## **Supplementary information**

## HPLC coupled with spectrophotometer as a reliable setup for the study of absorption properties of imidazolium ionic liquids on the example of bmimBF<sub>4</sub>

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**Fig. S1.** Absorption spectrum of bmimBF<sub>4</sub> sample Z in a mixture of 40% ACN and 60% H2O v/v (c=0.53 M; l=0.001 cm).



**Fig. S2.** Absorption chromatograms measured for  $\lambda$ =232–238 nm. The peak observed for each wavelength corresponds to the aggregates formed by bmimBF<sub>4</sub> (measured for sample Z). Inset: normalised chromatograms showing that the absorption spectra measured for this range of t<sub>R</sub> are not influenced by absorption of impurities.



Fig. S3. Absorption chromatograms for  $\lambda$ =232 nm of three samples bmimBF4 purchased from different producers and labelled X, Y, Z, obtained in HPLC-abs system. Differences in intensity of the absorbance between these three samples can be observed.



Fig. S4. Normalised absorption spectra of impurities present in sample Z of  $BF_4$  for  $t_R$  corresponding to the peak of  $t_R^{max}=7.95$  min shown in Fig. 2b.



**Fig. S5.** Normalised absorption spectra of complexes formed by  $\text{bmimBF}_4$  with water molecules, measured for retention times given for sample Z. Intensity of the long-wavelength band increases with increasing  $t_R$ .