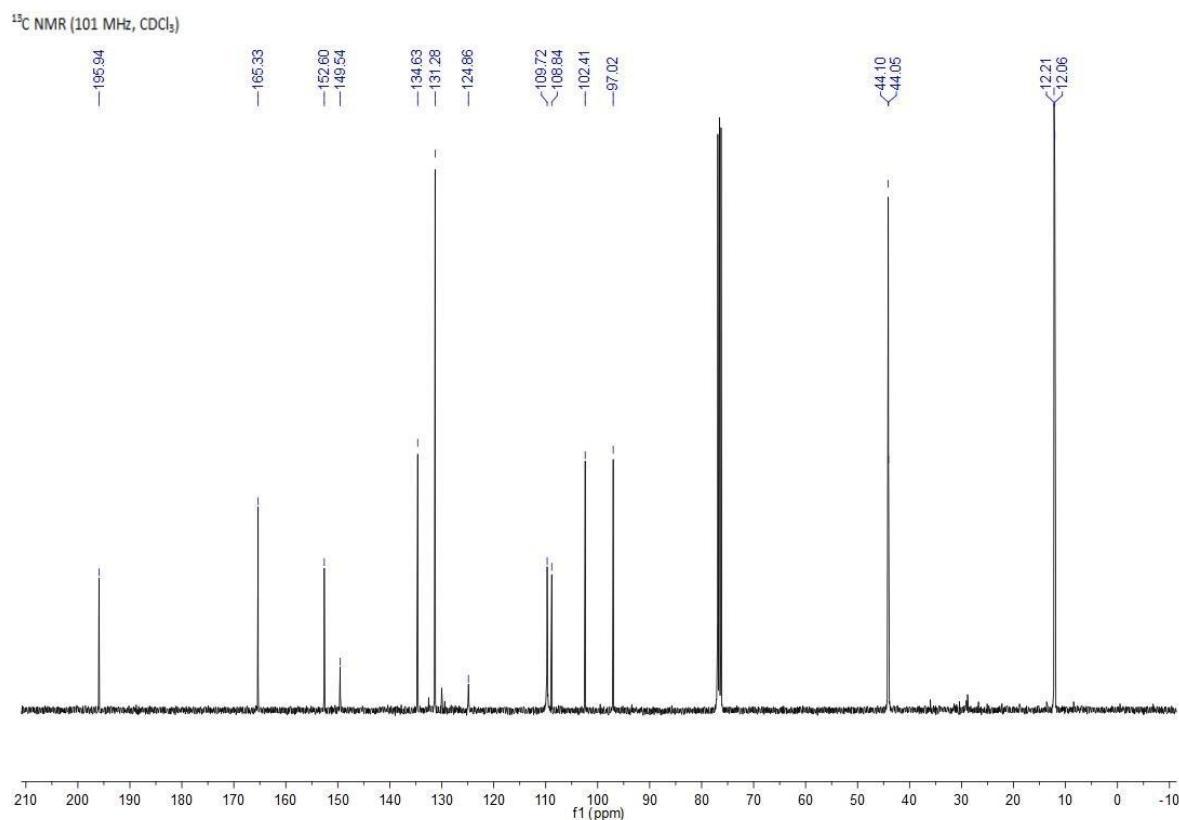
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**Fig. S9** HRMS(ESI<sup>+</sup>) of **3**.

**Fig. S10** <sup>1</sup>H NMR of **4**.**Fig. S11** <sup>13</sup>C NMR of **4**.

### Display Report

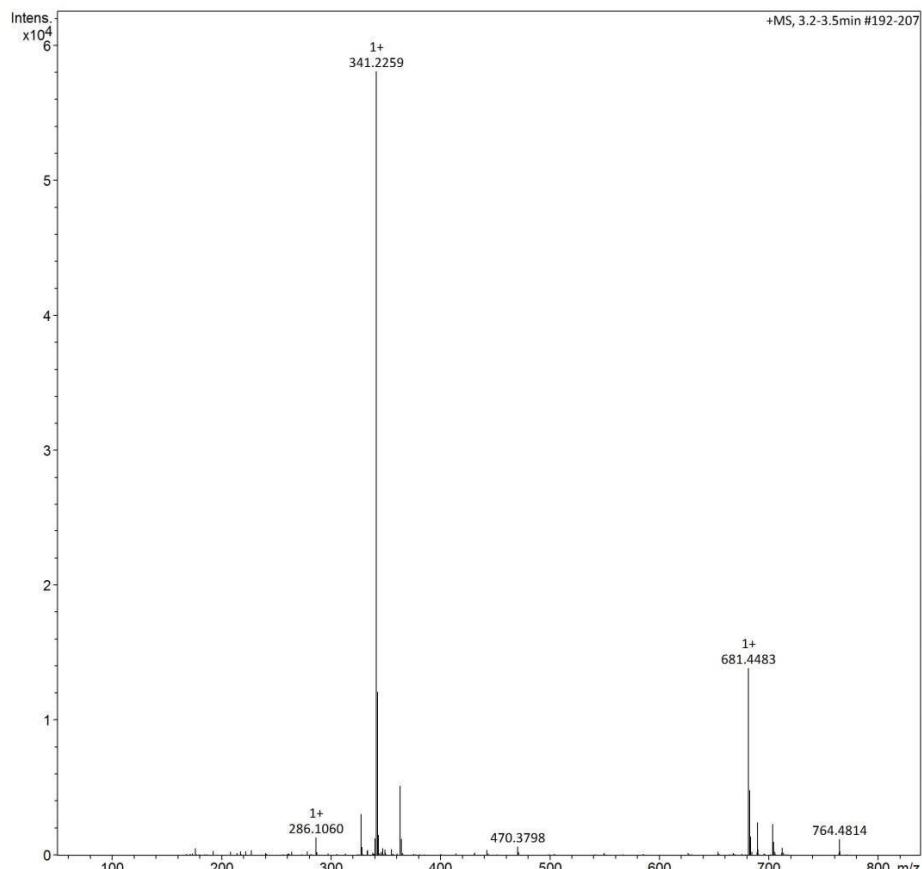
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Operator bruker  
Instrument micrOTOF-Q III 8228888.20487**Acquisition Parameter**

