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(54) **Title:** ELECTROCHROMIC COMPOSITION

(57) **Abstract:** The present invention relates to an electrochromic composition comprising at least one reducing compound, at least one oxidizing compound which is selected from specific viologen derivatives, and at least one dye. Said composition can be used as a variable transmittance medium for the manufacture of an optical article, such as an ophthalmic lens.



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Electrochromic composition

The present invention relates to an electrochromic composition comprising at least one reducing compound, at least one oxidizing compound selected from specific viologen derivatives and at least one dye. Said composition can be used as a variable transmittance medium for the manufacture of an optical article, such as an ophthalmic lens.

Electrochromism is a well-known physical phenomenon which is observed with certain classes of chemical compounds that change reversibly colour when a voltage is applied to them. The material undergoes reversible changes in optical properties by oxidation and reduction. Usually, the electrochromic material may be colourless when an electric field is not applied and may be coloured when an electric field is applied. An electrochromic device, i.e. device containing electrochromic compounds, the absorbance of which depends only on the presence of electric field, can thus have two states, a coloured state (when electrically activated) and a bleached state (in the inactive state). The optical transmission properties of the device depend on the electrochromic compounds.

Electrochromism may be applied to various applications. For instance, in the ophthalmic field, electrochromic lenses may enable the user to actively control the darkening of the lens under some illumination conditions, so as to provide ocular protection, and commute rapidly when these conditions change, contrary to photochromic lenses which passively darken under UV radiation and furthermore require some time to bleach again when the UV radiation stops. Moreover, photochromic dyes are usually incorporated into ophthalmic lenses by an imbibition (or impregnation) process which is not suited for any ophthalmic substrate. Electrochromic glasses have also been used in the manufacture of "smart windows" or rear-view mirrors. Usually, all these electrochromic devices are made from an electrochromic composition comprising, besides an electrochromic compound, a redox promoter or reducer, and a solvent.

When preparing an electrochromic composition to be used as transparent media for forming high quality optical articles, in particular high quality ophthalmic lenses, the choice of electrochromic compounds is critical. Indeed, electrochromic compounds need not only to show good electrochromic properties such as high absorption of the visible light in the coloured state, low absorption of visible radiations in the bleached state, fast colouring and fading rates, but should also have long-term stability, in particular in the

presence of oxygen, and good solubility in conventional solvents. Gathering all the required properties in one single compound is a real challenge. Many studies have already been conducted for providing electrochromic compounds having the best compromise. For example, viologen compounds have been identified as compounds of particular interest due to their high molar absorption coefficient. Their molar absorption coefficient is indeed higher than other electrochromic compounds, such as ferrocene or dihydrophenazine derivatives, usually used in electrochromic devices.

However, usual viologen compounds are blue when activated, whereas it would be useful to provide an electrochromic composition having a wide range of colours when in the activated state, and in particular neutral colours (i.e. brown, grey, grey-green...) which are widely used for sunglasses or other colours that would meet the consumers demand, and for instance match with specific spectacle frames, whereas, in the inactive state (i.e. when no voltage is applied) the composition is less coloured, with a wide range of possible colours, or even uncoloured. Such a neutral colour can be preferentially chosen with respect of the ISO Standard 1836, which defines the relative visual attenuation coefficient of filters of categories 0, 1, 2 and 3. Other examples of tints defining a neutral colour are given in documents US 6,255,238 and US 5,438,024.

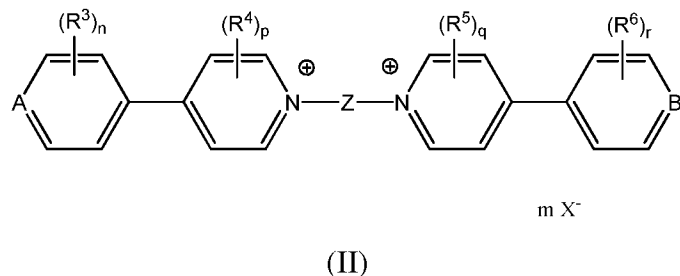
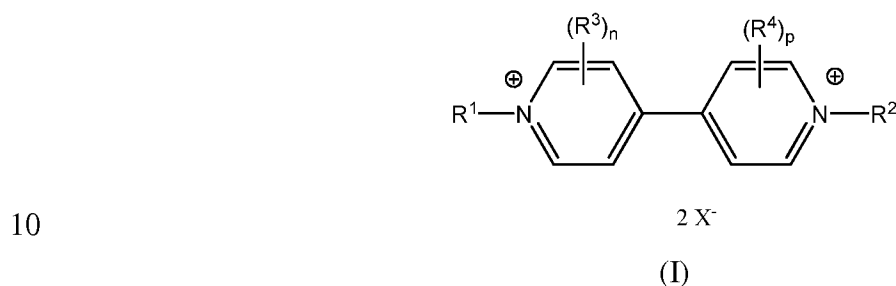
After conducting extensive research, the present inventors provide an electrochromic composition comprising at least one oxidizing compound selected from viologen derivatives of formula (I) and (II), in addition to a reducing compound and a dye. The viologen derivatives of formula (I) and (II) can show a wide variety of colours in their coloured states, including red, blue and green, which enables obtaining the desired colour for the electrochromic composition of the invention. In particular, the colour of the electrochromic composition can be adapted to the desired colour without the need of a specifically coloured electrochromic reducing compound. In other words, the suitable reducing compound can be chosen focusing on other properties such as transparency, stability or solubility, regardless of the coloured state that such a reducing compound may have. The suitable compounds of formula (I) and/or (II) can be chosen, possibly taking into account the colour of the reducing compounds, so as to obtain the electrochromic composition having the desired colour in the coloured state. Moreover, the dye added to the electrochromic composition provides it with the required colour or allows altering the absorbance of the composition of this invention when it is not electrically activated, in in

such a way that the composition absorbs light in one or several wavelength ranges of the visible spectrum.

The present invention relates more particularly to an electrochromic composition comprising:

- 5 - at least one reducing compound;
 - at least one electrochromic oxidizing compound; and
 - at least one dye,

wherein said electrochromic oxidizing compound is selected from viologen derivatives of formula (I) and (II):



wherein

- 15 - R¹ and R² are each independently selected from optionally substituted phenyl groups;
- R³, R⁴, R⁵ and R⁶ are each independently selected from H, alkyl, alkoxy, alkylthio, haloalkyl, haloalkoxy, haloalkylthio, polyakylenoxy, alkoxy carbonyl, aryl, substituted aryl, heteroaryl and substituted heteroaryl, wherein the alkyl group may be substituted by one or more substituents independently selected from alkoxy, cycloalkyl, aryl, substituted aryl, heteroaryl and substituted heteroaryl;
- 20 - n, p, q and r are each independently an integer from 0 to 4, wherein when n, p, q or r are two or more, each of the R³, each of the R⁴, each of the R⁵ or each of the R⁶ may be identical or different;
- A and B are respectively selected from nitrogen and -N⁺(R^{7a})-, and from nitrogen and -N⁺(R^{7b})-, wherein R^{7a} and R^{7b} are independently selected from:
- 25

- alkyl which may be substituted by one or more groups independently selected from halogen, alkoxy, cycloalkyl, vinyl, allyl, aryl, substituted aryl, heteroaryl and substituted heteroaryl;
 - aryl and heteroaryl which may be both substituted by one or more groups independently selected from:
 - halogen, cyano, nitro, alkyl, haloalkyl, arylalkyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkylalkyl and heterocycloalkylalkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, allyl, vinyl, aryl, substituted aryl, heteroaryl, substituted heteroaryl, -N(aryl)₂, -N(aryl)CO(aryl), -CO-aryl and -CO-substituted aryl;
 - -OR⁸, -SR⁸, -S(O)R⁸, -S(O₂)R⁸, -S(O₂)NR⁸R⁹, -NR⁸R⁹, -NR⁸COR⁹, -NR⁸CO(aryl), -NR⁸aryl, -CH₂OR⁸, -CH₂SR⁸, -CH₂R⁸, -CO-R⁸ and -CO₂R⁸ wherein R⁸ and R⁹ are independently selected from H, alkyl, haloalkyl, arylalkyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkylalkyl and heterocycloalkylalkyl;
 - -S(O₂)NR¹⁰R¹¹ and -NR¹⁰R¹¹, wherein R¹⁰ and R¹¹ form together with the nitrogen atom to which they are linked a saturated 5 to 7 membered heterocycloalkyl which may comprise in addition to the nitrogen atom one further heteroatom selected from oxygen, nitrogen and sulphur, and which may be optionally substituted by one or two groups independently selected from halogen, -R⁸, -OR⁸, and -NR⁸R⁹, wherein R⁸ and R⁹ are as defined above;
 - -V-W-R¹² wherein:
 - V is selected from oxygen, -N(R⁸)-, sulphur, -S(O)- and -S(O₂)- wherein R⁸ is as defined above;
 - W is alkylene, which may be substituted by one or more groups independently selected from halogen and alkoxy; and
 - R¹² is selected from -OR⁸, -NR⁸(alkyl) and -SR⁸ wherein R⁸ is as defined above; and
 - -OC(O)-R¹³ wherein R¹³ is selected from alkyl, haloalkyl, alkenyl, -W-R¹², and aryl group which may be substituted by 1 to 4 groups selected from halogen, -R⁸, -OR⁸, -SR⁸, -NR⁸R⁹, -NR¹⁰R¹¹, -CO-R⁸, -C(O)OR⁸, wherein R⁸, R⁹, R¹⁰, R¹¹, R¹² and W are as defined above;
- Z is selected from

- alkylene;
 - cycloalkylene; and
 - a bivalent groups of formula $-R^{14}-Y-R^{15}-$, wherein
 - R^{14} and R^{15} are each independently selected from single bond, alkylene and cycloalkylene, and
 - Y is selected from arylene, cycloalkylene, heteroarylene, arylene-arylene or arylene-CR[']R^{''}-arylene wherein R['] and R^{''} form together with the carbon to which they are linked a carbocyclic group;
- wherein said alkylene, cycloalkylene, arylene, heteroarylene and carbocyclic groups may be substituted by one or more substituents selected from halogen, alkyl, alkoxy, alkylthio, hydroxyalkyl, acyloxy, cycloalkyl, aryl, substituted aryl, aryloxy heteroaryl and substituted heteroaryl;
- m is 2 if A and B are nitrogen, 3 if one of A and B is nitrogen and the other is not nitrogen, and 4 if both A and B are not nitrogen.
 - X^- is a counterion.

In the context of this description, the term "dye" refers to any substance which is able, optionally when subjected to UV light, to alter the absorbance of the composition of this invention in the inactive state, in such a way that the composition absorbs light in one or several wavelength ranges of the visible spectrum. According to a preferred embodiment, the dye is chosen such that the visual transmittance of the composition containing it is higher than 18%, when in the inactive state, optionally when subjected to UV light.

It is specified that the transmission level or visual transmittance (Tv) of the lens is measured according to the ISO Standard 8980-3, in the 380 nm - 780 nm wavelength range, using a spectrophotometer. It corresponds to the transmission factor as defined in the ISO Standard 13666:1998.

The expression "alkylene" represents any divalent radical of a linear or branched hydrocarbon chain comprising 1 to 12 carbon atoms. Examples of C_1 - C_{12} alkylene groups include C_1 - C_4 alkylene groups such as $-\text{CH}_2-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_2-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_3-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_4-$, $-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-$, $-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-$, $-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_2-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-$, $-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-$ or $-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-(\text{CH}_2)_2-$, as well as $-(\text{CH}_2)_5-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_6-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_2-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-(\text{CH}_2)_2-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_3-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_7-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_8-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_9-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_{10}-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_{11}-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_{12}-$.

The expression “cycloalkylene” represents any any divalent radical of a monocyclic or bicyclic 3 to 12 membered carbocycle. Examples of C₃-C₁₂ alkylene groups include cyclopropylene, cyclopentylene, cyclohexylene, cycloheptylene, and decahydronaphthylene.

- 5 The expression “arylene” represents any divalent radical of an aromatic hydrocarbon comprising 6 to 18 carbon atoms. Examples of C₆-C₁₈ arylene groups include phenylene, naphthylene, anthracenylene and phenanthrenylene.

- 10 The expression “carbocyclic group” represents any monocyclic or fused polycyclic hydrocarbon rings comprising 3 to 20 carbon atoms and which may comprise one or more unsaturations. Examples of C₃-C₂₀ carbocyclic groups include C₁₀-C₂₀ fused hydrocarbon rings which may comprise one or more unsaturations, such as cyclohexenylene, indene, fluorene.

The expression “halogen” includes F, Cl, Br or I. Preferred halogens are F and Cl.

- 15 The expression “alkyl” represents any monovalent radical of a linear or branched hydrocarbon chain comprising 1 to 18 carbon atoms. Examples of C₁-C₁₈ alkyl groups include C₁-C₄ alkyl groups such as methyl, ethyl, *n*-propyl, *i*-propyl, *n*-butyl, *i*-butyl, *s*-butyl or *t*-butyl, C₆-C₈ alkyl groups such as *n*-hexyl, *n*-heptyl or *n*-octyl, as well as *n*-pentyl, 2-ethylhexyl, 3,5,5-trimethylhexyl, *n*-nonyl, *n*-decyl, *n*-undecyl, *n*-dodecyl or *n*-Octadecyl.

- 20 The expression “alkoxy” represents a radical of formula –OR wherein R is a C₁-C₁₂ alkyl. Examples of C₁-C₁₂ alkoxy groups include C₁-C₆ alkoxy groups such as –OCH₃, –OCH₂CH₃ or O(CH₂)₅CH₃.

The expression “cycloalkyl” represents any monovalent radical of a monocyclic or bicyclic 3 to 12 membered saturated carbocycle. Examples of C₃-C₁₂ cycloalkyl groups include cyclopropyl, cyclopentyl and cyclohexyl.

- 25 The expression “aryl” represents any monovalent radical of an aromatic hydrocarbon comprising 6 to 18 carbon atoms. Examples of C₆-C₁₈ aryl groups include phenyl, naphthyl, anthracenyl and phenanthrenyl.

- 30 The expression “substituted aryl” represents any C₆-C₁₈ aryl group as defined above substituted by one or more substituents selected from halogen, alkyl, alkoxy, alkynyl haloalkyl, haloalkoxy, alkoxycarbonyl, alkanoyl, aroyl, formyl, nitrile, nitro, amido, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, arylthio, arylsulfinyl, arylsulfonyl, amino, alkylamino, arylamino, dialkylamino and diarylamino. Preferably, the substituents are

selected from bulky or electron withdrawing groups. Examples of substituted C₆-C₁₈ aryl groups include substituted phenyl groups such as p-methylphenyl, o-*t*-butylphenyl, p-trifluoromethoxyphenyl, o-trifluoromethoxyphenyl, m-cyanophenyl, o-*i*-propylphenyl, 2,4-dinitrophenyl, 2,6-diisopropylphenyl or 3,5-dicyanophenyl.

- 5 The expression “aryloxy” represents a radical of formula –OR wherein R is a C₆-C₁₈ aryl. Examples of C₁-C₁₂ aryloxy groups include phenyloxy and naphthyloxy.

 The expression “heteroaryl” represents any monovalent radical of a monocyclic or bicyclic 5 to 10 membered aromatic group comprising from 1 to 3 heteroatoms independently selected from oxygen, nitrogen and sulfur. Examples of C₅-C₁₀ heteroaryl
10 groups include furyl, thienyl, pyrrolyl, pyrazoyl, imidazolyl, isoxazolyl, isothiazoyl, thiazoyl, oxazolyl, 1,2,3-triazolyl, 1,2,4-triazolyl, 1-benzofuryl, 1-benzothienyl, indolyl, benzimidazolyl, indazolyl, 1,2-benzisoxazolyl, 2,1-benzisoxazolyl, 1,2-benzisothiazolyl, 2,1-benzisothiazolyl, benzothiazolyl, benzoxazolyl, benzotriazolyl, pyridyl, quinoliny, isoquinoliny, pyridaziny, cinnoliny, phthalaziny, pyrimidiny, quinazoliny, pyraziny
15 and quinoxaliny.

 The expression “heteroarylene” represents any divalent radical of a monocyclic or bicyclic 5 to 10 membered aromatic group comprising from 1 to 3 heteroatoms independently selected from oxygen, nitrogen and sulfur. Examples of C₅-C₁₀ heteroarylene groups include furylene, thienylene, pyrrolylene, pyrazoylene, imidazolylene,
20 isoxazolylene, isothiazoylene, thiazoylene, oxazolylene, 1,2,3-triazolylene, 1,2,4-triazolylene, 1-benzofurylene, 1-benzothienylene, indolylene, benzimidazolylene, indazolylene, 1,2-benzisoxazolylene, 2,1-benzisoxazolylene, 1,2-benzisothiazolylene, 2,1-benzisothiazolylene, benzothiazolylene, benzoxazolylene, benzotriazolylene, pyridylene, quinoliny, isoquinoliny, pyridaziny, cinnoliny, phthalaziny, pyrimidiny, quinazoliny, pyraziny
25 and quinoxaliny.

 The expression “substituted heteroaryl” represents any heteroaryl group as defined above substituted by one or more substituents selected from alkyl, alkoxy, alkoxycarbonyl, alkanoyl, aroyl, formyl, nitrile, nitro, amido, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, arylthio, arylsulfinyl, arylsulfonyl, amino, alkylamino, arylamino, dialkylamino and diarylamino.
30 Preferably, the substituents are selected from bulky or electron withdrawing groups. Examples of substituted C₅-C₁₀ heteroaryl groups include 4-methylthienyl, 5-methyl-2-thienyl, 6-methyl-2-pyridyl, N-methylpyrrol-2-yl and N-phenylindol-3-yl.

The expression “haloalkyl” represents any C₁-C₁₂ alkyl group substituted by one or more halogen atom such as F or Cl. Examples of C₁-C₁₂ haloalkyl groups include C₁-C₁₂ perhaloalkyl groups, in particular C₁-C₄ perhaloalkyl groups such as -CF₃, as well as C₁-C₁₂ (perhaloalkyl)alkyl groups, in particular (C₁-C₄ perhaloalkyl)-(C₁-C₄ alkyl) groups
 5 such as -CH₂CF₃.

