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**Figure S1** – XPS C 1*s* spectra for calcinated- (top), microwave- (middle) and hydrothermal-based (bottom) C-dots.



**Figure S2** – XPS O 1*s* spectra for calcinated- (top), microwave- (middle) and hydrothermal-based (bottom) C-dots.



**Figure S3** – XPS N 1*s* spectra for calcinated- (top), microwave- (middle) and hydrothermal-based (bottom) C-dots.



**Figure S4** – Normalized absorbance spectra for calcinated- (top), hydrothermal- (middle) and microwave-based (bottom) C-dots, in aqueous solution.



**Figure S5** – Normalized emission spectra for hydrothermal- (top), microwave- (middle) and calcination-based (bottom) C-dots, in aqueous solution at different pHs (5, 7 and 10).