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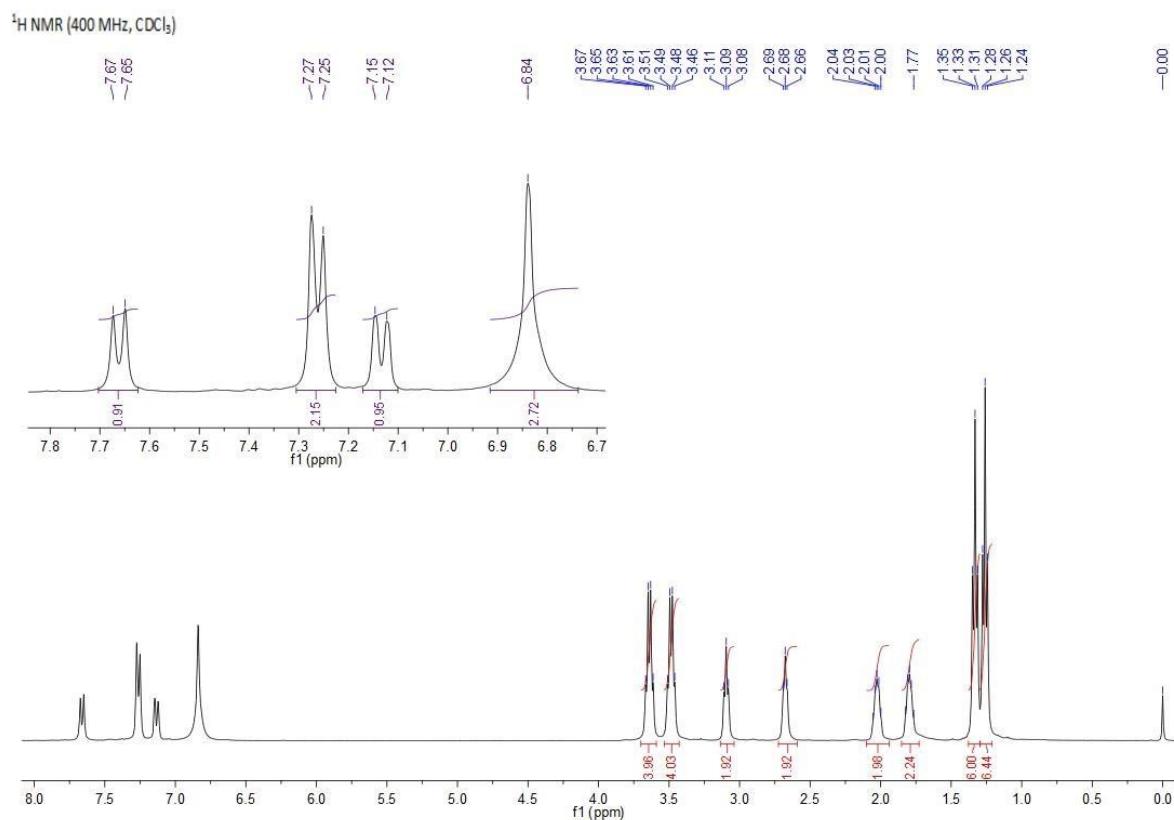
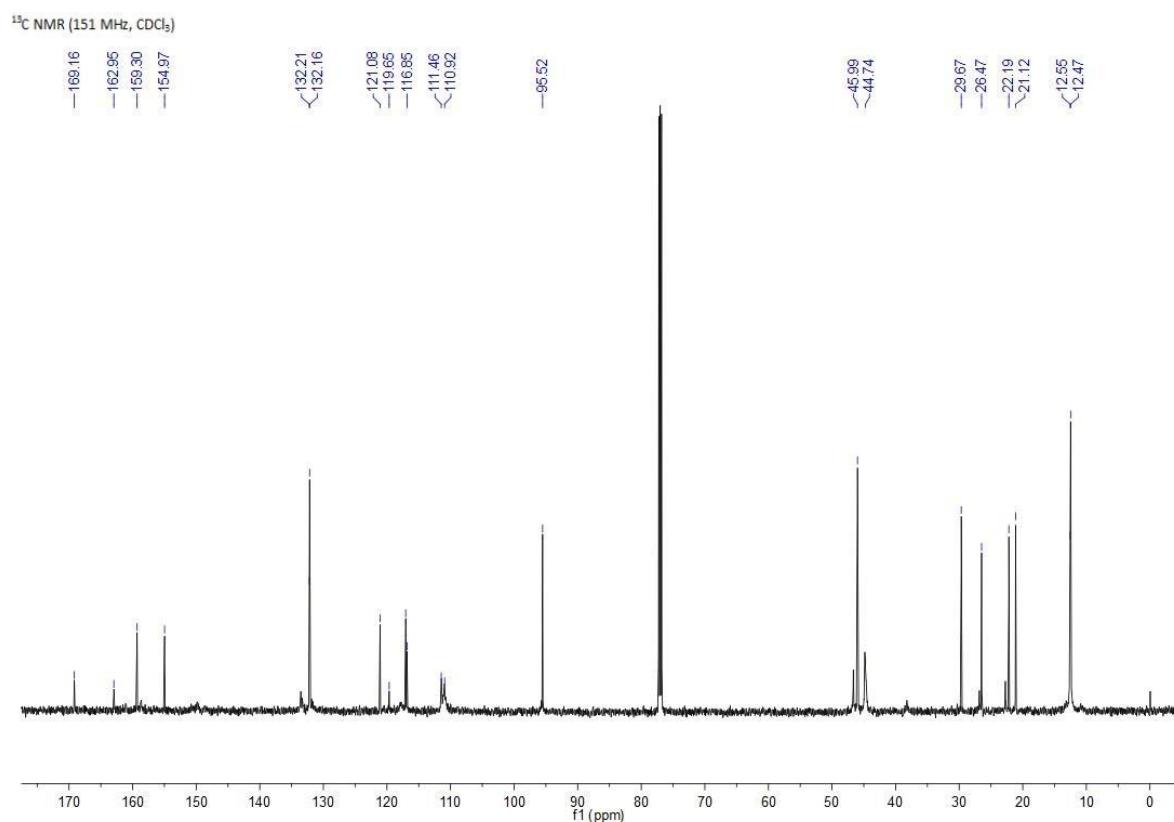
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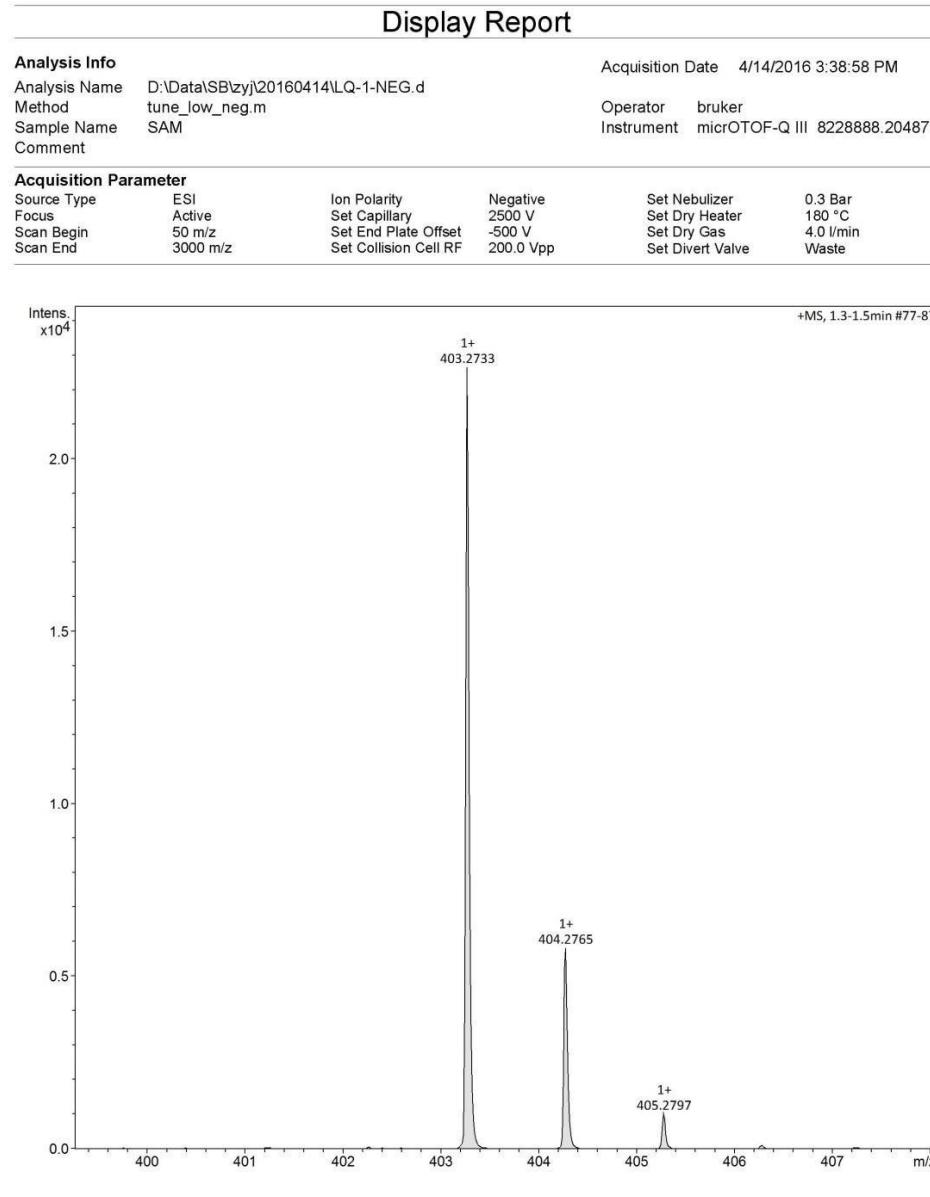