The expression “haloalkoxy” represents a radical of formula -OR wherein R is a C₁-C₁₂ haloalkyl. Examples of C₁-C₁₂ haloalkoxy include C₁-C₁₂ perhaloalkoxy groups, in particular C₁-C₄ perhaloalkoxy groups such as -OCF₃, as well as C₁-C₁₂ (perhaloalkyl)alkoxy groups, in particular (C₁-C₄ perhaloalkyl)-(C₁-C₄ alkoxy) groups such
 10 as -OCH₂CF₃.

The expression “alkylthio” represents a radical of formula -SR wherein R is a C₁-C₁₂ alkyl. Examples of C₁-C₁₂ alkylthio groups include -SCH₃ and -SCH₂CH₃.

The expression “haloalkylthio” represents a radical of formula -SR wherein R is a C₁-C₁₂ haloalkyl. Examples of C₁-C₁₂ haloalkoxy groups include C₁-C₁₂ perhaloalkylthio
 15 groups, in particular C₁-C₄ perhaloalkylthio groups such as -SCF₃, as well as C₁-C₁₂ (perhaloalkyl)alkylthio groups, in particular (C₁-C₄ perhaloalkyl)-(C₁-C₄ alkylthio) groups such as -SCH₂CF₃.

The expression “hydroxyalkyl” represents any C₁-C₁₂ alkyl group substituted by one or more hydroxyl groups. Examples of C₁-C₁₂ hydroxyalkyl groups include -CH₂OH and
 20 -CH₂CH₂OH.

The expression “acyloxy” represents a radical of formula -OC(O)R wherein R is a C₁-C₁₂ alkyl. Examples of C₁-C₁₂ acyloxy groups include -OC(O)CH₃ and -OC(O)CH₂CH₃.

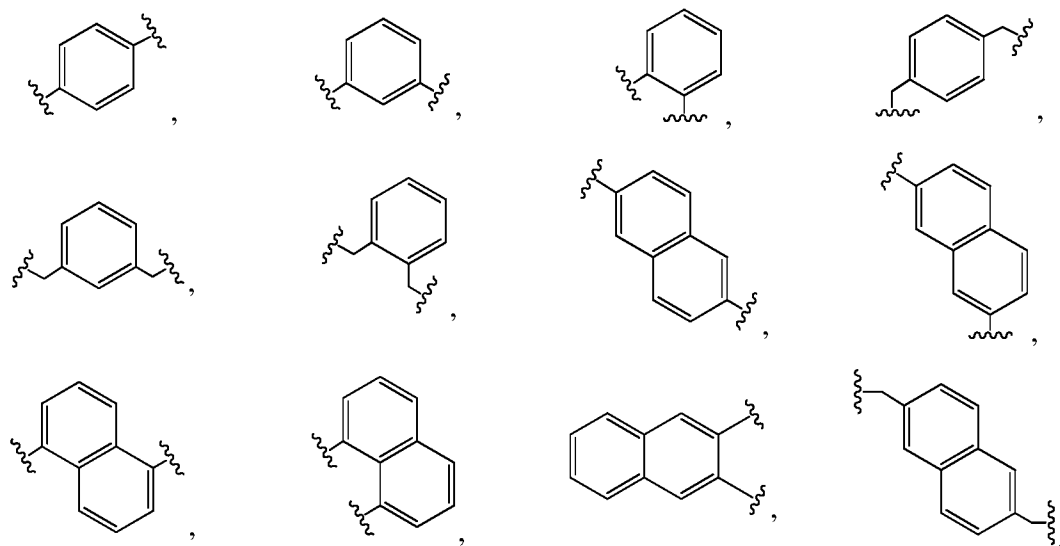
The expression “polyalkylenoxy” represents a radical of formula -O(R'O)_mR
 25 wherein R' is a C₁-C₁₂ alkylene, R is a C₁-C₁₂ alkyl and m is an integer from 1 to 12. Examples of poly(C₁-C₁₂ alkyleneoxy) groups include OCH₂CH₂OCH₃.

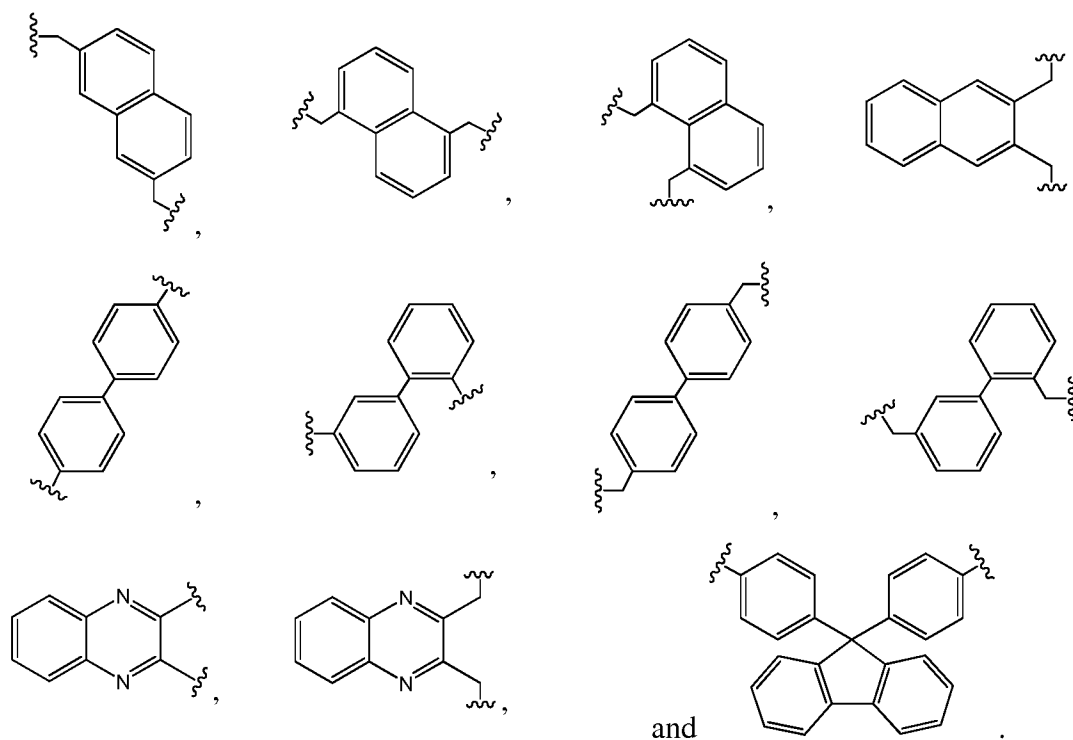
The expression “alkoxycarbonyl” represent a radical of formula -C(O)OR wherein R is a C₁-C₁₈ alkyl. Examples of C₁-C₁₈ alkoxycarbonyl groups include C₁-C₄ alkoxycarbonyl groups such as -C(O)OCH₃ and -C(O)OC₂H₅.

30 In formula (II), Z called “the central core” is preferably selected from C₁-C₁₂ alkylene, C₃-C₇ cycloalkylene, C₃-C₁₄ arylene, C₅-C₁₀ heteroarylene, (C₁-C₄ alkylene)-(C₃-C₁₄ arylene), (C₁-C₄ alkylene)-(C₃-C₁₄ heteroarylene), (C₁-C₄ alkylene)-(C₃-C₁₄ arylene)-

(C₁-C₄ alkylene), (C₁-C₄ alkylene)-(C₃-C₁₄ heteroarylene)-(C₁-C₄ alkylene), (C₃-C₁₄ arylene)-(C₃-C₁₄ arylene), (C₁-C₄ alkylene)-(C₃-C₁₄ arylene)-(C₃-C₁₄ arylene)-(C₁-C₄ alkylene) and (C₃-C₁₄ arylene)-(CR'R'')-(C₃-C₁₄ arylene) wherein R' and R'' form together with the carbon to which they are linked a C₃-C₂₀ carbocyclic group; wherein the arylene and cycloalkylene groups may be substituted by one or more substituents selected from halogen, C₁-C₄ alkyl, C₁-C₄ alkoxy and C₃-C₇ cycloalkyl and the alkylene groups may be substituted by one or more substituents selected from halogen, C₃-C₁₄ alkyl, C₁-C₁₂ alkoxy, C₂-C₁₂ acyloxy, C₁-C₁₂ hydroxyalkyl, C₃-C₁₂ cycloalkyl, phenyl, phenyloxy and substituted phenyl. In particular, substituted alkylene include -CH₂(CR^aR^b)CH₂- wherein R^a and R^b may be independently selected from H, C₃-C₁₄ alkyl, C₃-C₁₂ cycloalkyl, (cycloalkyl)methyl, aryl, substituted aryl, arylalkyl such as benzyl or phenyl(C₂-C₇ alkyl), phenyloxyethyl, substituted arylalkyl, C₁-C₁₂ alkoxy, C₂-C₁₂ acyloxy, C₁-C₁₂ hydroxyalkyl, and C₁-C₁₂ alkoxymethyl.

More preferably, Z is selected from C₁-C₁₂ alkylene, aryl substituted C₁-C₁₂ alkylene, phenylene, naphthylene, (C₁-C₄ alkylene)-phenylene-(C₁-C₄ alkylene), (C₁-C₄ alkylene)-naphthylene-(C₁-C₄ alkylene) such as naphthylene bis(methylene), quinoxaline-2,3-diyl, (C₁-C₄ alkylene)-quinoxaline-2,3-diyl-(C₁-C₄ alkylene) such as quinoxaline-2,3-diylbis(methylene), phenylene-phenylene, (C₁-C₄ alkylene)-phenylene-phenylene-(C₁-C₄ alkylene) and phenylene-fluorenylene-phenylene. For example, Z may be selected from -CH₂-, -(CH₂)₂-, -(CH₂)₃-, -(CH₂)₄-, -(CH₂)₅-, -CH₂-CH(CH₃)-CH₂-, -CH₂-CH(CH₂Phenyl)-CH₂-, -(CH₂)₂-CH(CH₃)-CH₂-, -(CH₂)₃-CH(CH₃)-CH₂-, -(CH₂)₂-CH(CH₃)-(CH₂)₂-,





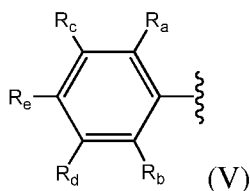
R^3 , R^4 , R^5 and R^6 are preferably each independently selected from C_1 - C_4 alkyl, C_1 - C_4 alkoxy carbonyl, alkanoyl, aroyl, nitrile, alkylsulfonyl, arylsulfonyl, aryl and heteroaryl, wherein the aryl and heteroaryl may be substituted by one or more substituents selected from C_1 - C_4 alkyl and C_1 - C_4 haloalkyl. Aryl, heteroaryl, substituted aryl and substituted heteroaryl are particularly preferred, and more particularly optionally substituted phenyl such as phenyl, tolyl and cumyl, because they induce a decrease of the activation potential of the compounds of the invention. Moreover, the steric hindrance provided by the presence of such substituents on the viologen cores of the compounds of the invention is believed to prevent π - π interactions between the aromatic viologen cores which is the cause of the stacking phenomenon on or near the electrode surface. For example, R^3 , R^4 , R^5 and R^6 may be independently selected from methyl, ethoxycarbonyl, phenyl, p-methylphenyl and p-trifluoromethylphenyl, preferably from phenyl, p-methylphenyl and p-trifluoromethylphenyl.

n , p , q and r are each independently an integer from 0 to 4, wherein when n , p , q and r are two or more, each of the R^3 , each of the R^4 , each of the R^5 or each of the R^6 may be identical or different. Preferably, n and r are 0 when at least one of p and q is an integer from 1 to 4, and conversely p and q are 0 when at least one of n and r is an integer from 1 to 4. In a preferred embodiment, n and r are 0 and p and q are 2. In such an embodiment

the two R^3 substituents, respectfully the two R^4 substituents, are identical. The two R^3 substituents, respectfully the two R^4 substituents are preferably located meta to each other and are all ortho position relative to the central core Z. Moreover, the R^3 substituents may be similar or different from the R^4 substituents. In another embodiment, n, p, q and r are 0.

5 The counterion X^- may be any anion that maintains electric neutrality of the viologen compounds of formula (I) or (II). X^- is preferably selected from halide, preferably fluoride and chloride, tetrafluoroborate, tetraphenylborate, hexafluorophosphate, nitrate, methanesulfonate, trifluoromethane sulfonate, toluene sulfonate, hexachloroantimonate, bis(trifluoromethanesulfonyl)imide, perchlorate, acetate, sulphate and their mixtures.

10 In formula (I), R^1 and R^2 are independently selected from optionally substituted phenyl groups. The inventors have observed that the presence of phenyl groups results in the stabilization of the compounds of the invention and, consequently, in a decrease of the activation potential, which corresponds to an increase of the reduction potential, of the viologen compounds. Optionally substituted phenyl groups are represented by formula (V):



15

wherein R_a , R_b , R_c , R_d and R_e are each independently selected from:

- H, halogen, cyano, nitro, alkyl, haloalkyl, haloalkoxy, (haloalkoxy)alkyl, arylalkyl, cycloalkyl, (cycloalkyl)alkyl and (heterocycloalkyl)alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, allyl, vinyl, aryl, substituted aryl, heteroaryl, substituted heteroaryl, $-N(aryl)_2$, $-N(aryl)CO(aryl)$, $-CO-aryl$ and $-CO-substituted\ aryl$;
- $-OR^{19}$, $-SR^{19}$, $-S(O)R^{19}$, $-S(O_2)R^{19}$, $-S(O_2)NR^{19}R^{20}$, $-NR^{19}R^{20}$, $-NR^{19}COR^{20}$, $-NR^{19}CO(aryl)$, $-NR^{19}aryl$, $-CH_2OR^{19}$, $-CH_2SR^{19}$, $-CH_2R^{19}$, $-CO-R^{19}$ and $-CO_2R^{20}$ wherein R^{19} and R^{20} are independently selected from H, alkyl, haloalkyl, arylalkyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkylalkyl and heterocycloalkylalkyl;
- 25 - $-S(O_2)NR^{21}R^{22}$ and $-NR^{21}R^{22}$, wherein R^{21} and R^{22} form together with the nitrogen atom to which they are linked a saturated 5 to 7 membered heterocycloalkyl which may comprising in addition to the nitrogen atom one further heteroatom selected from oxygen, nitrogen and sulfur, and which may be optionally substituted by one or two groups, identical or different, selected from halogen, $-R^{19}$, $-OR^{19}$, and $-NR^{19}R^{20}$,
- 30 wherein R^{19} and R^{20} are as defined above;

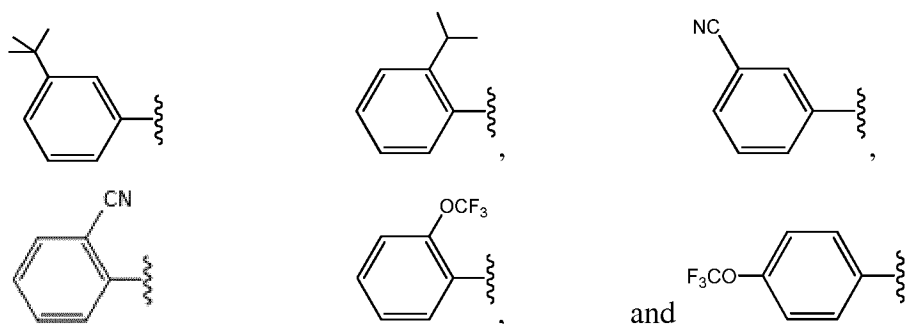
- $-V-W-R^{23}$ wherein:
 - V is selected from oxygen, $-N(R^{19})-$, sulfur, $-S(O)-$ and $-S(O_2)-$ wherein R^{19} is as defined above;
 - W is alkylene, which may be substituted by a group selected from halogen and alkoxy; and
 - R^{23} is selected from $-OR^{19}$, $-NR^{19}$ (alkyl) and $-SR^{19}$ wherein R^{19} is as defined above; and
- $OC(O)-R^{24}$ wherein R^{24} is selected from alkyl, haloalkyl, alkenyl, $-W-R^{23}$, and aryl group which may be substituted by 1 to 4 groups selected from halogen, $-R^{19}$, $-OR^{19}$, $-SR^{19}$, $-NR^{19}R^{20}$, $-NR^{21}R^{22}$, $-CO-R^{19}$, $-CO_2R^{19}$ wherein R^{19} , R^{20} , R^{21} , R^{22} , R^{23} and W are as defined above.

In particular, R_a , R_b , R_c , R_d and R_e may be independently selected from H, halogen, cyano, nitro, hydroxyl, alkyl, preferably C_4-C_{12} alkyl, haloalkyl, alkoxy, haloalkoxy, alkylthio, acyl, aroyl, alkoxy carbonyl, cycloalkyl, allyl, aryl, benzyl, and heteroaryl. In a particular embodiment, at least one of R_a , R_b , R_c , R_d and R_e is not H. Preferably, at least one of R_a , R_b , R_c , R_d and R_e is selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, hydroxyl, haloalkyl, haloalkoxy, alkoxy carbonyl, allyl, aryl and heteroaryl. Indeed, the inventors have found that such electron-withdrawing substituents stabilize the radical cation which results in a decrease of the activation potential. In a preferred embodiment, R_e is H and at least one of R_a , R_b , R_c and R_d is not H, preferably at least one of R_a and R_b is not H.

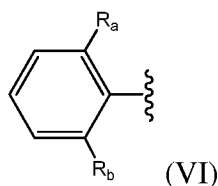
In a preferred variant, and in particular in the case where R_1 and R_2 are chosen to be different, R_e is H and at least one of R_a , R_b , R_c and R_d is not H, and may be independently selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, hydroxyl, C_4-C_{12} alkyl, haloalkyl, alkoxy, haloalkoxy, alkoxy carbonyl, cycloalkyl, allyl, aryl and heteroaryl.

In another variant, then R_e is H and at least one of R_a , R_b , R_c and R_d is not H, and may be independently selected from halogen, cyano, hydroxyl, C_4-C_{12} alkyl, haloalkyl, alkoxy, haloalkoxy, alkoxy carbonyl, cycloalkyl, allyl, and heteroaryl.