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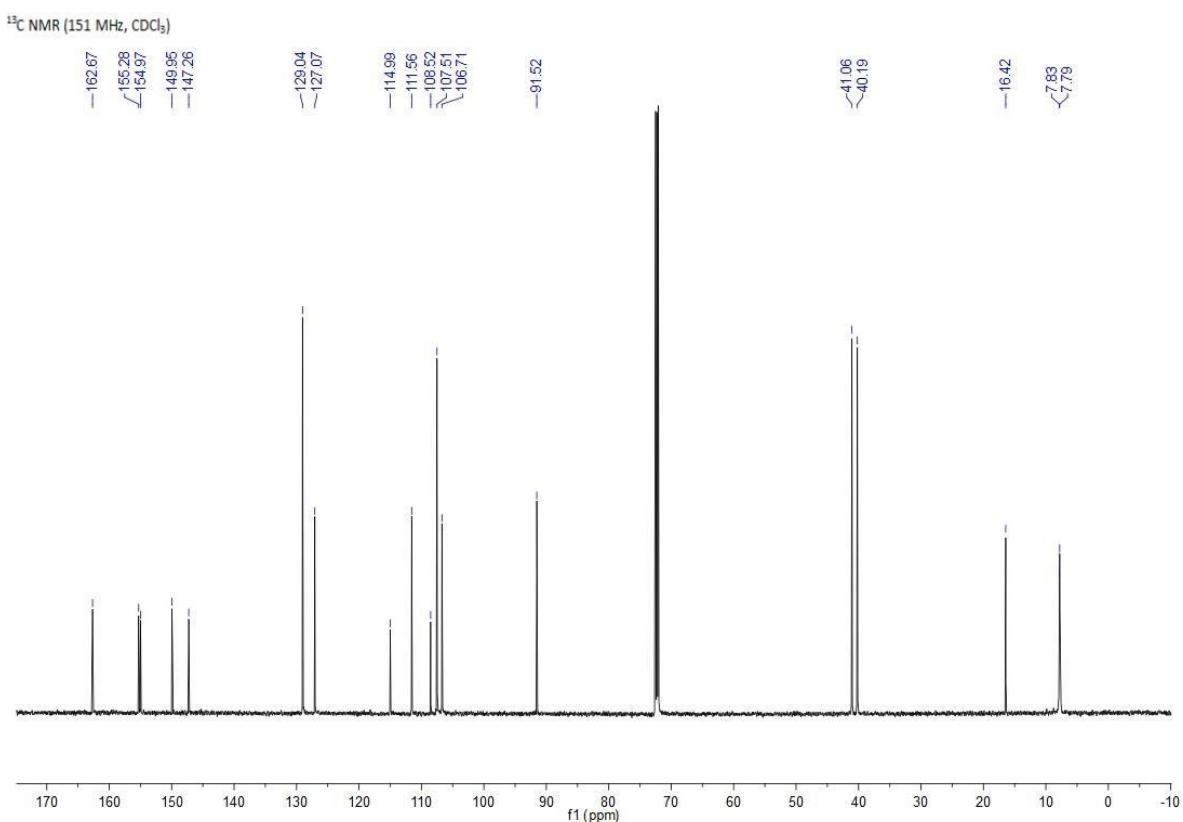
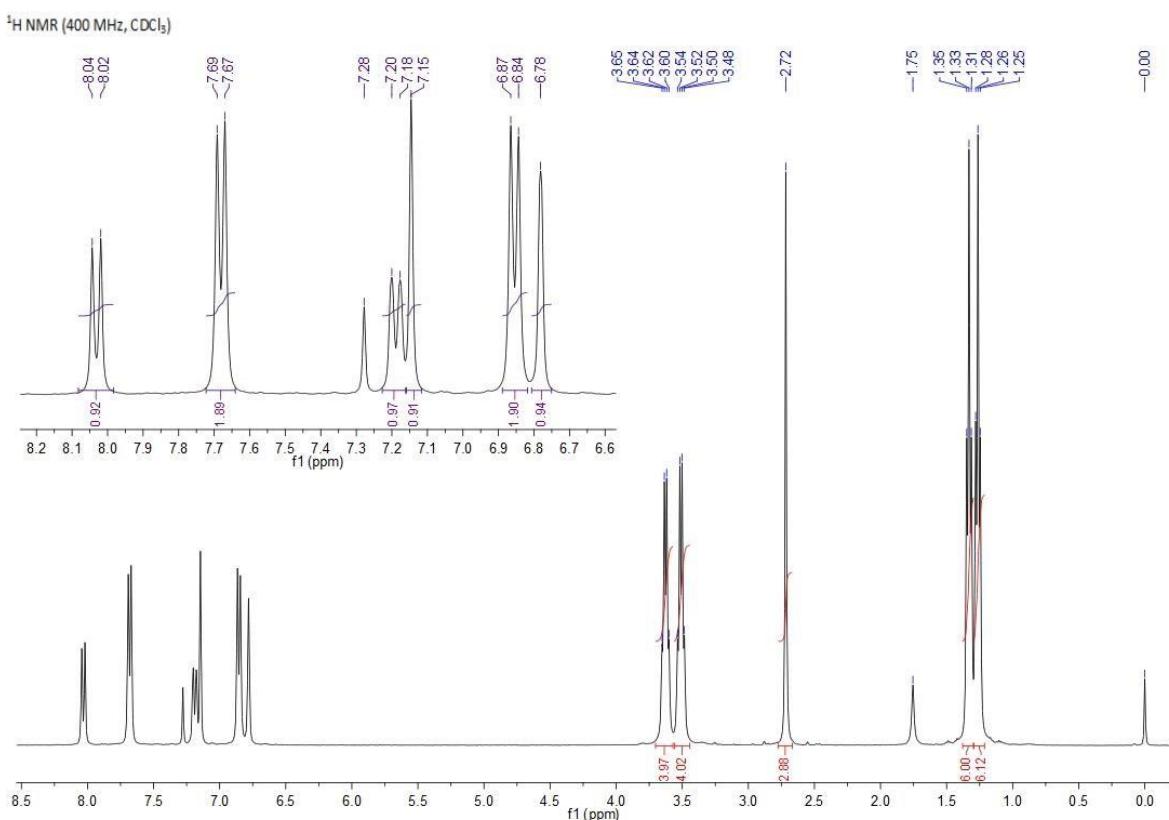
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**Fig. S12** HRMS(ESI<sup>+</sup>) of **4**.