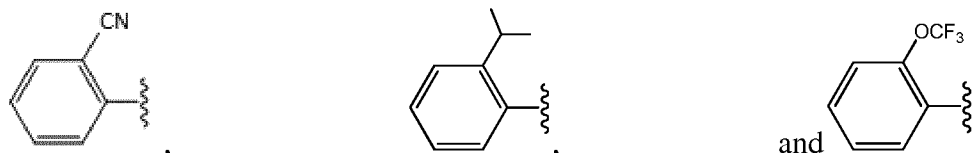
For example, at least one of R_a , R_b , R_c , R_d and R_e may be selected from methyl, *i*-propyl, *t*-butyl, cyano, trifluoromethoxy, preferably trifluoromethoxy. Thus, R^1 and R^2 may be independently selected from:



In a preferred embodiment, R^1 and R^2 are independently selected from substituted phenyl groups of formula (VI):



wherein R_a and R_b are as defined above provided that at least one of R_a and R_b is not H. In particular, R^1 and R^2 may be selected from:



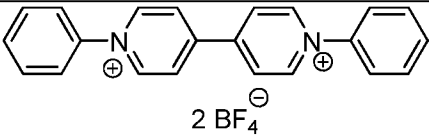
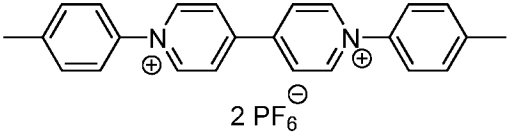
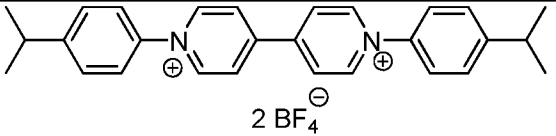
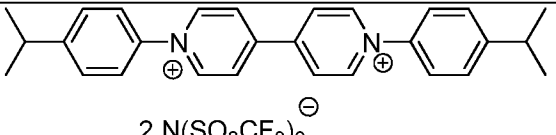
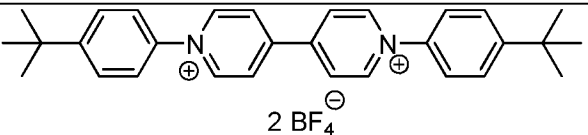
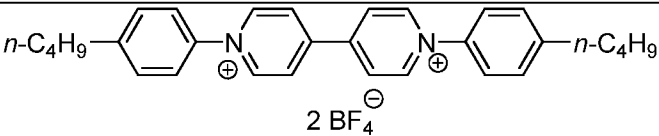
In formula (II), A and B are preferably respectively selected from nitrogen and $-N^+(R^{7a})-$, and from nitrogen and $-N^+(R^{7b})-$, wherein R^{7a} and R^{7b} are independently selected from C_6 - C_8 alkyl, in particular *n*-hexyl, and phenyl or naphthyl, wherein phenyl and naphthyl may be both substituted by one or more substituents independently selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, hydroxy, C_1 - C_4 alkyl, C_1 - C_4 haloalkyl, C_1 - C_4 alkoxy, C_1 - C_4 haloalkoxy, C_1 - C_4 alkylthio, C_1 - C_4 haloalkylthio, C_3 - C_7 cycloalkyl, $(C_3$ - C_7 cycloalkyl) C_1 - C_4 alkyl.

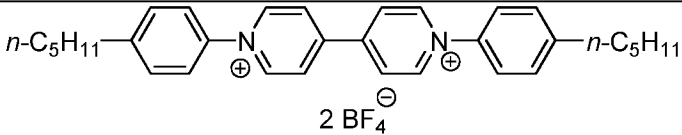
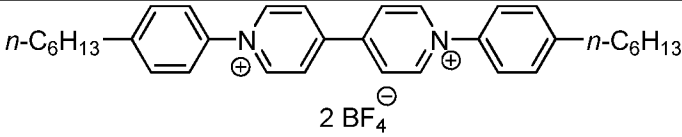
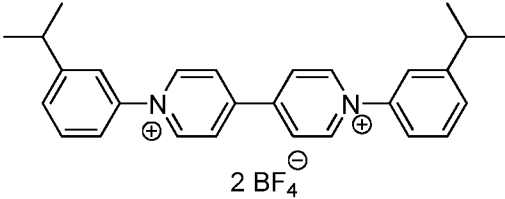
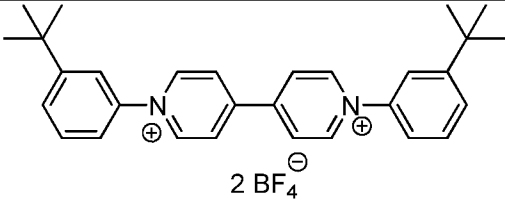
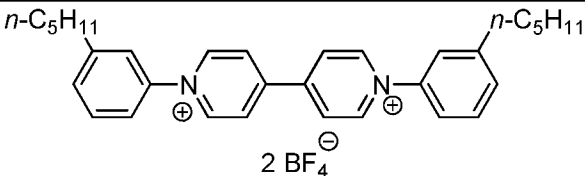
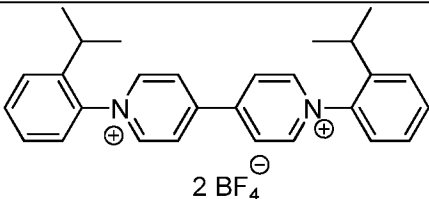
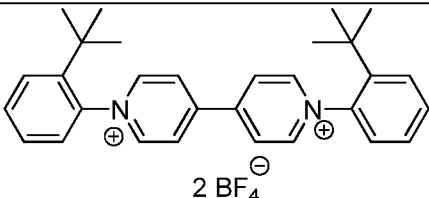
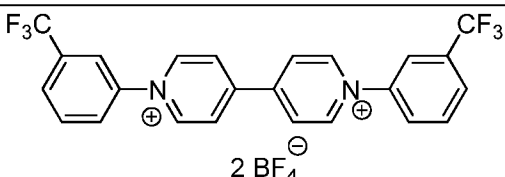
In particular, A and B may be independently selected from $-N^+(C_6-C_8 \text{ alkyl})-$, preferably $-N^+(C_6H_{13})-$, more preferably $-N^+(n-C_6H_{13})-$. The corresponding compounds have a good solubility in conventional solvents used in electrochromic compositions, such as propylene carbonate, while maintaining a fast fading rate to the bleached state. Indeed, C_1 - C_5 alkyl substituted viologen compounds are more difficult to solubilise in some solvents used in electrochromic compositions like some ionic liquids. On the contrary, higher alkyl substituted two-core viologen compounds have good solubility. However, when two-core

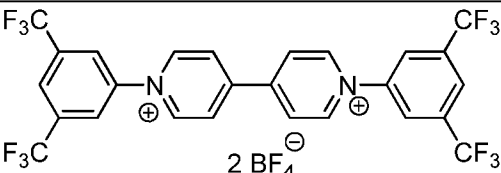
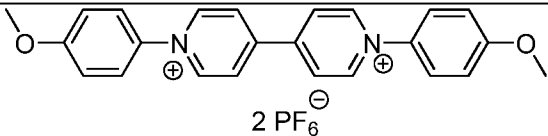
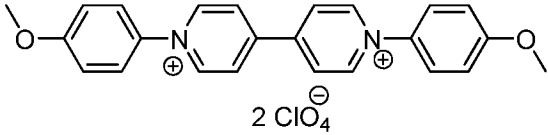
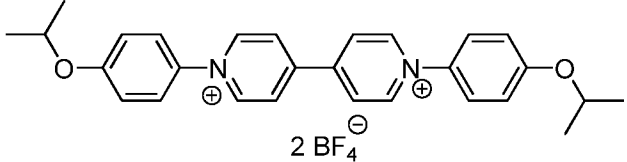
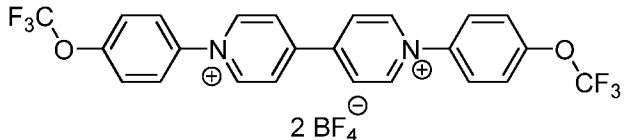
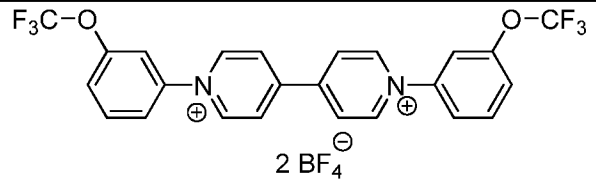
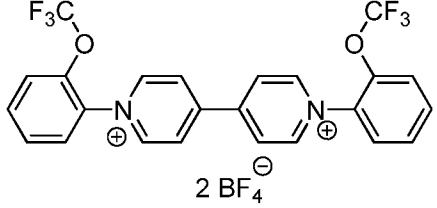
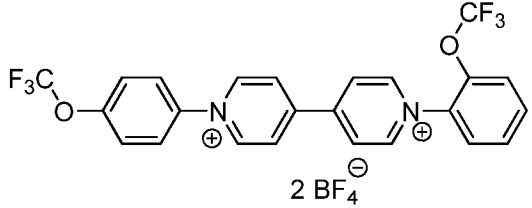
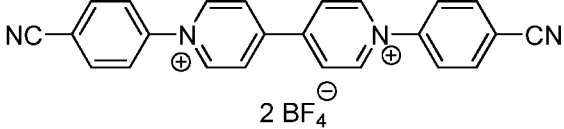
viologen compounds are substituted with long chain alkyls having more than 8 carbon atoms, the fading rate tends to decrease, which prevents a fast reversibility to the bleached state.

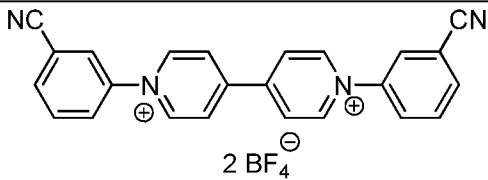
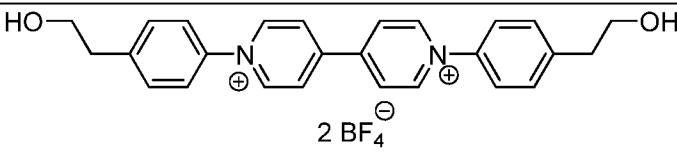
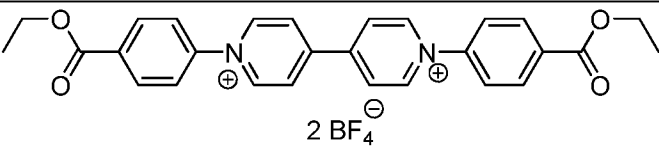
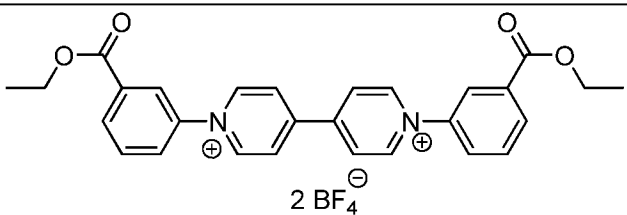
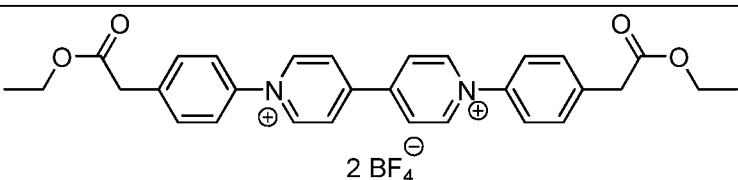
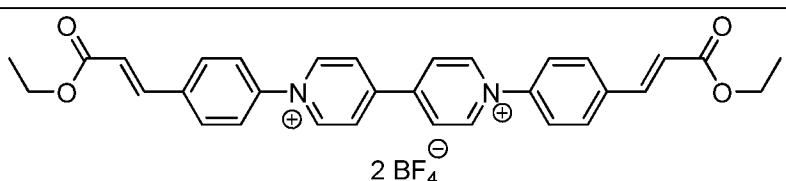
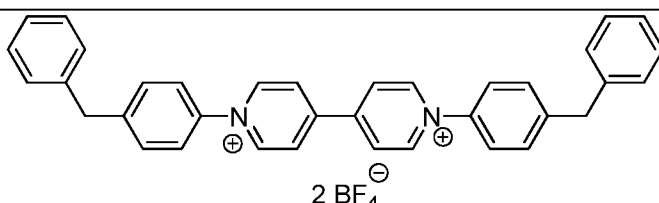
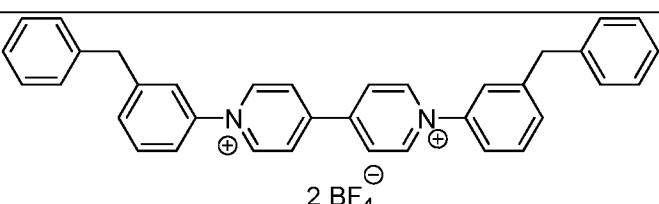
Also, the inventors have observed that the presence of aryl substituents, in particular phenyl substituents, on the viologen cores of compounds of the present invention results in the stabilization of the compounds of the invention and, consequently, in a decrease of the activation potential, which corresponds to an increase in the reduction potential of the viologen compounds. Therefore, in a preferred embodiment, A and B may be respectively selected from nitrogen and $-N^+(R^{7a})-$, and from nitrogen and $-N^+(R^{7b})-$, wherein R^{7a} and R^{7b} are independently selected from optionally substituted phenyl groups represented by formula (V) as defined above, preferably represented by formula (VI) as defined above.

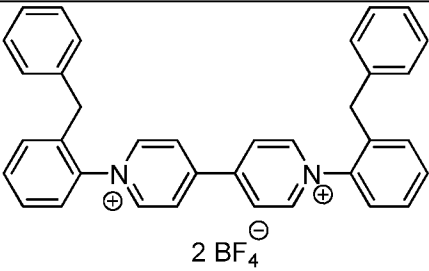
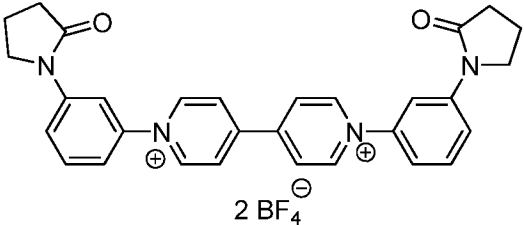
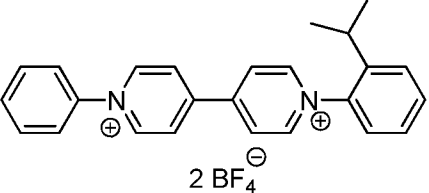
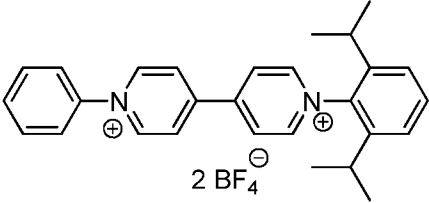
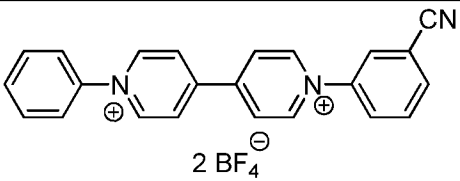
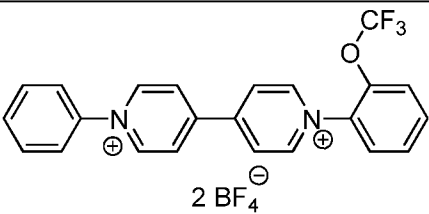
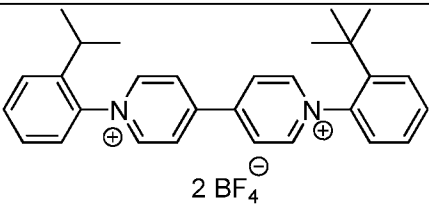
In a particularly preferred embodiment, the viologen derivatives of formula (I) and (II) are selected from the group consisting of:

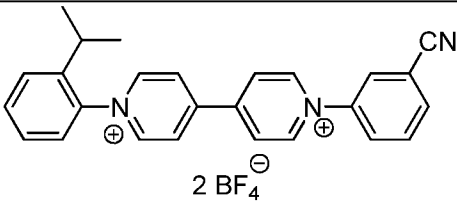
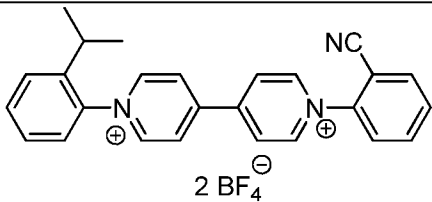
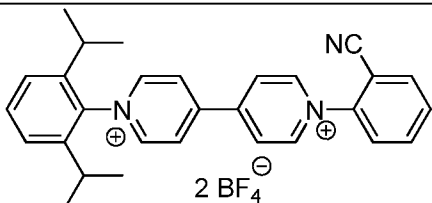
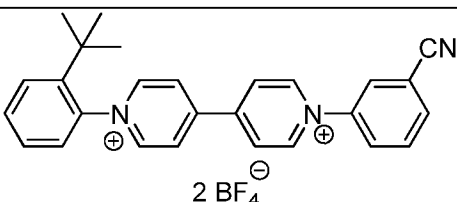
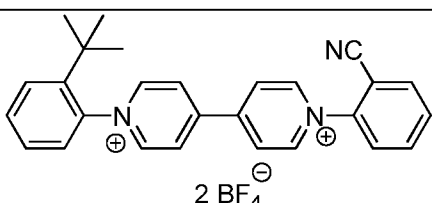
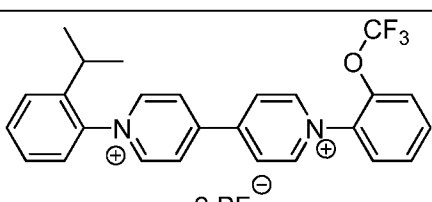
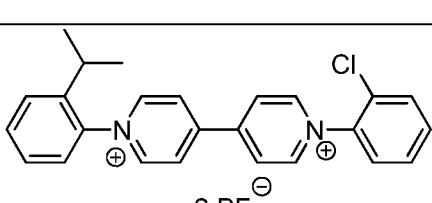
Compound	Formula
I-1	 2 BF_4^-
I-2	 2 PF_6^-
I-3	 2 BF_4^-
I-4	 $2 \text{ N(SO}_2\text{CF}_3)_2^-$
I-5	 2 BF_4^-
I-6	 2 BF_4^-