**Fig. S13** <sup>1</sup>H NMR of 5.**Fig. S14** <sup>13</sup>C NMR of 5.



**Fig. S15 HRMS(ESI<sup>+</sup>) of 5.**



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Display Report

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**Analysis Info**

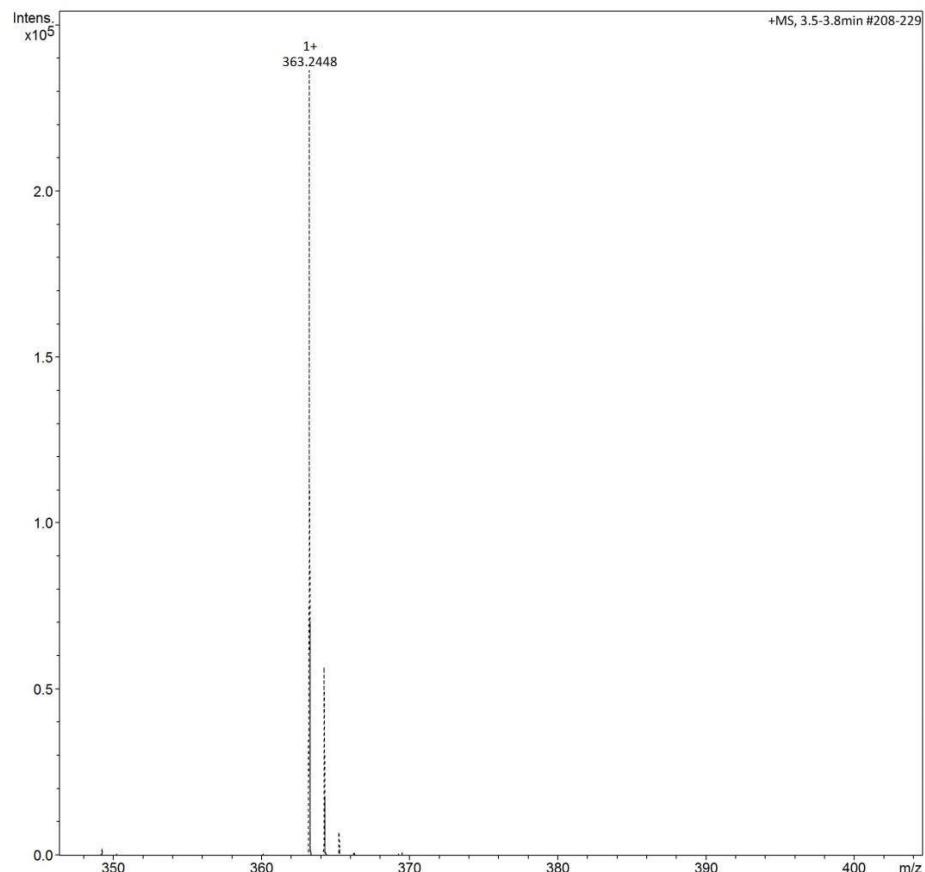
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Sample Name	X-2	Instrument	micrOTOF-Q III 8228888.20487
Comment			

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**Acquisition Parameter**

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Bruker Compass DataAnalysis 4.2