I-7	
I-8	
I-9	
I-10	
I-11	
I-12	
I-13	
I-14	

I-15	 2 BF ₄ [⊖]
I-16	 2 PF ₆ [⊖]
I-17	 2 ClO ₄ [⊖]
I-18	 2 BF ₄ [⊖]
I-19	 2 BF ₄ [⊖]
I-20	 2 BF ₄ [⊖]
I-21	 2 BF ₄ [⊖]
I-22	 2 BF ₄ [⊖]
I-23	 2 BF ₄ [⊖]

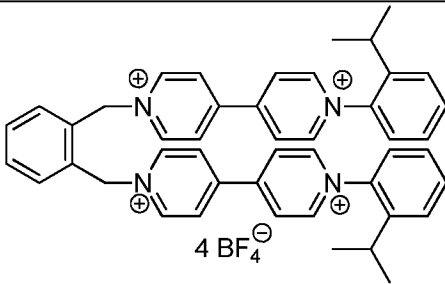
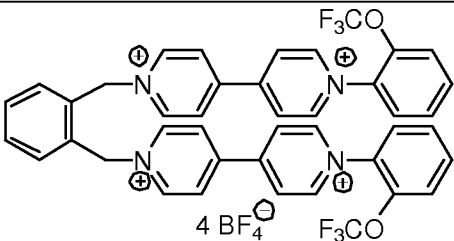
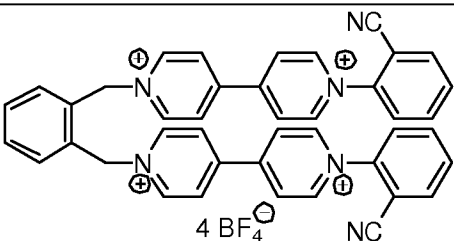
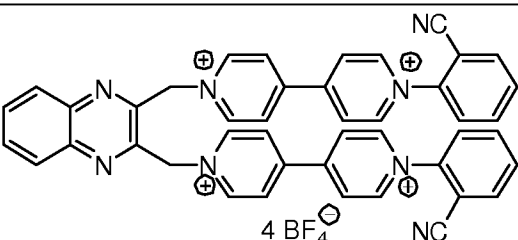
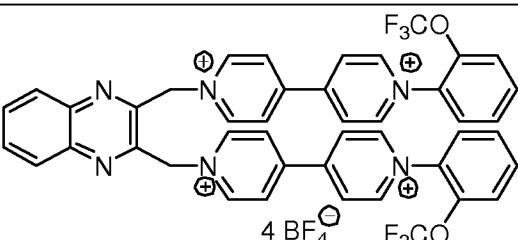
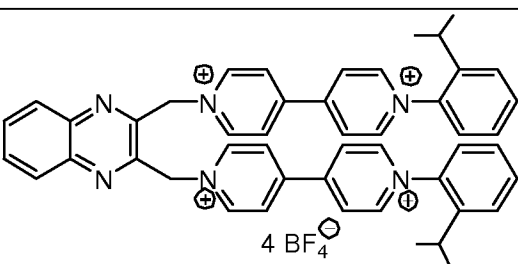
I-24	 <chem>N#Cc1ccc(cc1)[n+]2ccc(cc2[n+]3ccc(cc3)C#N) + 2[B-](F)(F)F</chem>
I-25	 <chem>OCc1ccc(cc1)[n+]2ccc(cc2[n+]3ccc(cc3)CO) + 2[B-](F)(F)F</chem>
I-26	 <chem>CCOC(=O)c1ccc(cc1)[n+]2ccc(cc2[n+]3ccc(cc3)C(=O)OCC) + 2[B-](F)(F)F</chem>
I-27	 <chem>CCOC(=O)c1cccc(c1)[n+]2ccc(cc2[n+]3cccc(c3)C(=O)OCC) + 2[B-](F)(F)F</chem>
I-28	 <chem>CCOC(=O)Cc1ccc(cc1)[n+]2ccc(cc2[n+]3ccc(cc3)C(=O)OCC) + 2[B-](F)(F)F</chem>
I-29	 <chem>CCOC(=O)/C=C/c1ccc(cc1)[n+]2ccc(cc2[n+]3ccc(cc3)/C=C/C(=O)OCC) + 2[B-](F)(F)F</chem>
I-30	 <chem>c1ccc(cc1)Cc2ccc(cc2)[n+]3ccc(cc3[n+]4ccc(cc4)Cc5ccccc5) + 2[B-](F)(F)F</chem>
I-31	 <chem>c1ccc(cc1)Cc2cccc(c2)[n+]3ccc(cc3[n+]4ccccc4) + 2[B-](F)(F)F</chem>

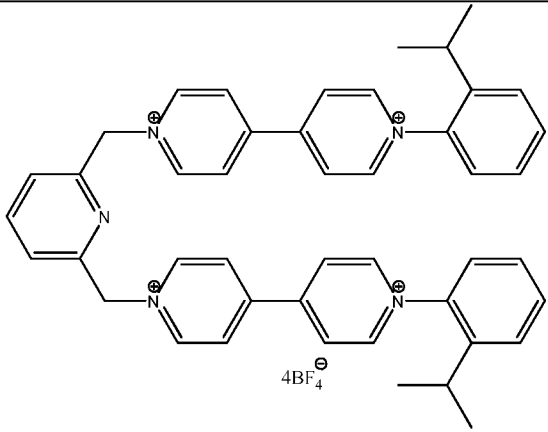
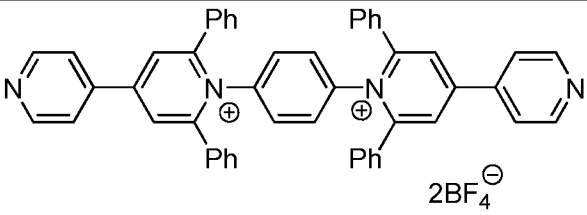
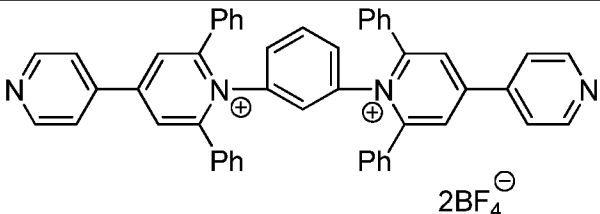
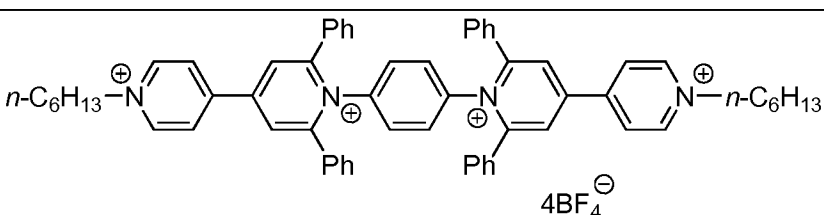
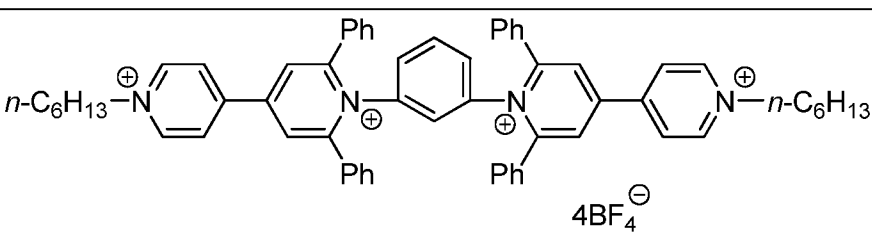
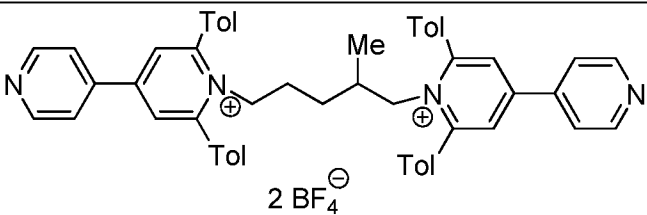
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I-33	 <chem>O=C1CCN1c2ccc(cc2)N3C=CC=CC=C3N4C=CC=CC=C4c5ccc(cc5)N6CCNC6=O</chem> 2 BF_4^-
I-34	 <chem>CC(C)c1ccc(cc1)N2C=CC=CC=C2N3C=CC=CC=C3N4C=CC=CC=C4c5ccccc5</chem> 2 BF_4^-
I-35	 <chem>CC(C)c1cc(C)c(cc1)N2C=CC=CC=C2N3C=CC=CC=C3N4C=CC=CC=C4c5ccccc5</chem> 2 BF_4^-
I-36	 <chem>N#Cc1ccc(cc1)N2C=CC=CC=C2N3C=CC=CC=C3N4C=CC=CC=C4c5ccccc5</chem> 2 BF_4^-
I-37	 <chem>COc1ccc(cc1)N2C=CC=CC=C2N3C=CC=CC=C3N4C=CC=CC=C4c5ccccc5</chem> 2 BF_4^-
I-38	 <chem>CC(C)c1cc(C(C)(C)C)cc1N2C=CC=CC=C2N3C=CC=CC=C3N4C=CC=CC=C4c5ccccc5</chem> 2 BF_4^-

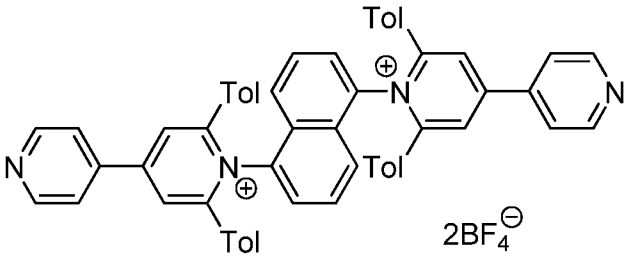
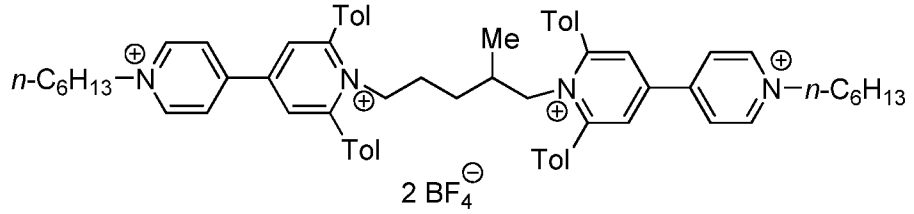
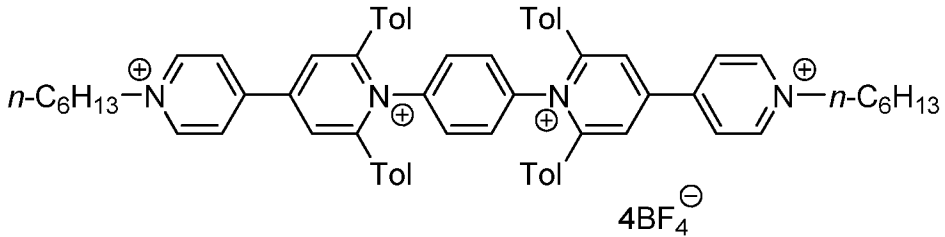
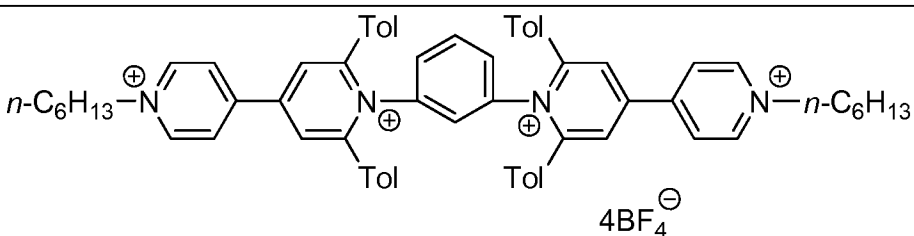
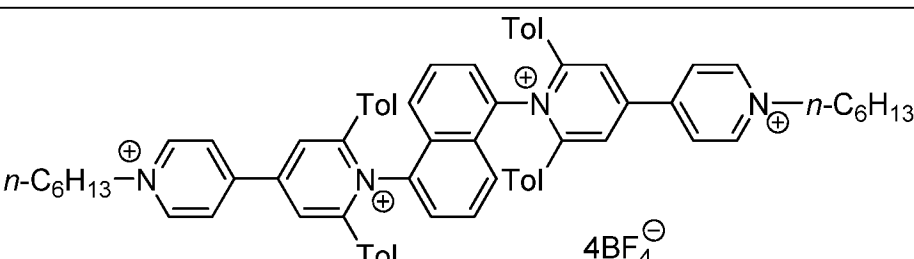
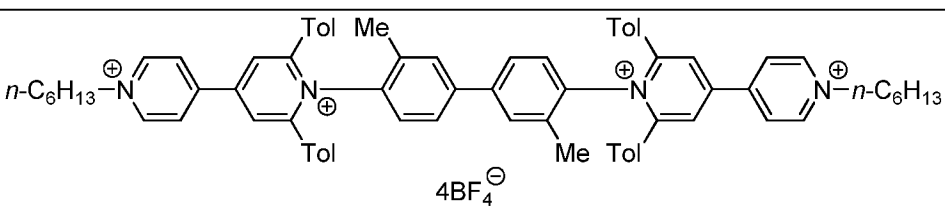
I-39	 <chem>CC(C)c1ccccc1N2=CC=CC=C2[N+]2=CC=C(C3=CC=CC=C3C#N)N2.[B-](F)(F)F.[B-](F)(F)F</chem>
I-40	 <chem>CC(C)c1ccccc1N2=CC=CC=C2[N+]2=CC=C(C3=CC=CC=C3C#N)N2.[B-](F)(F)F.[B-](F)(F)F</chem>
I-41	 <chem>CC(C)c1cc(C(C)C)c(C(C)C)cc1N2=CC=CC=C2[N+]2=CC=C(C3=CC=CC=C3C#N)N2.[B-](F)(F)F.[B-](F)(F)F</chem>
I-42	 <chem>CC(C)(C)c1ccc(cc1)N2=CC=CC=C2[N+]2=CC=C(C3=CC=CC=C3C#N)N2.[B-](F)(F)F.[B-](F)(F)F</chem>
I-43	 <chem>CC(C)(C)c1ccc(cc1)N2=CC=CC=C2[N+]2=CC=C(C3=CC=CC=C3C#N)N2.[B-](F)(F)F.[B-](F)(F)F</chem>
I-44	 <chem>CC(C)c1ccccc1N2=CC=CC=C2[N+]2=CC=C(C3=CC=CC=C3OC(F)(F)F)N2.[B-](F)(F)F.[B-](F)(F)F</chem>
I-45	 <chem>CC(C)c1ccccc1N2=CC=CC=C2[N+]2=CC=C(C3=CC=CC=C3Cl)N2.[B-](F)(F)F.[B-](F)(F)F</chem>

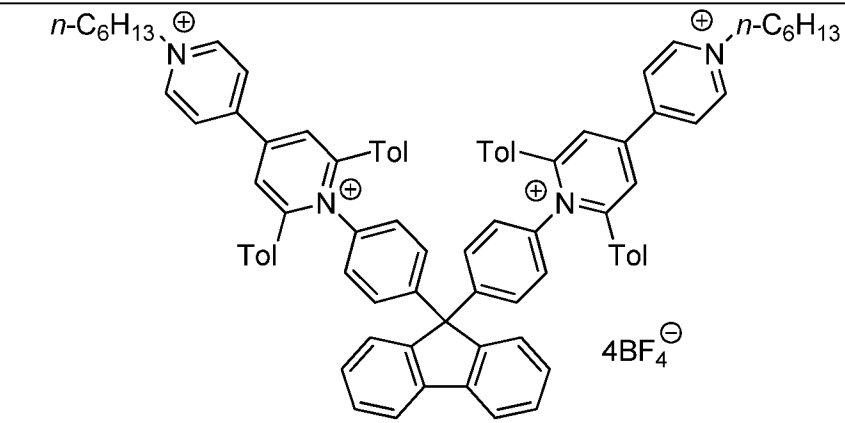
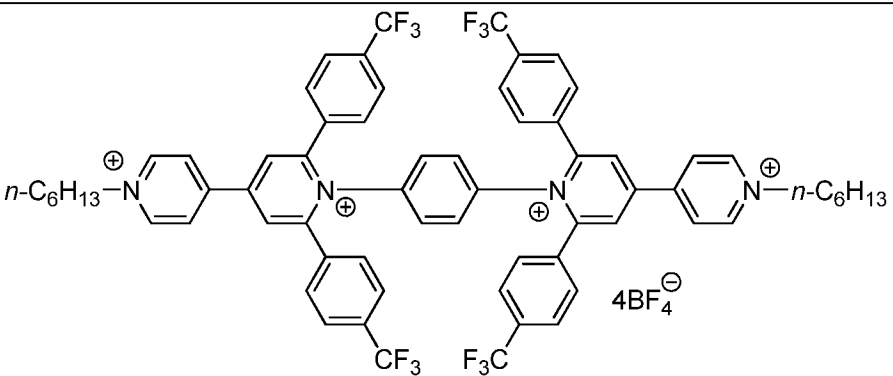
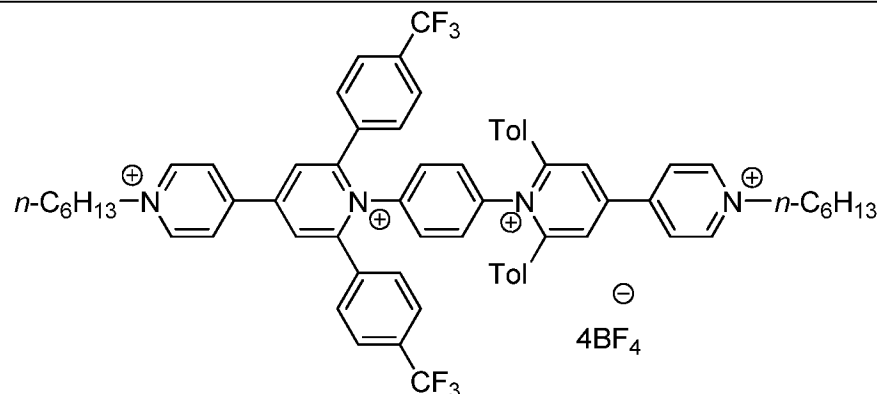
I-46	
I-47	
I-48	
I-49	
I-50	
III-1	
III-2	
III-3	

III-4	
III-5	
III-6	
III-7	
III-8	
III-9	
III-10	
III-11	
III-12	

III-13	
III-14	
III-15	
III-16	
III-17	
III-18	

III-19	 4BF_4^-
IV-1	 2BF_4^-
IV-2	 2BF_4^-
IV-3	 4BF_4^-
IV-4	 4BF_4^-
IV-5	 2BF_4^-

IV-6	 2BF ₄ [⊖]
IV-7	 2 BF ₄ [⊖]
IV-8	 4BF ₄ [⊖]
IV-9	 4BF ₄ [⊖]
IV-10	 4BF ₄ [⊖]
IV-11	 4BF ₄ [⊖]

IV-12	
IV-13	
IV-14	

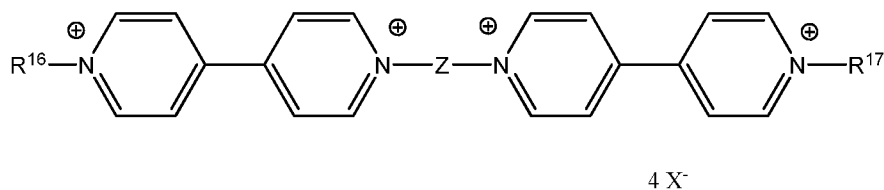
Me represents methyl; Ph represents phenyl; Tol represents 4-methylphenyl

In a first embodiment, at least one of the viologen derivatives present in the composition is selected from compounds of formula (I). Compounds of formula (I) generally have a green or blue-green colour in their coloured state. However, Applicant found that compounds of formula (I) wherein R^1 and R^2 are independently selected from substituted phenyl groups of formula (VI) as defined above can provide a wide range of colours in the low visible wavelength – i.e. blue or green coloured state –, while presenting good stability. Indeed, the Applicant found that the presence of a substituent in the ortho position of the phenyl group results in a hypsochromic effect compared to the meta position, which itself provides a hypsochromic effect compared to the para position. Indeed

the maximum wavelength $\lambda_{\max}$ in the absorption spectrum for a similar compound is higher when the substituent is in the para position of the phenyl group, than in the meta position, and a fortiori than in the ortho position.