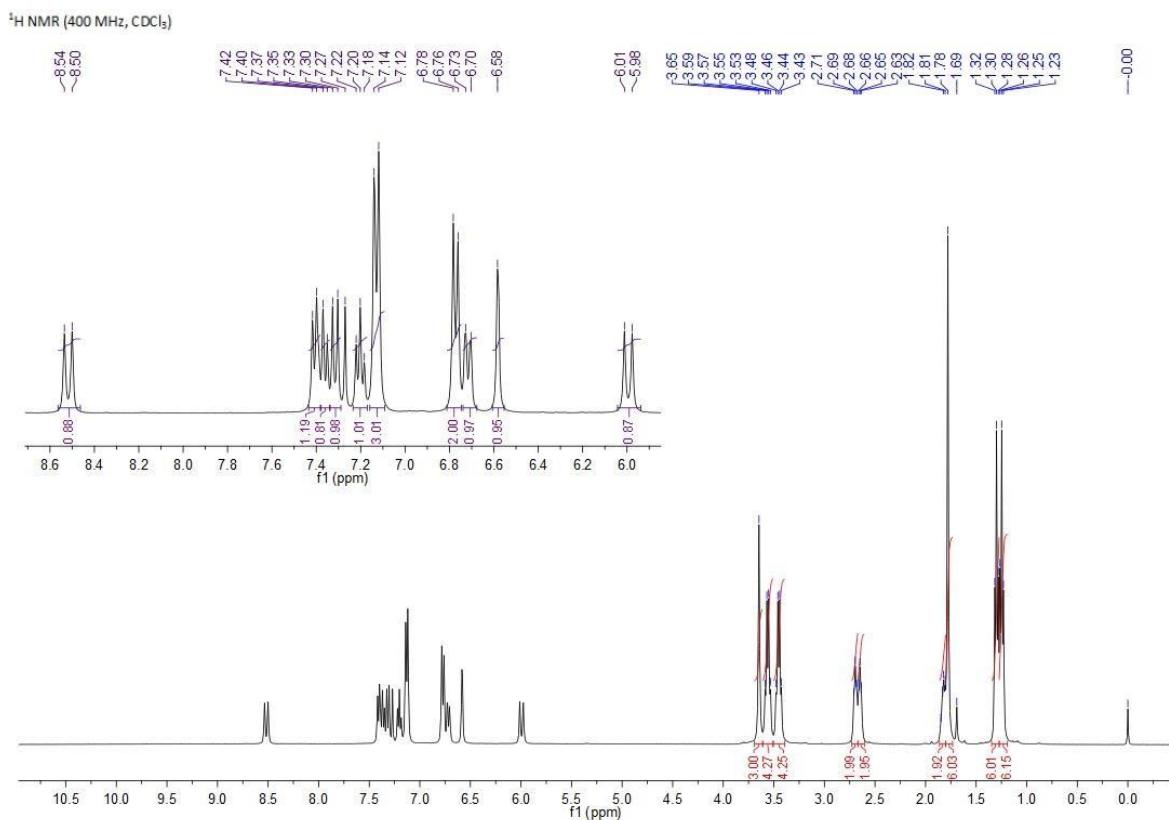
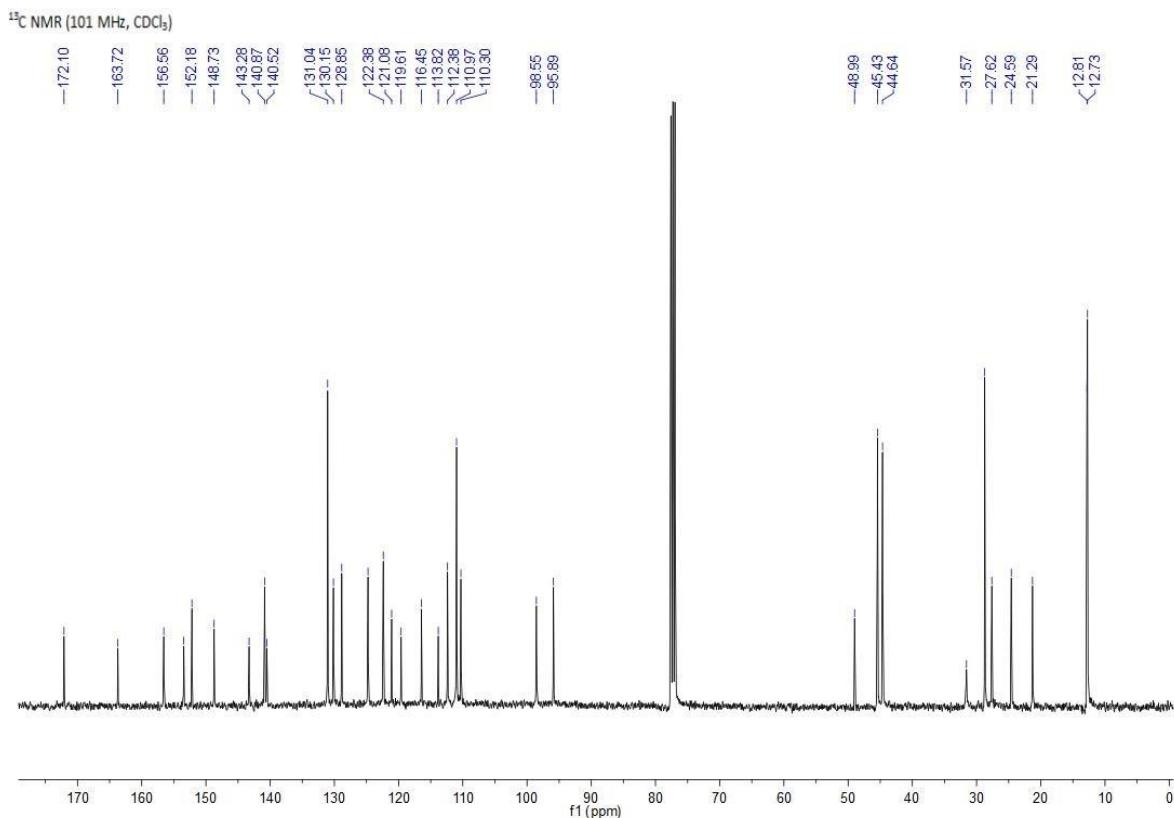
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by: bruker

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**Fig. S18** HRMS(ESI<sup>+</sup>) of **6**.

**Fig. S19** <sup>1</sup>H NMR of dye 1a.**Fig. S20** <sup>13</sup>C NMR of dye 1a.

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## Display Report

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**Analysis Info**

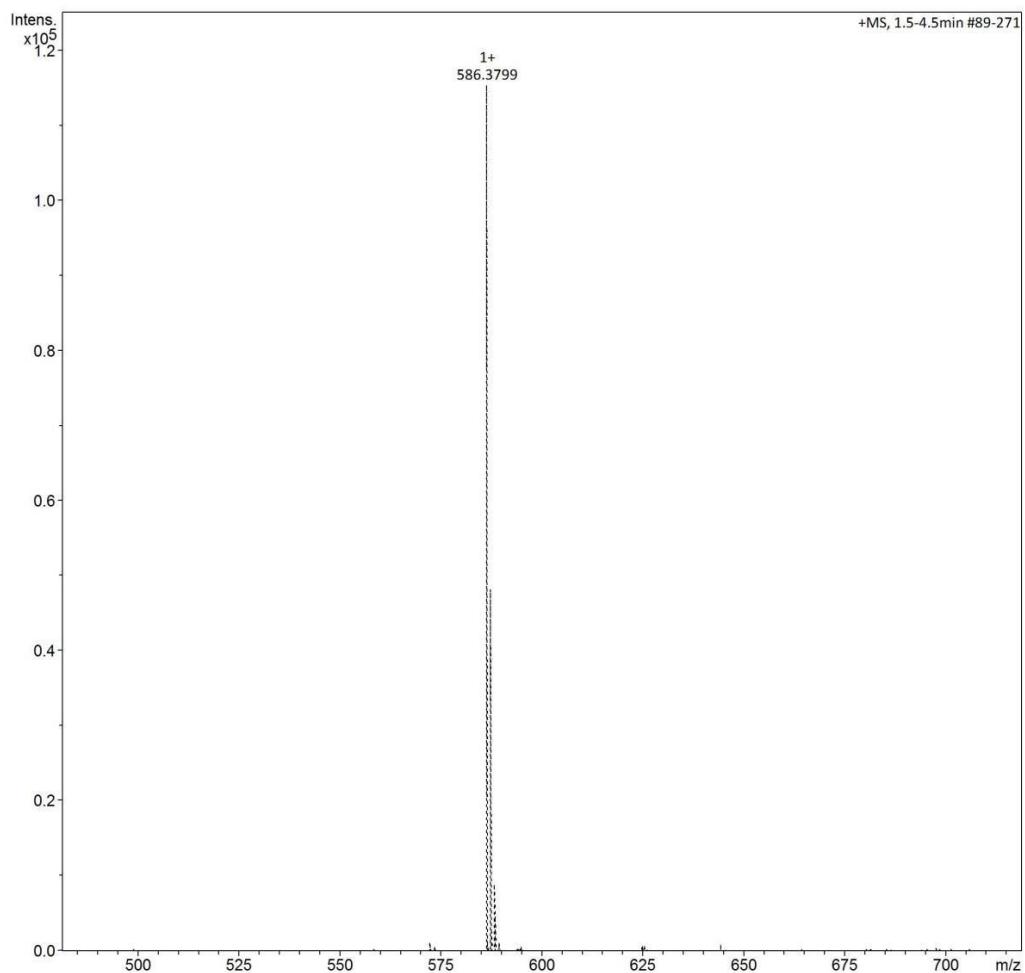
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Sample Name	X-2	Instrument	micrOTOF-Q III 8228888.20487
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**Acquisition Parameter**