Preferred compounds of formula (I) are compounds I-1 to I-50 defined above.

- 5 In a second embodiment, the viologen derivative of Formula (II) is selected from compounds of formula (III):



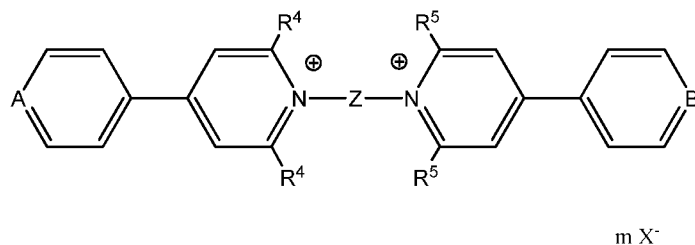
(III)

- wherein Z, and X⁻ are as defined in formula (II), and R¹⁶ and R¹⁷ are selected from alkyl and optionally substituted phenyl groups.

In particular, R¹⁶ and R¹⁷ may be independently selected from optionally substituted phenyl groups of formula (V) defined above. Alternatively, R¹⁶ and R¹⁷ may be independently selected from substituted phenyl groups of formula (VI) as defined above. Such compounds can provide colours in the low visible wavelength, while presenting good stability.

- 15 Preferred compounds of formula (III) are compounds III-1 to III-18 defined above.

In a third embodiment, the viologen derivative of Formula (II) is selected from compounds of formula (IV):



(IV)

- 20 wherein R⁴, R⁵, Z, A, B, m and X⁻ are as defined in formula (II) and at least one of R⁴ and R⁵ is not H.

Z is preferably selected from alkylene and arylene; more preferably, Z is selected from phenylene and naphthylene.

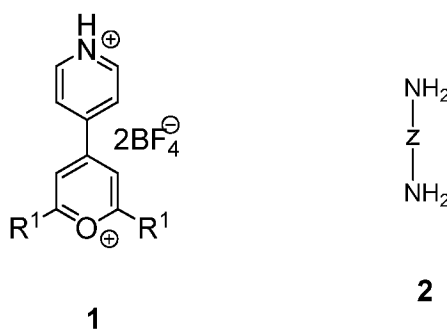
- A and B are preferably independently selected from nitrogen and -N⁺(alkyl)-. In particular, compounds of formula (IV) wherein A and B are nitrogen can provide colours in the high visible wavelength – i.e. yellow and red -, while presenting good stability.

Preferably, R^4 and R^5 are independently selected from optionally substituted aryl; more preferably, R^4 and R^5 are independently selected from optionally substituted phenyl.

Preferred compounds of formula (IV) are compounds IV-1 to IV-14 defined above.

Compounds of formula (I) and (II) can be obtained through various methods well known in the art. Suitable methods are described for example in EP 13184771.7 and EP 13184780.8.

In particular Compounds of formula IV can be prepared by a method comprising the step of reacting a 2,6-disubstituted-4-[(1H)-pyridinium-4-yl]pyrylium bis(tetrafluoroborate) (1) with a diamine (2):

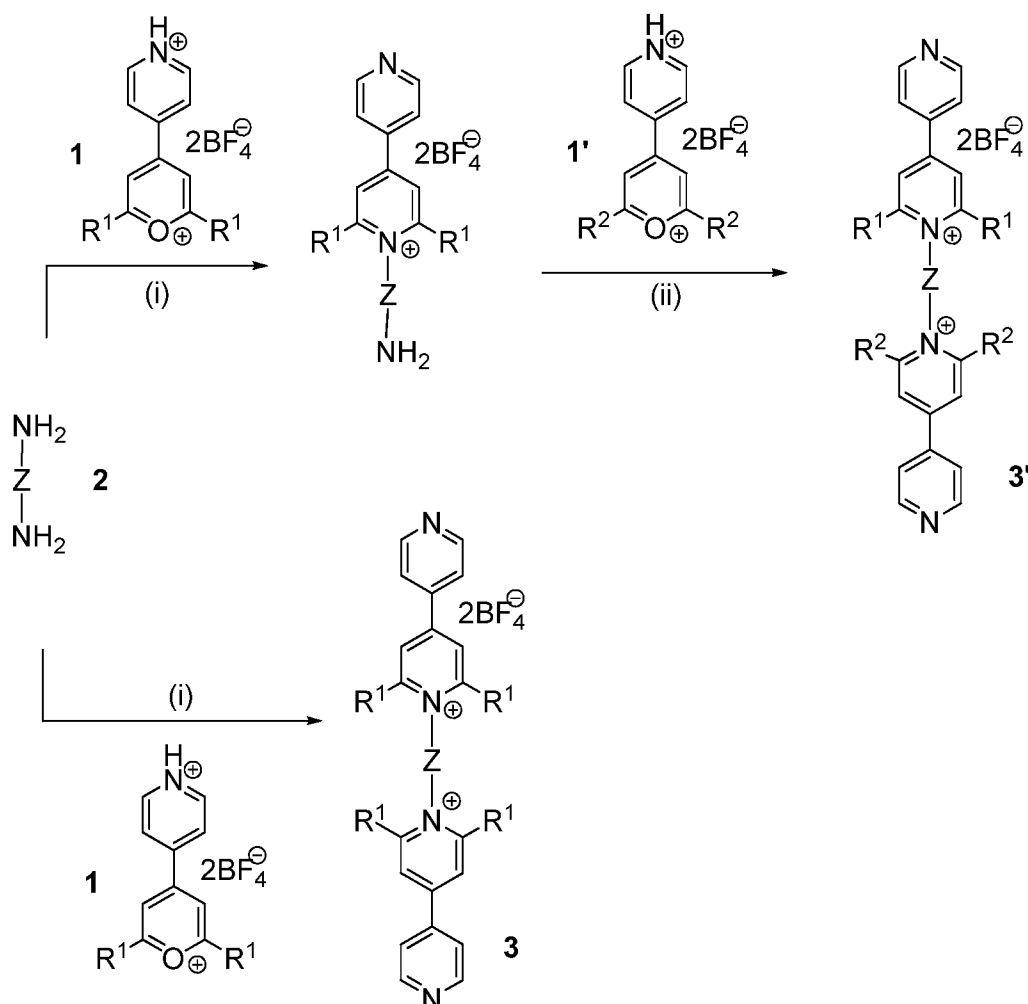


10

wherein Z, and R^1 are as defined above.

The use of a single 2,6-disubstituted-4-[(1H)-pyridinium-4-yl]pyrylium bis(tetrafluoroborate) (1) results in symmetrically substituted two-cores viologen derivatives (3) of formula (I-3) wherein A and B are nitrogen, and R^1 and R^2 are identical. Through a control the amount of the diamine (2) and a subsequent reaction with a second 2,6-disubstituted-4-[(1H)-pyridinium-4-yl]pyrylium bis(tetrafluoroborate) (1'), unsymmetrically substituted two-cores viologen derivatives (3') of formula (IV) wherein A and B are nitrogen, and R^1 and R^2 are different, can be obtained as shown on scheme A.

15



Scheme A

Steps (i) and (ii) disclosed in scheme A may be achieved under heat, for example from 70 to 90°C, in an alcohol and in the presence of a base.

- 5 Compounds of formula (IV) wherein A and/or B are respectively -N⁺(R^{7a})- and -N⁺(R^{7b})- as defined above can be obtained from the corresponding compounds (3) or (3') using suitable reaction step well known in the art. For example, compounds of formula (IV) wherein A and/or B are -N⁺(alkyl)- can be obtained through an *N*-alkylation of the corresponding compound (3) or (3') with a suitable haloalkane.

- 10 The 2,6-disubstituted-4-[(1H)-pyridinium-4-yl]pyrylium bis(tetrafluoroborate) (1) may be prepared according to various methods well known in the art. For example, 4-(4-pyridyl)-1,5-disubstituted-1,5-diketones can be obtained by the condensation of pyridine-4-carboxaldehyde and substituted acetophenones (see for example Aryl-substituted Derivatives of 4,4'-Bipyridylum Salts: their Spectroscopic Properties and Stereochemistry, J. E. Downes, *J. Chem. Soc. (C)*, 1967, 1491 and Pyrylogens: Synthesis,
- 15

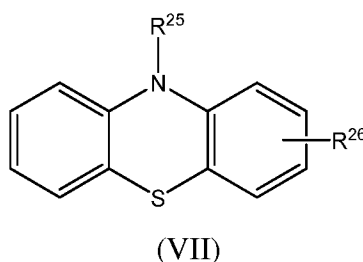
Structural, Electrochemical, and Photophysical Characterization of a New Class of Electron Transfer Sensitizers, E. L. Clennan, C. Liao, E. Ayokosok, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, 2008, 130, 7552). The cyclisation of the 4-(4-pyridyl)-1,5-disubstituted 1,5-diketones can be readily accomplished by, for example, heating in glacial acetic acid containing *trans*-
5 chalcone and boron trifluoride etherate to give the 2,5-disubstituted 4-[(1*H*)-pyridinium-4-yl]pyrylium bis(tetrafluoroborates) (1).

The reducing compound of the composition of the present invention is not particularly limited. The reducing compound is not necessarily an electrochromic compound; however, it should be chosen among compounds having at least the following
10 properties: low absorption of visible light in the bleached state (if the reducing compound is also an electrochromic compound), good stability, in particular to oxygen, and good solubility in conventional electrochromic solvents. Whether or not the reducing compound used in the electrochromic composition of the invention has electrochromic properties, the wide range of colours available among compounds of formula (I) and (II) allows obtaining
15 the desired colour for the electrochromic composition when activated, possibly taking into account the colour of the reducing compound in its coloured state, if any.

The reducing compound can be selected from:

- ferrocene and their derivatives such as ethyl ferrocene, t-butyl ferrocene,
- phenoxazine and their derivatives, such as N-benzylphenoxazine,
- 20 - phenazine and their derivatives, such as 5,10-dihydrophenazine, N,N,N',N'-tetramethyl-p-phenylenediamine,
- phenothiazine and their derivatives, such as 10-methylphenothiazine and isopropylphenothiazine,
- thioanthrene, and
- 25 - tetrathiafulvalene.

Accordingly, the reducing compound may be selected from phenothiazine derivatives of formula (VII):



wherein R²⁵ is independently selected from H, alkyl, preferably C₁-C₆ alkyl, C₁-C₆ heteroalkyl, C₆-C₁₄ aryl and substituted aryl, preferably phenyl and phenyl substituted by one or more substituents selected from halogen, C₁-C₄ alkyl, C₁-C₄ heteroalkyl and C₁-C₄ haloalkyl, and benzyl and substituted benzyl, preferably phenylbenzyl and R²⁶ is
5 selected from the group consisting of H, C₁-C₄ haloalkyl, preferably trifluoromethyl, C₁-C₄ alkoxy, preferably methoxy, and optionally substituted aryl, preferably optionally substituted phenyl.

The composition of the invention also includes at least one dye, which may for instance be selected from the group consisting of:

- 10 - organic or inorganic photochromic and/or dichroic substances,
- electrochromic substances distinct from the first constituent of this invention, and which may be selected among the above compounds of Formulas (I) and/or (II) or among different electrochromic compounds,
- organic and inorganic pigments, especially in the form of nanoparticles,
- 15 - organic dyes,
- optical brighteners,
- and mixtures thereof.

Each dye included in the composition of the invention shall be chemically inert with respect to the electrochromic molecules with which said dye is mixed. Said dye shall also
20 be soluble in the same solvent used for the electrochromic molecules. Moreover, said dye shall present a good electrochemical stability, i.e. each dye shall keep its characteristics after several cycles of activation/deactivation of the electrochromic molecules.

Examples of organic photochromic substances that may be used are those selected from the group consisting of: naphthopyrans, such as 3H-naphtho[2,1-b]pyrans and 3H-naphtho[1,2-b]pyrans; benzopyrans; oxazines, such as benzoxazines, spiro-oxazines,
25 spironaphthooxazines and spiroindoline[2,3']benzoxazines; fulgides; fulgimides; and their mixtures. Among these compounds, some also provide dichroic properties, such as those described in WO 2008/028930.

Examples of dichroic substances that can be used within the context of the
30 invention may include azomethines, indigoids, thioindigoids, indans, quinophthalonics, perylenes, phthaloperines, triphenodioxazines, indoloquininoxalines, imidazotriazines, azo and polyazo dyes, benzoquinones, naphthoquinones, (poly)anthraquinones,

anthrapyrimidinones, iodines, iodates and their mixtures. These compounds are available from various suppliers such as MERCK, MITSUI or NEMATEL. Dichroic compounds are typically used in combination with liquid crystals, because the former are able to orient themselves, and the dichroic dyes they contain, when an electrical potential is applied, which produces the required colour.

The electrochromic compounds used as a dye preferably have a redox potential similar to that of the first constituent of this invention. Preferably, the redox potentials of the electrochromic compound used as a dye differ from that of the invention of less than 0.2 V, more preferably of less than 0.15 V, still more preferably of less than 0.1 V, even more preferably of less than 0.05 V. Since the redox potentials of these electrochromic compounds are very close, said compounds can change colour simultaneously when a potential is applied to the composition, and the "chameleon effect" occurring when electrochromic compounds change colour all one by one can be prevented. In one embodiment, the electrochromic compounds used as a dye may be chosen from inorganic electrochromic compounds, such as WO_3 , IrO_2 , TiO_2 , Nb_2O_5 , MoO_3 , V_2O_5 , iron hexacyanoferrates (such as Prussian blue) and their mixtures; and organic electrochromic compounds, such as polythiophene and its derivatives including PEDOT, polyaniline, polypyrrole, metallopolymers, metallophtalocyanines, alkylviologens, arylviologens, arylalkylviologens, alkylarylviologens, or anthraquinone and its derivatives, and their mixtures. In another embodiment, the electrochromic compounds used as a dye may be selected from those of Formula (I), wherein R^1 and/or R^2 represent a phenyl group which is substituted in the para position. In still another embodiment, the electrochromic compounds used as a dye may be selected from those of Formula (II), wherein R^{7a} and/or R^{7b} represent a phenyl group which is substituted in the para position.

Optical brighteners are compounds well known to a person skilled in the art, which emit a fluorescent visible light when they are illuminated by UV radiation. The visible light which is produced by these compounds is therefore situated at least partially within the wavelength band comprised between 380 nm and 780 nm, in particular between 380 nm and 420 nm, corresponding to a blue colour. Optical brighteners are usually derivatives of benzoxazolyis, stilbenes, and benzotriazoles, such as derivatives of 4,4'-diaminostilbene-2,2'-disulphonic acid. Examples of optical brighteners are available under

the names FLUOLITE XMP a trademark of ICI, LECOPUR EGM, a trademark of SANDOZ, and UVITEX OB, a trademark of CIBA-GEIGY.

Examples of organic and inorganic pigments include quinacridones, isoindolinones with or without cobalt complexes resp. copper complexes, aryl amides, diarylides and lead/(sulfur)/chromium compounds. Examples of pigments are the following, wherein C.I. is the color index no.: phthalocyanine blue (pigment blue 15:3, C.I. 74160), cobalt blue (pigment blue 36, C.I. 77343), Toner cyan BG (Clariant), Permajet blue B2G (Clariant); phthalocyanine green (Pigment green 7, C.I. 74260), chromium sesquioxide; iron oxides; carbazole violet; and Monolith black C-K (CIBA Specialty Chemicals).

Organic dyes are compounds that are soluble in aqueous or organic solvents. They can be chosen among azo or diazo compounds, quinone derivatives, anthraquinone derivatives, indigoid compounds, phthalides, phthalocyanine derivatives, porphyrines, styryl derivatives, quinophthalone derivatives, naphthazine derivatives, pyrazolone, and their mixtures, or can be derived from a halotriazine such as a dihalotriazine or monohalotriazine, especially water-soluble dichlorotriazines. Some of these organic dyes may also have electrochromic properties. Examples of organic dyes are available from CLARIANT under the trade names Savinyl, Solvaperm, Duasyn and Sanolyn, for instance.

In a preferred embodiment, the composition of the invention comprises at least one dye selected from the group consisting of organic or inorganic photochromic and/or dichroic substances and electrochromic substances distinct from the first constituent of this invention, and which may be selected among the above compounds of Formulas (I) and/or (II), in particular among compounds of formula III, or among different electrochromic compounds.

In this particular embodiment, the composition of the invention may comprise two dyes: the first dye being an electrochromic substance distinct from the first constituent of this invention, and which may be selected among the above compounds of Formulas (I) and/or (II), in particular among compounds of formula III or among different electrochromic compounds and the second dye being selected from the group consisting of organic or inorganic photochromic and/or dichroic substances.

The composition according to this invention may comprise a fluid, mesomorphous or gel host medium in which the electrochromic compounds are preferably dissolved. The

fluid or mesomorphous host medium is preferably selected from the group consisting of organic solvents and/or liquid crystals.

Suitable solvents are redox-inert solvents which cannot react with the electrochromic compounds of the composition. Examples of suitable solvents are ethylene carbonate, propylene carbonate, γ -butyrolactone, γ -valerolactone, acetonitrile, propionitrile, benzonitrile, glutaronitrile, methylglutaronitrile, dimethylformamide, N-methylpyrrolidone, sulfolane, 3-methyl sulfolane, benzene, toluene, methyl ethyl ketone, acetone, ethanol, tetrahydrofurfuryl alcohol, 2-methoxyethyl ether, xylene, cyclohexane, 3-methylcyclohexanone, ethyl acetate, ethyl phenylacetate, tetrahydrofuran, methanol, methyl propionate, ethylene glycol ethylene carbonate, ionic liquids, and mixtures thereof. Preference is given to carbonate and particularly propylene carbonate.

The liquid crystal medium that may be used in the present invention includes, without being limited to, such materials as nematic or chiral nematic media.

The concentration of the oxidizing compounds in the composition depends on the desired absorption of the electrochromic composition in the coloured (i.e. activated) state. The concentration of the oxidizing compounds is typically from 0.001 to 0.5 M, preferably from 0.01 to 0.3 M, more preferably from 0.05 to 0.25 M. The ratio between each of the oxidizing compounds can be easily determined by the skilled person according to the colour of the electrochromic composition to be obtained.

The concentration of the reducing compound in the composition can be from 0.001 to 0.5 M, preferably from 0.01 to 0.3 M, more preferably from 0.05 to 0.25 M.

The composition of the invention may further comprise an inert current-carrying electrolyte. The inert current-carrying electrolyte should be compatible with the other components of the composition. In particular, the inert current-carrying electrolyte should not react with the electrochromic compounds. Examples of inert current-carrying electrolyte include alkali metal salts, lithium, sodium or tetraalkylammonium salts, aluminium chloride and aluminium boride, persulfates and bis(fluorosulfonyl)imide. The inert current-carrying electrolyte is preferably selected from sodium, lithium and tetraalkylammonium, ions in combination with inert anion selected preferably from chloride, tetrafluoroborate and perchlorate. Other examples of inert anions are tetraphenylborate, cyano-triphenylborate, tetramethoxyborate, tetrapropoxyborate, tetraphenoxyborate, perchlorate, chloride, nitrate, sulphate, phosphate, methanesulphonate,

ethanesulphonate, tetradecanesulphonate, pentadecanesulphonate, trifluoromethanesulphonate, perfluorobutanesulphonate, perfluorooctanesulphonate, benzenesulphonate, chlorobenzenesulphonate, toluenesulphonate, butylbenzenesulphonate, tert-butylbenzenesulphonate, dodecylbenzenesulphonate, 5 trifluoromethylbenzenesulphonate, hexafluorophosphate, hexafluoroarsenate or hexafluorosilicate. Most preferred inert current-carrying electrolyte is tetra-*n*-butylammonium tetrafluoroborate. When present in the electrochromic composition, the concentration of the inert current-carrying electrolyte is typically from 0.005 to 2 M, preferably from 0.01 to 1 M, more preferably from 0.05 to 0.5 M.

10 The electrochromic composition of the invention may comprise other additives such as thickening or gelling agents. The thickening or gelling agent should be inert to the other components of the composition, should be electrochemically stable and should not decrease significantly the conductivity of the electrochromic composition. Examples of thickening or gelling agents include acrylic polymers such as polyacrylates including 15 polymethylmethacrylate, polyvinylacetate, polyurethanes, polystyrene, polyacetonitrile, cellulose derivatives such as carboxymethylcellulose, hydroxymethylcellulose, cellulose propionate or hydroxypropylmethylcellulose, gums or hydrocolloids such as gellan, carrageenan, pullulan, polyethylene oxide, polypropylene oxide, polyvinyl acetate, poly(*N*-vinyl pyrrolidone), and polyvinylidene fluoride. The concentration of the thickening or 20 gelling agent will depend on the nature of the thickening agent and the viscosity desired for the electrochromic composition. Typically, the content of the thickening or gelling agent may be from 1 to 30 wt%, preferably from 3 to 20 wt%, more preferably from 5 to 15 wt% of the electrochromic composition.

Suitable further additives for the electrochromic medium for the occasionally desired 25 protection against UV light (<350 nm) are UV absorbers. Examples are 2,4-dihydroxybenzophenone (UVINUL® 3000, BASF), 2-hydroxy-4-*n*-octyloxybenzophenone (SANDUVOR® 3035, Clariant), 2-(2H-benzotriazol-2-yl)-6-dodecyl-4-methylphenol (Tinuvin® 571, Ciba), 2,2'-dihydroxy-4-methoxy-benzophenone (Cyasorb 24™, American Cyanamid Company), ethyl 2-cyano-3,3-diphenylacrylate (UVINUL® 3035, 30 BASF 2-ethylhexyl 2-cyano-3,3-diphenyl-acrylate (UVINUL® 3039, BASF), 2-ethylhexyl *p*-methoxycinnamate (UVINUL® 3088, BASF), 2-hydroxy-4-methoxy-benzophenone

(CHIMASSORB® 90, Ciba), dimethyl 4-methoxybenzylidenemalonate (SANDUVOR® PR-25, Clariant).

The present invention also relates to an electrochromic device, in particular an optical article, comprising the composition of the invention.

5 The electrochromic device may be selected from an optical article such as an optical lens or an optical filter, a window, a visor, a mirror and a display, in particular a segmented or matrix display. Preferably, the electrochromic device of the invention is an optical lens, more preferably an ophthalmic lens. Non-limiting examples of ophthalmic lenses include
10 corrective and non-corrective lenses, including single vision or multi-vision lenses, which may be either segmented or non-segmented, as well as other elements used to correct, protect, or enhance vision, including without limitation contact lenses, intra-ocular lenses, magnifying lenses and protective lenses or visors. Non-limiting examples of display elements and devices include screens and monitors. Non-limiting examples of windows include automotive, marine and aircraft windows, filters, shutters, and optical switches.

15 The device may contain functional layers such as polarizing layers, photochromic layers, anti-reflecting coatings, visible light and UV absorbing coatings, impact-resistant coatings, abrasion-resistant-coating, anti-smudge-coating, anti-fog coating, anti-dust coating, all of which are familiar to the skilled person. The electrochromic device of the invention may comprise a mechanism for holding the composition in a mechanically stable
20 environment. For example, the electrochromic device of the invention comprises an electrochromic cell including two substrates facing each other. The substrates are preferably optical substrates such as any mineral or organic glass commonly known and used in the optical field. It may be sodocalcic ou borosilicate mineral glass for instance. It may be a thermoplastic resin such as a thermoplastic polycarbonate, or a thermoset or
25 photo-cured resin such as polyurethane or polythiourethane. In case where the electrochromic device is used as an ophthalmic lens, the substrates used for manufacturing the cell may have a spherical shape or aspheric shape. The internal sides of the substrates may be coated with transparent conductive electrodes ("TCO"). The conductive electrodes may be formed of a transparent conductive material such as, for example indium tin oxide
30 ("ITO"), fluorine-doped in oxide ("FTO"). The sheet resistance of these TCO must be below 100 ohm/square, preferably below 40 ohm/square, and even preferably below 10 ohm/square. The substrates may be held at fixed distance from each other, for example

with a spacer of 10 μm to 200 μm , preferably of 20 to 150 μm , and more preferably of 75 μm , in order to form a gap wherein the electrochromic composition is introduced.

Another device of the present invention comprises an optical component provided with at least one transparent cell arrangement juxtaposed in a parallel direction to the surface thereof, as disclosed in WO 2006/013250, each cell being tightly closed and
5 containing said fluid, mesomorphous or gel host medium and said at least one compound of the present invention. Other devices according to the invention can be a device as described in FR 2937154 or FR2950710 comprising at least one compound of the invention.

EXAMPLES

This invention will be further illustrated by the following non-limiting examples which are given for illustrative purposes only and should not restrict the scope of the appended claims.

Example 1: composition comprising electrochromic compounds and a photochromic substance

A composition was prepared by dissolving, in propylene carbonate (82.3 wt.%):

- the electrochromic compound corresponding to Formula I-10 above (3.5 wt.%),
- 10 - the electrochromic compound corresponding to Formula III-10 above (2.0 wt.%),
- 10-methylphenothiazine (5.9 wt.%) as a reducing agent,
- a photochromic substance of the naphthopyrane type, produced by VIVIMED LABS under the trade name Reversacol[®] Berry Red (0.8 wt.%), and
- tetrabutylammonium tetrafluoroborate, hereafter designated as TBA BF₄⁻ (5.5 wt.%).

15 A tank was filled at room temperature and atmospheric pressure with the electrochromic composition as described above. A cell was then placed vertically in the tank under atmospheric pressure in such way that the opening was located above the solution level. This cell included two mineral glass substrates facing each other, the internal sides of which were coated with transparent conductive electrodes made of indium
20 tin oxide (ITO). The substrates were held at fixed distance from one another by using spacers of 75 µm, in order to form a gap. The edge of the cell was sealed with a UV curable adhesive in such a way that an opening of 5 mm was left.

The tank with the cell was placed in a vacuum-desiccator, which was evacuated to 0.5 mBar. During the aeration of the tank under the introduction of an inert gas, the
25 electrochromic formulation filled the entire volume of the gap through the opening. The opening was then sealed with a UV curable adhesive in order to make the cell hermetic. The electrical connection was made by two silver plated copper wires, sealed on each ITO glass substrate with a silver charged epoxy adhesive.

A potential of 0.9V was applied between the electrodes and the color obtained was
30 assessed visually. It was observed that the composition was slightly pink in the inactive state and that this colour was only due to the photochromic substance included therein.

After activation, the sample had a nice grey-purple colour which changed reversibly when reversing the polarity.

The transmission level (Tv) of the composition was also measured according to the ISO Standard 8980-3, in the 380 nm - 800 nm wavelength range, using a spectrophotometer. It corresponds to the transmission factor as defined in the ISO Standard 13666:1998. It was observed that Tv decreased from 75% to 16% when applying the electrical potential.

It was further noticed that the coloration / discoloration kinetics did not seem to be affected by the presence of the photochromic substance.

The photochromic substance also kept its photochromic properties, which was checked by activating the sample with a UV lamp (v1208bl of 2 x 8 W, 365 nm, 1400 $\mu\text{W}/\text{cm}^2$). The photochromic substance coloured in red when activated by the UV light.

This example demonstrates that it is possible to obtain both a photochromic effect and an electrochromic effect using the above composition. The sample which was both UV- and electrically activated had a dark purple colour.

Example 2: composition comprising an electrochromic compound and an organic dye

A composition was prepared by dissolving, in propylene carbonate (88.8 wt.%):

- the electrochromic compound corresponding to Formula I-10 above (4.3 wt.%),
- ferrocene (1.2 wt.%) as a reducing agent,
- an organic dye, which was an azo metal complex dye supplied by CLARIANT under the trade name Savinyl[®] Red 2 BLSE (1.4 wt.%), and
- tetrabutylammonium tetrafluoroborate, hereafter designated as TBA BF₄⁻ (4.3 wt.%).

This composition has a red colour in the inactive state, which was due to the presence of the organic dye. Its colour turned to brown when voltage of 0.9V was applied to the electrochromic device.

Example 3: composition comprising an electrochromic compound and a dichroic compound.

A composition was prepared by dissolving, in propylene carbonate (92.35 wt.%):

- the electrochromic compound corresponding to Formula I-10 above (1.48 wt.%),
- Methylphenothiazine (1.21 wt.%) as a reducing agent,

- a mixture of three dichroic dyes, which were anthraquinone derivatives supplied by NEMATEL under the trade name Blue AB4[®] (0.95 wt.%), Red[®] AR1 (0.84 wt.%), and Yellow[®] AG1 (0.86 wt.%), and
- tetrabutylammonium tetrafluoroborate, hereafter designated as TBA BF₄⁻ (2.31 wt.%).

5 This composition has a dark blue colour in the inactive state, which was due to the presence of the dichroic dyes. As the dichroic dyes were not oriented in the same direction, the residual colour corresponded to the absorption obtained with an average orientation of the molecules.

 Its colour turned to dark green when a voltage of 0.9V was applied to the
10 electrochromic device.

 It has also been checked that the colour of the dichroic compound was not modified with the application of the voltage.

Example 4: composition comprising electrochromic compounds and liquid crystals

 A composition was prepared by dissolving, in propylene carbonate (40.0 wt.%):

- 15 - the electrochromic compound corresponding to Formula I-10 above (2.0 wt.%),
 - the electrochromic compound corresponding to Formula III-10 above (0.9 wt.%),
 - 10-methylphenothiazine (1.4 wt.%) as a reducing agent,
 - liquid crystals sold by MERCK under the trade name E7 (53.8 wt.%), and
 - tetrabutylammonium tetrafluoroborate, hereafter designated as TBA BF₄⁻ (1.9 wt.%).

20 The transmission rate of the composition, which was initially clear (uncoloured), decreased from 82% when in the inactive state to 30% when electrically activated (with a voltage of 0.9V) and its colour simultaneously turned to a grey-green colour.

 This example shows that the presence of liquid crystals in a composition of this invention, even in high amounts, does not affect the electrochromic properties of the
25 composition. It is thus possible to incorporate dichroic compounds and to orientate them, as said dichroic compounds need to be formulated into liquid crystals.

Example 5: composition comprising two electrochromic compounds

 A composition was prepared by dissolving, in propylene carbonate (82.1 wt.%):

- 30 - the electrochromic compound corresponding to Formula I-18 above (3.7 wt.%),
 - the electrochromic compound corresponding to Formula III-4 above (1.0 wt.%),
 - phenoxazine (1.9 wt.%) as a reducing agent,
 - PMMA (7.8 wt.%), and

- tetrabutylammonium tetrafluoroborate, hereafter designated as TBA BF₄⁻ (3.5 wt.%), wherein one of the electrochromic compounds was used as a dye according to this invention.

5 At the inactive state, the composition had a yellow colour which turned to brown when a voltage of 1.1V was applied. When the polarity was reversed, the colour turned back to pale brown but did not return to yellow. The colour of the composition thus changed from brown to light brown and vice versa over several cycles.

Example 6: composition comprising two electrochromic compounds

10 A composition was prepared by dissolving, in propylene carbonate (92 wt.%):

- the electrochromic compound corresponding to Formula I-25 above (2.4 wt.%),
- the electrochromic compound corresponding to Formula III-3 above (0.9 wt.%),
- phenoxazine (1.1 wt.%) as a reducing agent, and
- tetrabutylammonium tetrafluoroborate, hereafter designated as TBA BF₄⁻ (3.6 wt.%),

wherein one of the electrochromic compounds is used as a dye according to this invention.

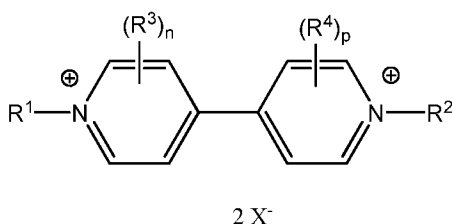
15 During successive activation cycles (with application of a voltage of 1V), the colour of the composition varied from pale green to dark green and vice versa.