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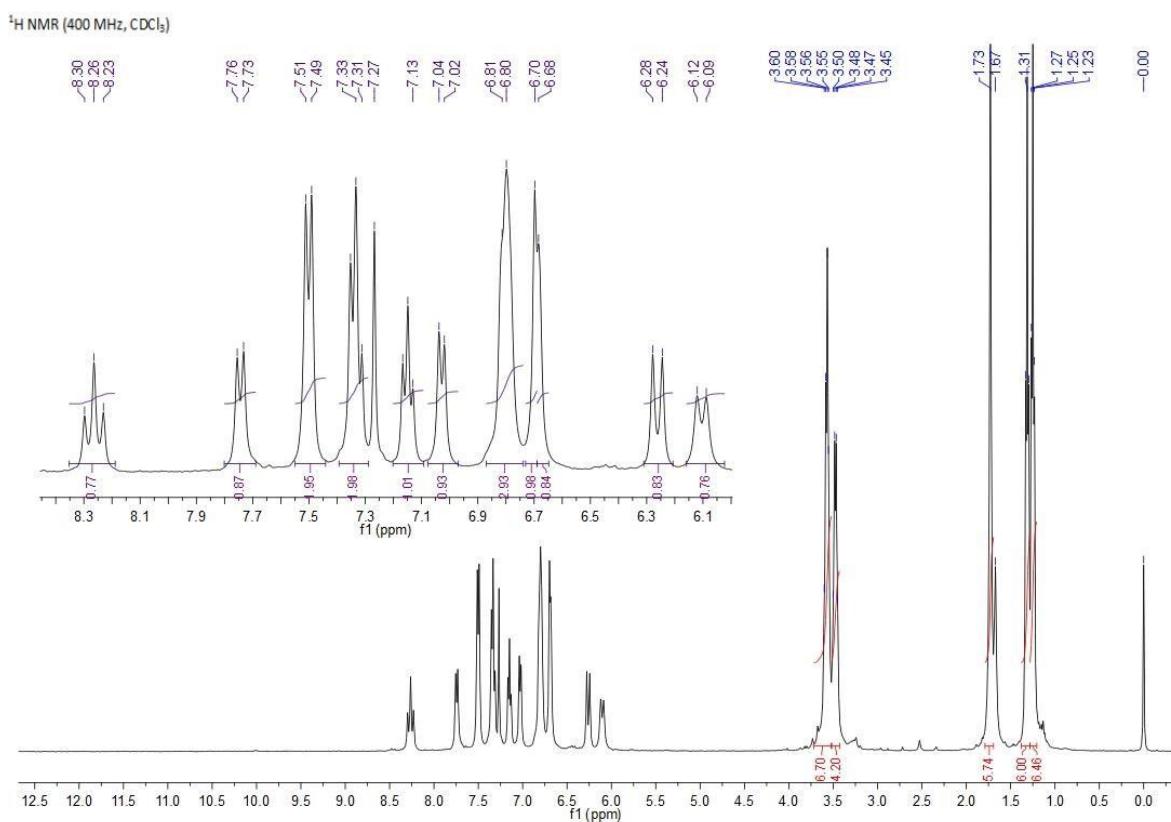
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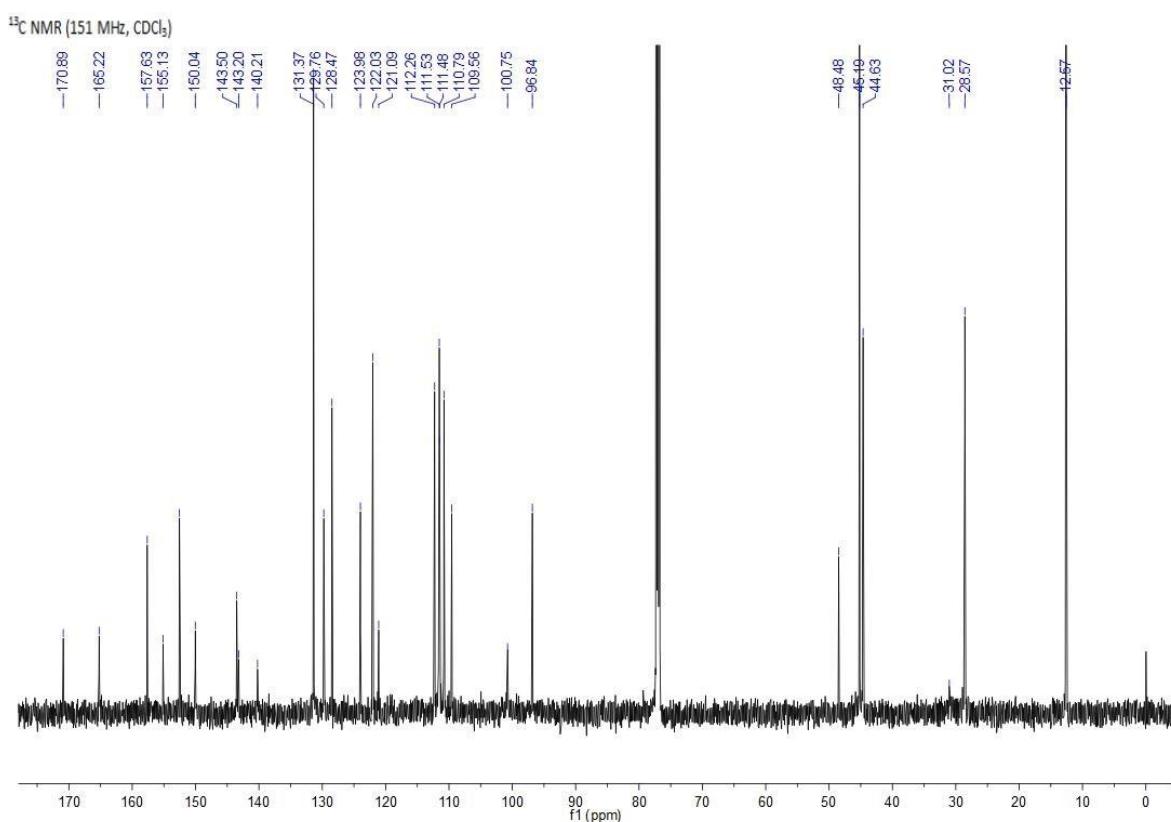
by: bruker

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**Fig. S21** HRMS(ESI<sup>+</sup>) of dye **1a**.