CLAIMS

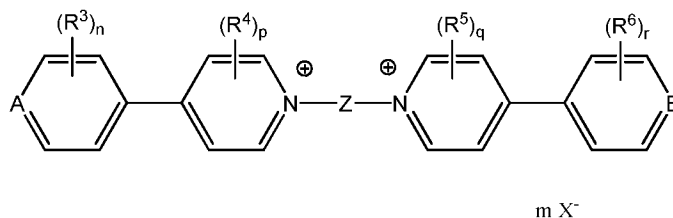
1. Electrochromic composition comprising:

- at least one reducing compound;
- 5 - at least one electrochromic oxidizing compound; and
- at least one dye,

wherein said electrochromic oxidizing compound is selected from viologen derivatives of formula (I) and (II):



(I)



(II)

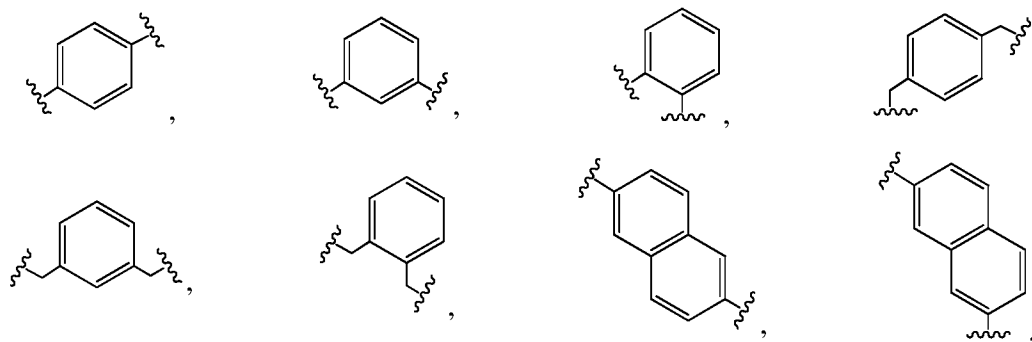
wherein

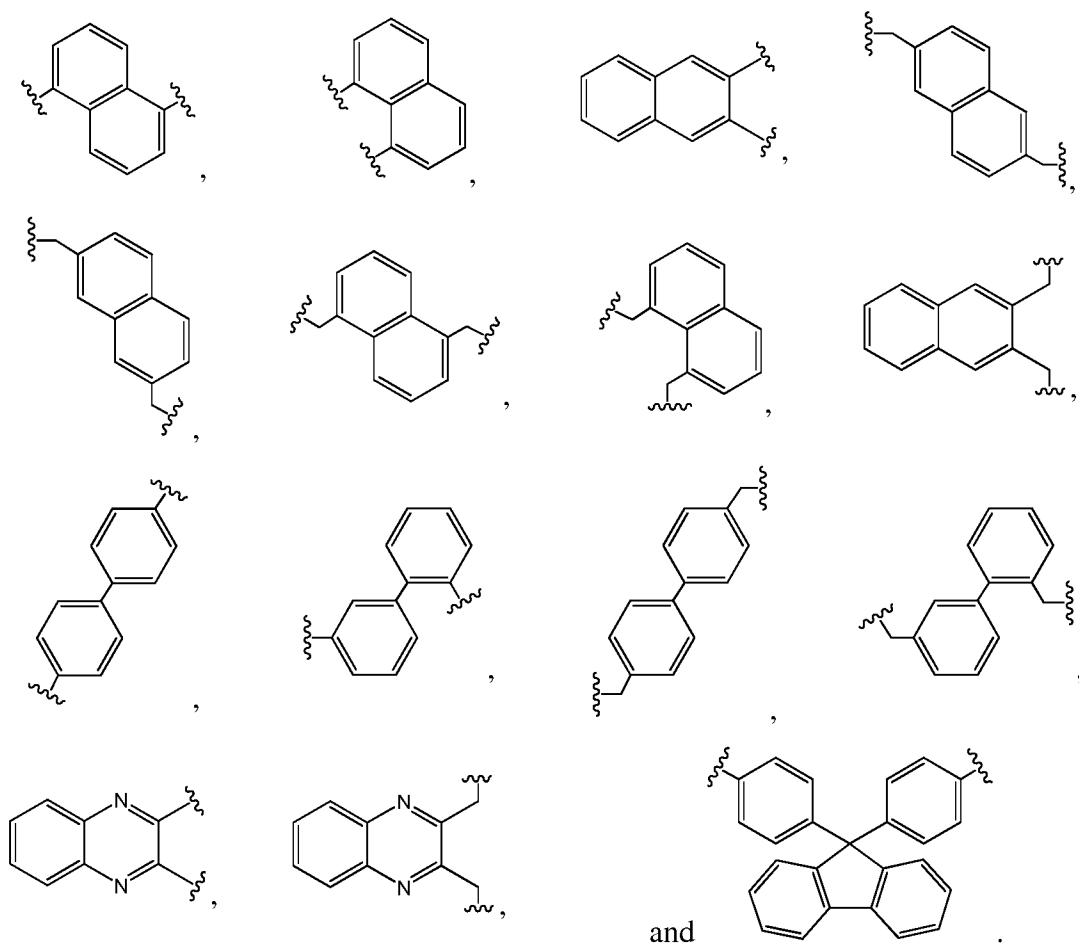
- R^1 and R^2 are each independently selected from optionally substituted phenyl groups;
- 15 - R^3 , R^4 , R^5 and R^6 are each independently selected from H, alkyl, alkoxy, alkylthio, haloalkyl, haloalkoxy, haloalkylthio, polyalkylenoxy, alkoxycarbonyl, aryl, substituted aryl, heteroaryl and substituted heteroaryl, wherein the alkyl group may be substituted by one or more substituents independently selected from alkoxy, cycloalkyl, aryl, substituted aryl, heteroaryl and substituted heteroaryl;
- 20 - n, p, q and r are each independently an integer from 0 to 4, wherein when n, p, q or r are two or more, each of the R^3 , each of the R^4 , each of the R^5 or each of the R^6 may be identical or different;
- A and B are respectively selected from nitrogen and $-N^+(R^{7a})-$, and from nitrogen and $-N^+(R^{7b})-$, wherein R^{7a} and R^{7b} are independently selected from:

- alkyl which may be substituted by one or more groups independently selected from halogen, alkoxy, cycloalkyl, vinyl, allyl, aryl, substituted aryl, heteroaryl and substituted heteroaryl;
 - aryl and heteroaryl which may be both substituted by one or more groups independently selected from:
 - halogen, cyano, nitro, alkyl, haloalkyl, arylalkyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkylalkyl and heterocycloalkylalkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, allyl, vinyl, aryl, substituted aryl, heteroaryl, substituted heteroaryl, -N(aryl)₂, -N(aryl)CO(aryl), -CO-aryl and -CO-substituted aryl;
 - -OR⁸, -SR⁸, -S(O)R⁸, -S(O₂)R⁸, -S(O₂)NR⁸R⁹, -NR⁸R⁹, -NR⁸COR⁹, -NR⁸CO(aryl), -NR⁸aryl, -CH₂OR⁸, -CH₂SR⁸, -CH₂R⁸, -CO-R⁸ and -CO₂R⁸ wherein R⁸ and R⁹ are independently selected from H, alkyl, haloalkyl, arylalkyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkylalkyl and heterocycloalkylalkyl;
 - -S(O₂)NR¹⁰R¹¹ and -NR¹⁰R¹¹, wherein R¹⁰ and R¹¹ form together with the nitrogen atom to which they are linked a saturated 5 to 7 membered heterocycloalkyl which may comprise in addition to the nitrogen atom one further heteroatom selected from oxygen, nitrogen and sulphur, and which may be optionally substituted by one or two groups independently selected from halogen, -R⁸, -OR⁸, and -NR⁸R⁹, wherein R⁸ and R⁹ are as defined above;
 - -V-W-R¹² wherein:
 - V is selected from oxygen, -N(R⁸)-, sulphur, -S(O)- and -S(O₂)- wherein R⁸ is as defined above;
 - W is alkylene, which may be substituted by one or more groups independently selected from halogen and alkoxy; and
 - R¹² is selected from -OR⁸, -NR⁸(alkyl) and -SR⁸ wherein R⁸ is as defined above; and
 - -OC(O)-R¹³ wherein R¹³ is selected from alkyl, haloalkyl, alkenyl, -W-R¹², and aryl group which may be substituted by 1 to 4 groups selected from halogen, -R⁸, -OR⁸, -SR⁸, -NR⁸R⁹, -NR¹⁰R¹¹, -CO-R⁸, -C(O)OR⁸, wherein R⁸, R⁹, R¹⁰, R¹¹, R¹² and W are as defined above;
- Z is selected from

- alkylene;
 - cycloalkylene; and
 - a bivalent groups of formula $-R^{14}-Y-R^{15}-$, wherein
 - R^{14} and R^{15} are each independently selected from single bond, alkylene and cycloalkylene, and
 - Y is selected from arylene, cycloalkylene, heteroarylene, arylene-arylene or arylene- $CR'R''$ -arylene wherein R' and R'' form together with the carbon to which they are linked a carbocyclic group;
- wherein said alkylene, cycloalkylene, arylene, heteroarylene and carbocyclic groups may be substituted by one or more substituents selected from halogen, alkyl, alkoxy, alkylthio, hydroxyalkyl, acyloxy, cycloalkyl, aryl, substituted aryl, aryloxy heteroaryl and substituted heteroaryl;
- m is 2 if A and B are nitrogen, 3 if one of A and B is nitrogen and the other is not nitrogen, and 4 if both A and B are not nitrogen.
 - X^- is a counterion.

2. The electrochromic composition according to claim 1, wherein Z is selected from C_1 - C_{12} alkylene, aryl substituted C_1 - C_{12} alkylene, phenylene, naphthylene, (C_1 - C_4 alkylene)-phenylene-(C_1 - C_4 alkylene), (C_1 - C_4 alkylene)-naphthylene-(C_1 - C_4 alkylene), quinoxaline-2,3-diyl, (C_1 - C_4 alkylene)-quinoxaline-2,3-diyl-(C_1 - C_4 alkylene), phenylene-phenylene, (C_1 - C_4 alkylene)-phenylene-phenylene-(C_1 - C_4 alkylene) and phenylene-fluorenylene-phenylene, preferably Z is selected from $-\text{CH}_2-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_2-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_3-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_4-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_5-$, $-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-$, $-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_2\text{Phenyl})-\text{CH}_2-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_2-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_3-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_2-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-(\text{CH}_2)_2-$,



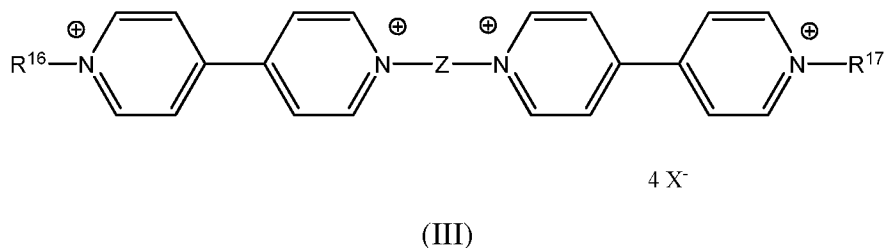


3. The electrochromic composition according to any one of claims 1 to 2, wherein R³, R⁴, R⁵ and R⁶ are each independently selected from C₁-C₄ alkyl, C₁-C₄ alkoxycarbonyl, alkanoyl, aroyl, nitrile, alkylsulfonyl, arylsulfonyl, aryl and heteroaryl, wherein the aryl and heteroaryl may be substituted by one or more substituents selected from C₁-C₄ alkyl and C₁-C₄ haloalkyl, preferably, R³, R⁴, R⁵ and R⁶ are each independently selected from methyl, ethoxycarbonyl, phenyl, p-methylphenyl and p-trifluoromethylphenyl.

4. The electrochromic composition according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the counterion X^- is selected from halide, tetrafluoroborate, tetraphenylborate, hexafluorophosphate, nitrate, methanesulfonate, trifluoromethane sulfonate, toluene sulfonate, hexachloroantimonate, bis(trifluoromethanesulfonyl)imide, perchlorate, acetate and sulfate.

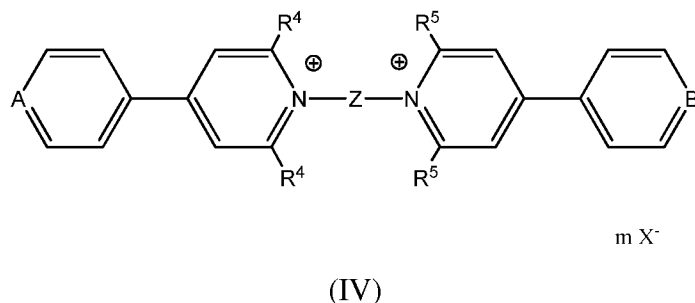
5. The electrochromic composition according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein at least one of the viologen derivatives is selected compounds of formula (I).

6. The electrochromic composition according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein at least one of the viologen derivatives is selected compounds of formula (III):



5 wherein Z, and X^- are as defined in formula (II), and R^{16} and R^{17} are selected from alkyl and optionally substituted phenyl groups.

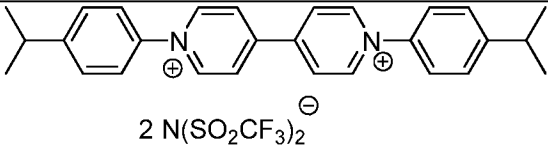
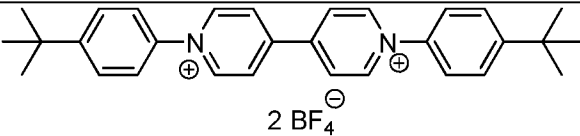
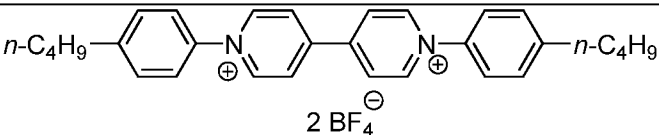
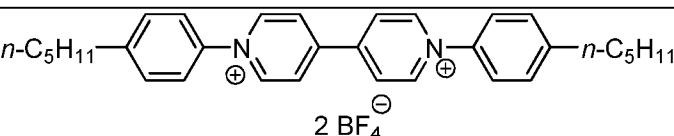
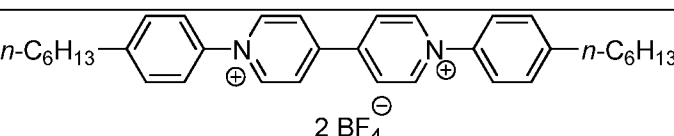
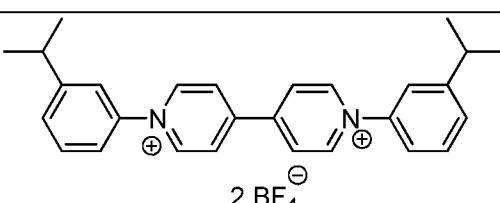
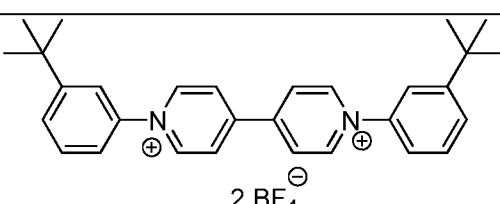
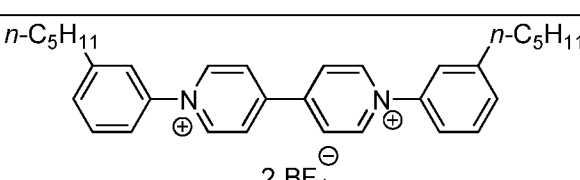
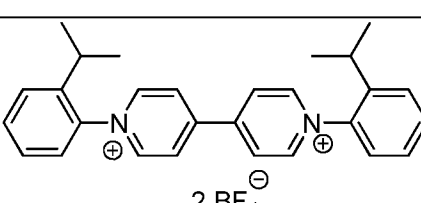
7. The electrochromic composition according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein at least one of the viologen derivatives is selected compounds of formula (IV):

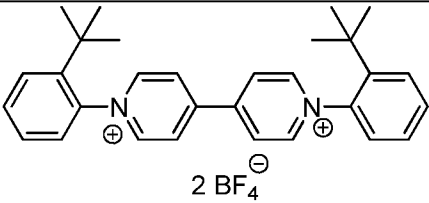
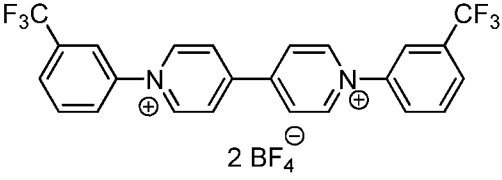
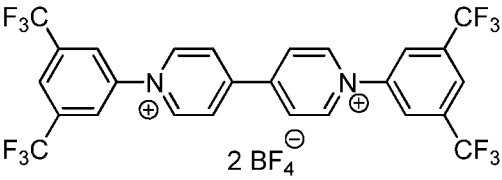
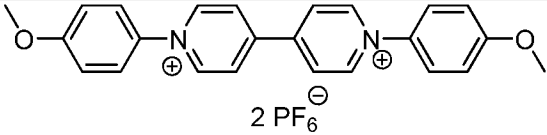
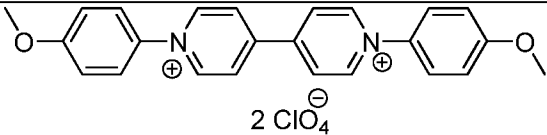
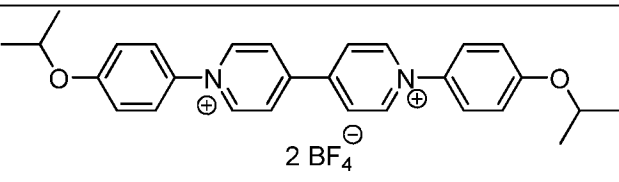
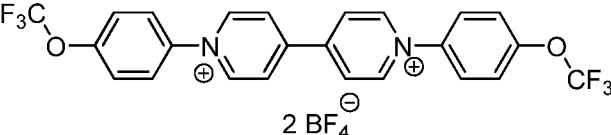
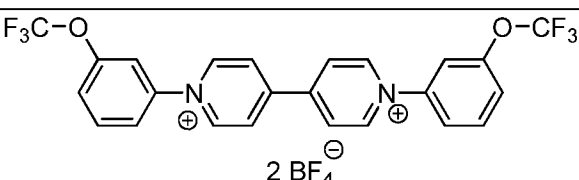
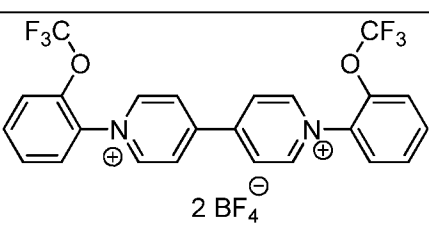


wherein R^4 , R^5 , Z, A, B, m and X^- are as defined in formula (II) and at least one of R^4 and R^5 is not H.