**Fig. S22**  $^1\text{H}$  NMR of dye **1b**.



**Fig. S23**  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR of dye **1b**.

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## Display Report

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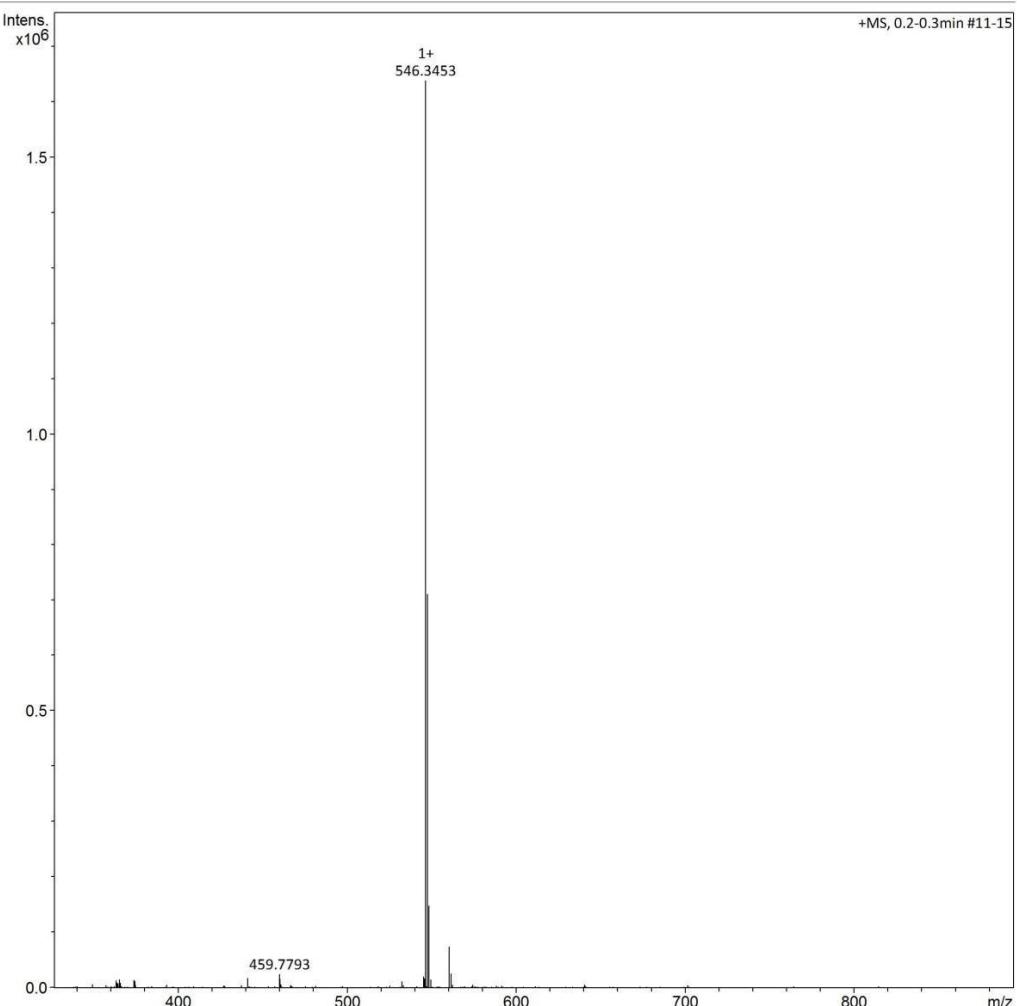
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Operator bruker  
 Instrument micrOTOF-Q III 8228888.20487**Acquisition Parameter**

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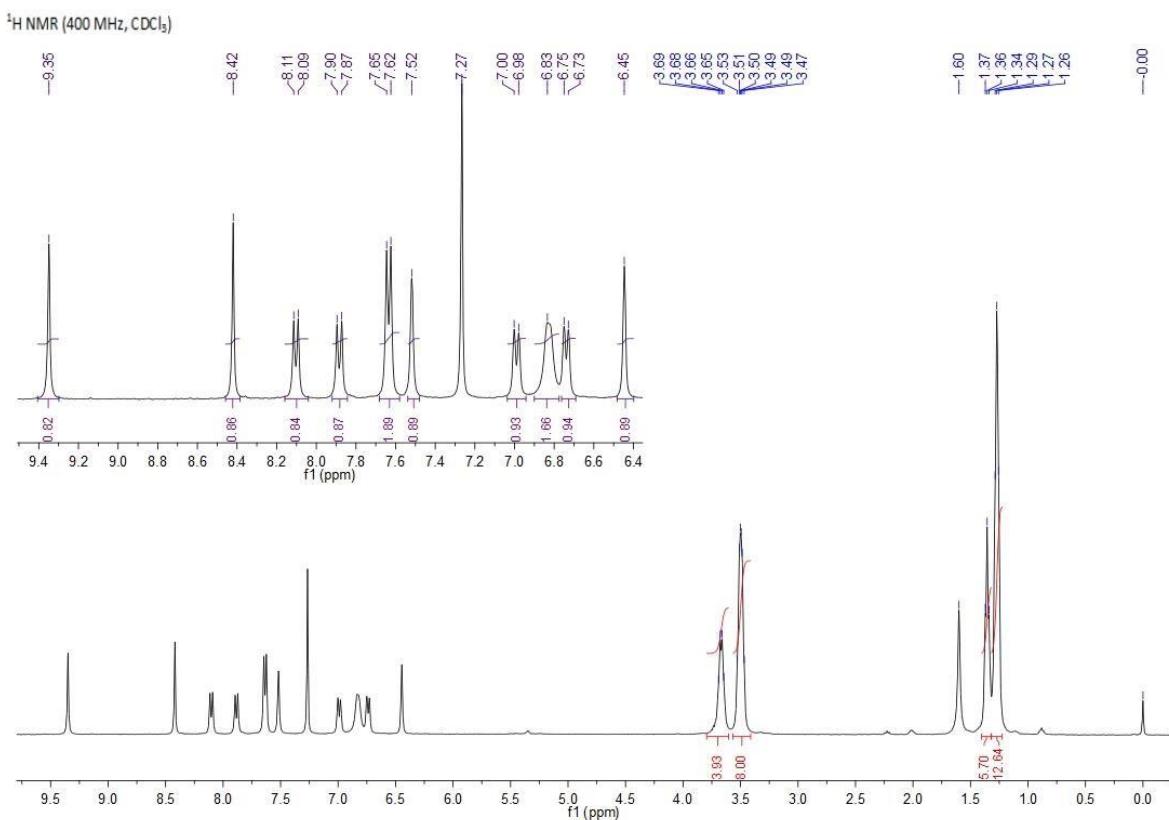
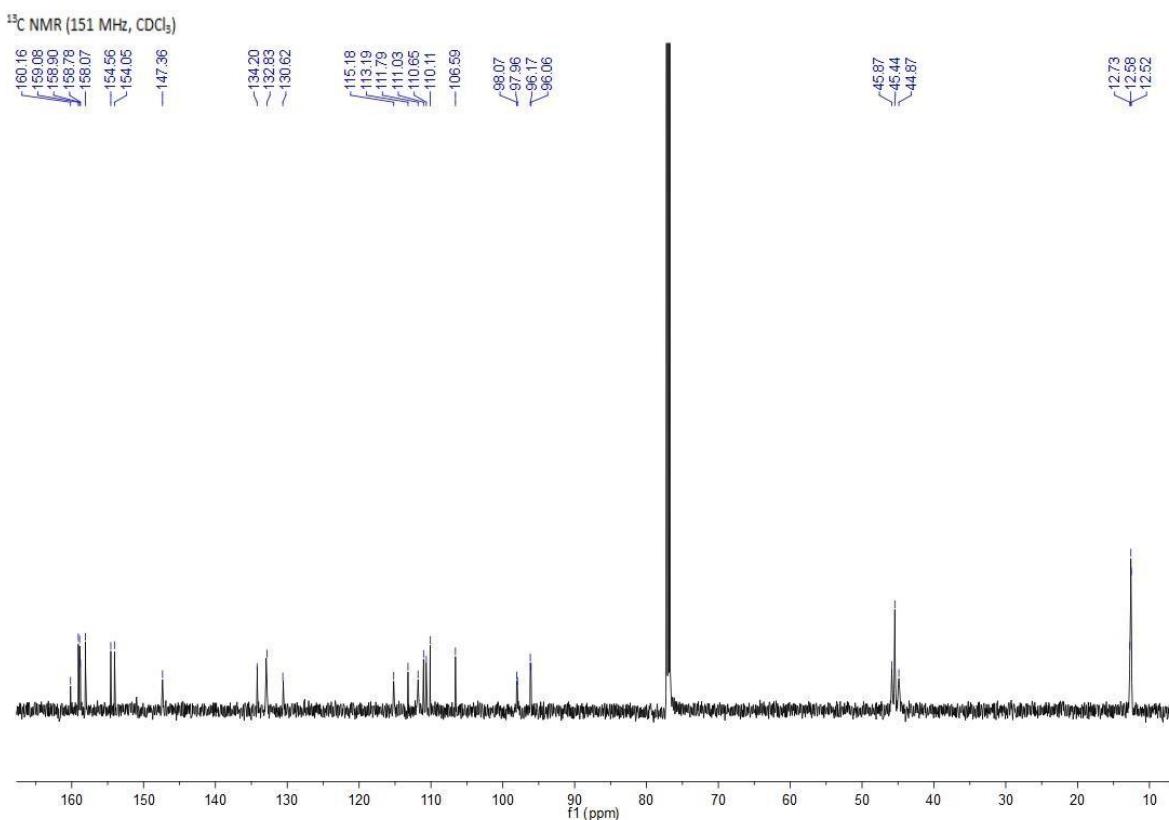
Bruker Compass DataAnalysis 4.2

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**Fig. S24** HRMS(ESI<sup>+</sup>) of dye **1b**.

**Fig. S25** <sup>1</sup>H NMR of dye 1c.**Fig. S26** <sup>13</sup>C NMR of dye 1c.

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## Display Report

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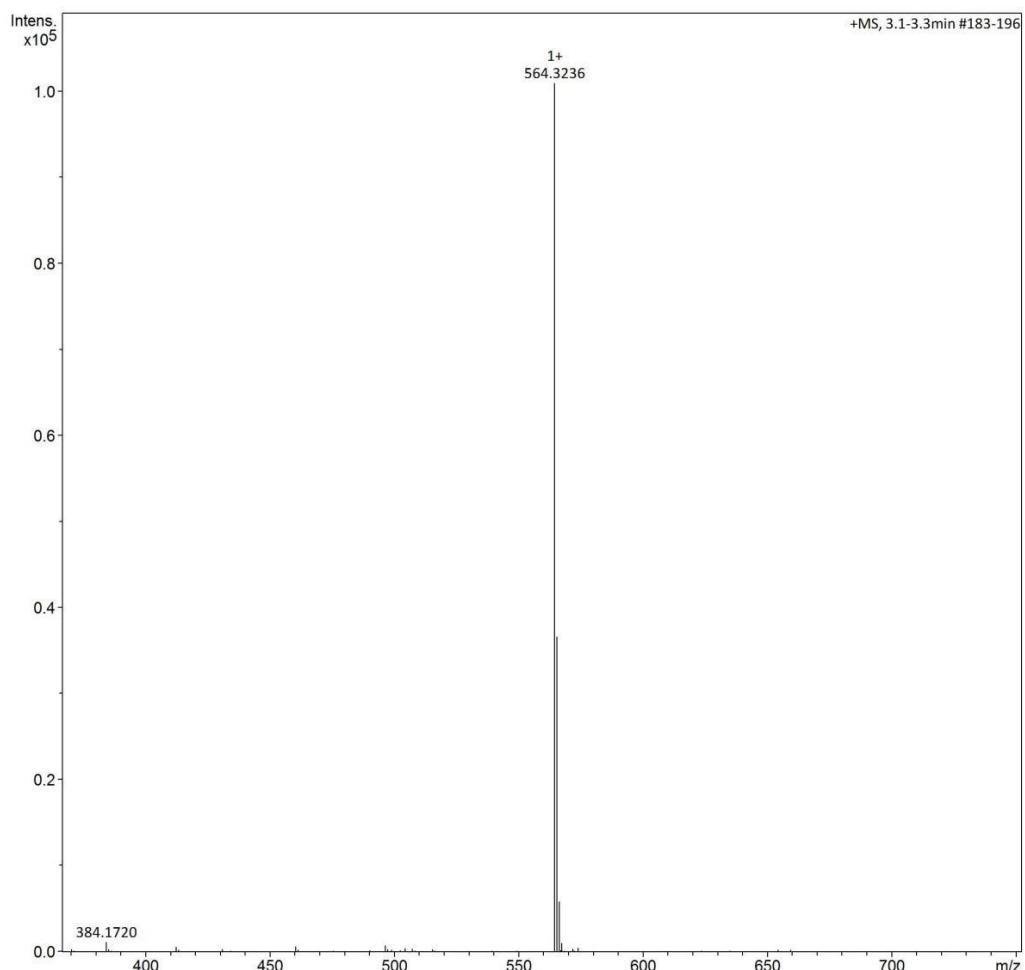
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 Operator bruker  
 Instrument micrOTOF-Q III 8228888.20487
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**Fig. S27** HRMS(ESI<sup>+</sup>) of dye **1c**.