8. The electrochromic composition according to any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein said viologen derivatives are selected from compounds I-1 to I-50, III-1 to III-18 and IV-1 and IV-14:

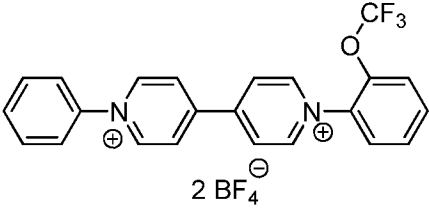
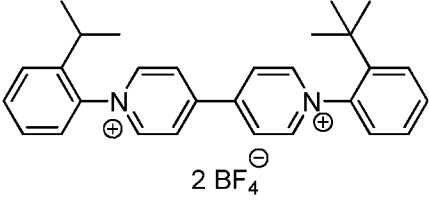
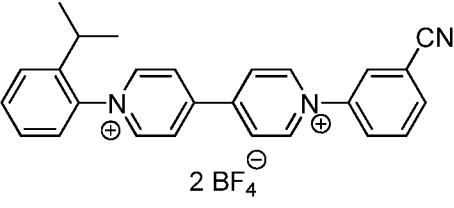
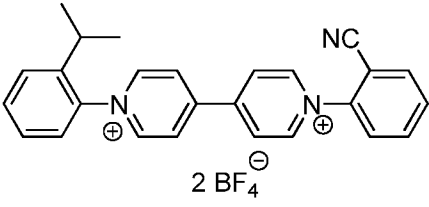
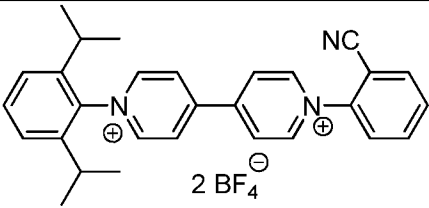
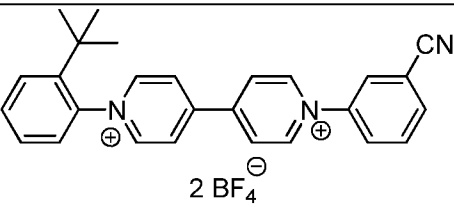
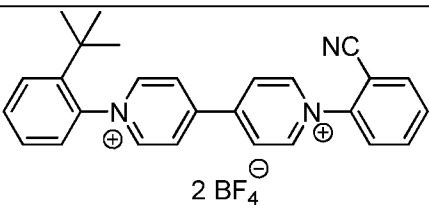
Compound	Formula
I-1	2 BF_4^-
I-2	2 PF_6^-
I-3	2 BF_4^-

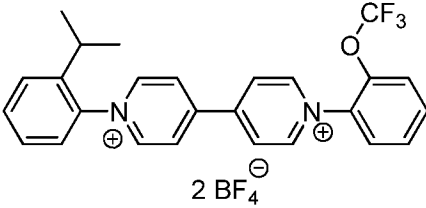
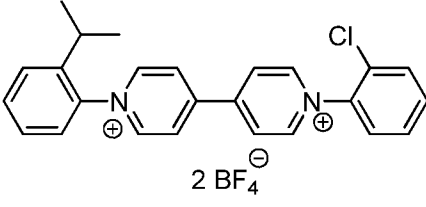
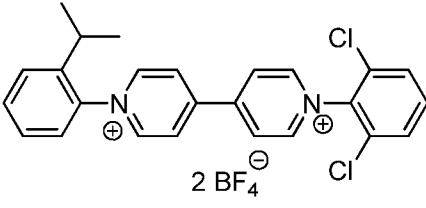
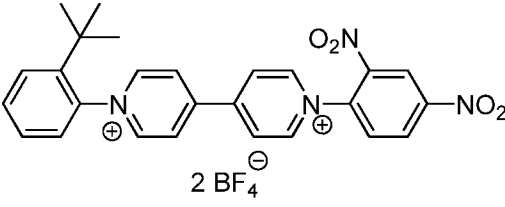
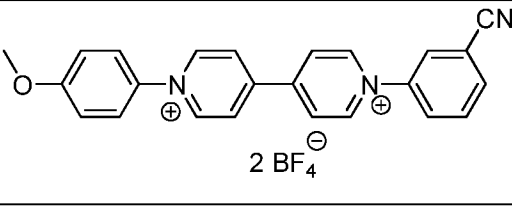
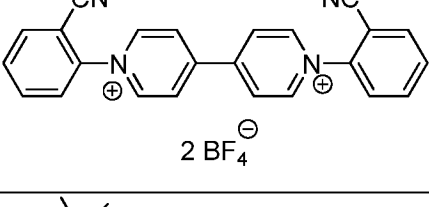
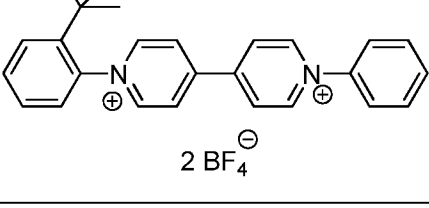
I-4	 2 N(SO₂CF₃)₂[⊖]
I-5	 2 BF₄[⊖]
I-6	 2 BF₄[⊖]
I-7	 2 BF₄[⊖]
I-8	 2 BF₄[⊖]
I-9	 2 BF₄[⊖]
I-10	 2 BF₄[⊖]
I-11	 2 BF₄[⊖]
I-12	 2 BF₄[⊖]

I-13	 2 BF ₄ [⊖]
I-14	 2 BF ₄ [⊖]
I-15	 2 BF ₄ [⊖]
I-16	 2 PF ₆ [⊖]
I-17	 2 ClO ₄ [⊖]
I-18	 2 BF ₄ [⊖]
I-19	 2 BF ₄ [⊖]
I-20	 2 BF ₄ [⊖]
I-21	 2 BF ₄ [⊖]

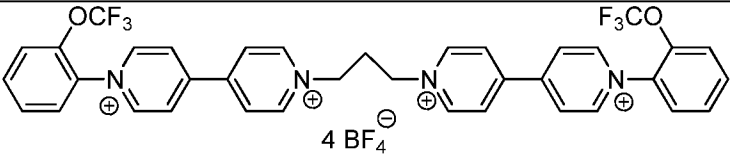
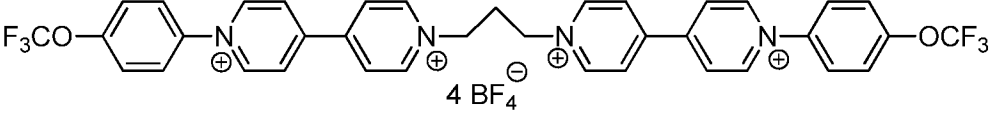
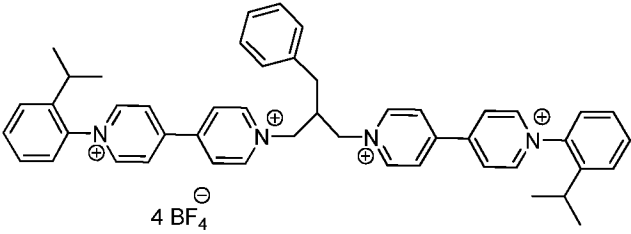
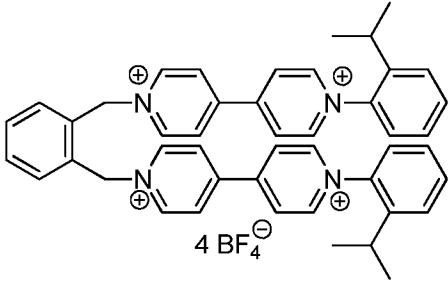
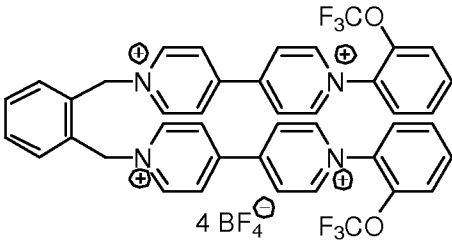
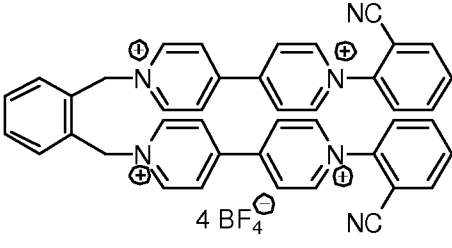
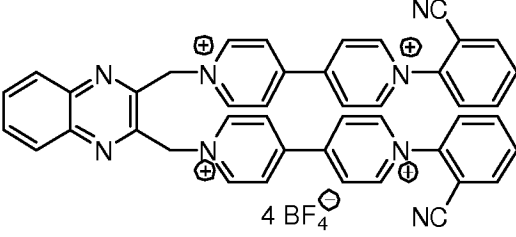
I-22	2 BF₄[⊖]
I-23	2 BF₄[⊖]
I-24	2 BF₄[⊖]
I-25	2 BF₄[⊖]
I-26	2 BF₄[⊖]
I-27	2 BF₄[⊖]
I-28	2 BF₄[⊖]
I-29	2 BF₄[⊖]

I-30	 <chem>c1ccc(cc1)Cc2ccc(cc2)[N+]1=CC=C(C=C1)-c2ccc(cc2)[N+]3=CC=CC=C3Cc4ccc(cc4)c5ccccc5</chem> 2 BF_4^-
I-31	 <chem>c1ccc(cc1)Cc2cccc(c2)[N+]1=CC=C(C=C1)-c2ccc(cc2)[N+]3=CC=CC=C3Cc4ccccc4</chem> 2 BF_4^-
I-32	 <chem>c1ccc(cc1)Cc2cccc(c2)[N+]1=CC=C(C=C1)-c2ccc(cc2)[N+]3=CC=CC=C3Cc4ccccc4</chem> 2 BF_4^-
I-33	 <chem>c1ccc(cc1)N2CCCC2c3ccc(cc3)[N+]4=CC=C(C=C4)-c5ccc(cc5)[N+]6=CC=CC=C6c7ccc(cc7)N8CCCC8=O</chem> 2 BF_4^-
I-34	 <chem>CC(C)c1cccc(c1)[N+]2=CC=CC=C2-c3ccc(cc3)[N+]4=CC=CC=C4c5ccccc5</chem> 2 BF_4^-
I-35	 <chem>CC(C)c1cc(C(C)C)ccc(c1)[N+]2=CC=CC=C2-c3ccc(cc3)[N+]4=CC=CC=C4c5ccccc5</chem> 2 BF_4^-
I-36	 <chem>N#Cc1ccc(cc1)[N+]2=CC=CC=C2-c3ccc(cc3)[N+]4=CC=CC=C4c5ccccc5</chem> 2 BF_4^-

I-37	
I-38	
I-39	
I-40	
I-41	
I-42	
I-43	

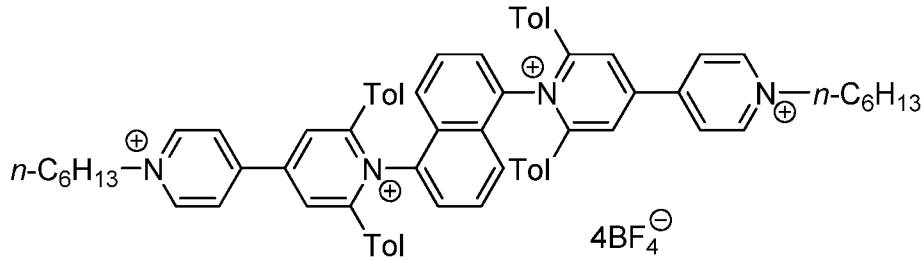
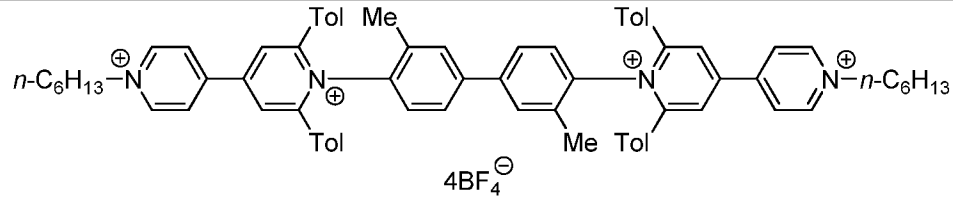
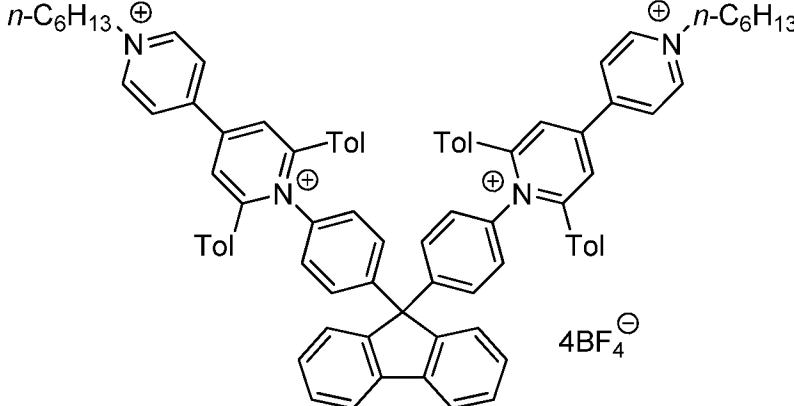
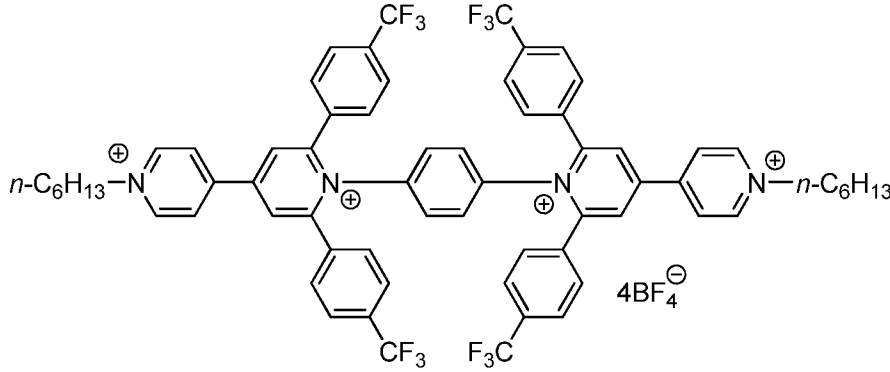
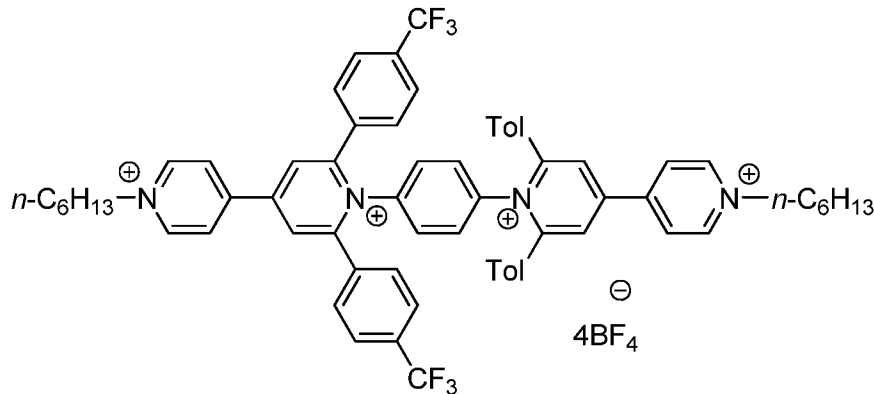
I-44	
I-45	
I-46	
I-47	
I-48	
I-49	
I-50	

III-1	
III-2	
III-3	
III-4	
III-5	
III-6	
III-7	
III-8	
III-9	

III-10	
III-11	
III-12	
III-13	
III-14	
III-15	
III-16	

III-17	
III-18	
III-19	
IV-1	
IV-2	
IV-3	

IV-4	$n\text{-C}_6\text{H}_{13}\text{-N}^+\text{C}_5\text{H}_4\text{-C}_6\text{H}_3\text{(Ph)}_2\text{-C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-C}_6\text{H}_3\text{(Ph)}_2\text{-N}^+\text{C}_5\text{H}_4\text{-N}^+\text{-C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-n-C}_6\text{H}_{13}$ 4BF_4^-
IV-5	$\text{C}_5\text{H}_4\text{(Tol)}_2\text{-N}^+\text{-CH}_2\text{-CH}_2\text{-CH}_2\text{-CH}_2\text{-CH}_2\text{-CH}_2\text{-N}^+\text{-C}_5\text{H}_4\text{(Tol)}_2\text{-C}_5\text{H}_4$ 2BF_4^-
IV-6	$\text{C}_5\text{H}_4\text{(Tol)}_2\text{-N}^+\text{-C}_{10}\text{H}_6\text{-N}^+\text{-C}_5\text{H}_4\text{(Tol)}_2\text{-C}_5\text{H}_4$ 2BF_4^-
IV-7	$n\text{-C}_6\text{H}_{13}\text{-N}^+\text{C}_5\text{H}_4\text{-C}_6\text{H}_3\text{(Tol)}_2\text{-N}^+\text{-CH}_2\text{-CH}_2\text{-CH}_2\text{-CH}_2\text{-CH}_2\text{-CH}_2\text{-N}^+\text{-C}_6\text{H}_3\text{(Tol)}_2\text{-N}^+\text{-C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-n-C}_6\text{H}_{13}$ 2BF_4^-
IV-8	$n\text{-C}_6\text{H}_{13}\text{-N}^+\text{C}_5\text{H}_4\text{-C}_6\text{H}_3\text{(Tol)}_2\text{-C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-C}_6\text{H}_3\text{(Tol)}_2\text{-N}^+\text{C}_5\text{H}_4\text{-N}^+\text{-C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-n-C}_6\text{H}_{13}$ 4BF_4^-
IV-9	$n\text{-C}_6\text{H}_{13}\text{-N}^+\text{C}_5\text{H}_4\text{-C}_6\text{H}_3\text{(Tol)}_2\text{-C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-C}_6\text{H}_3\text{(Tol)}_2\text{-N}^+\text{C}_5\text{H}_4\text{-N}^+\text{-C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-n-C}_6\text{H}_{13}$ 4BF_4^-

IV-10	 Chemical structure IV-10: A macrocyclic dicationic compound. It features two N-methyl-4-vinylpyridinium rings linked by two 4,4'-biphenyl units. Each nitrogen is substituted with a tolyl group (Tol). The counterion is 4BF_4^-.
IV-11	 Chemical structure IV-11: A linear dicationic compound. It features two N-methyl-4-vinylpyridinium rings linked by two 4,4'-biphenyl units. Each nitrogen is substituted with a tolyl group (Tol). The counterion is 4BF_4^-.
IV-12	 Chemical structure IV-12: A macrocyclic dicationic compound. It features two N-methyl-4-vinylpyridinium rings linked by two 4,4'-biphenyl units. Each nitrogen is substituted with a tolyl group (Tol). The counterion is 4BF_4^-.
IV-13	 Chemical structure IV-13: A linear dicationic compound. It features two N-methyl-4-vinylpyridinium rings linked by two 4,4'-biphenyl units. Each nitrogen is substituted with a tolyl group (Tol). The counterion is 4BF_4^-.
IV-14	 Chemical structure IV-14: A linear dicationic compound. It features two N-methyl-4-vinylpyridinium rings linked by two 4,4'-biphenyl units. Each nitrogen is substituted with a tolyl group (Tol). The counterion is 4BF_4^-.

wherein Me represents methyl, Ph represents phenyl and Tol represents 4-methylphenyl.

9. The electrochromic composition according to claims 1 to 8, wherein the reducing compound is selected from ferrocene and their derivatives such as ethyl ferrocene, t-butyl ferrocene; phenoxazine and their derivatives, such as N-benzylphenoxazine; phenazine and their derivatives, such as 5,10-dihydrophenazine, N,N,N',N'-tetramethyl-p-phenylenediamine; phenothiazine and their derivatives, such as 10-methylphenothiazine and isopropylphenothiazine; thioanthrene; and tetrathiafulvalene.

10. The electrochromic composition according to claim 9, wherein said composition comprises a fluid, mesomorphous or gel host medium preferably selected from the group consisting of organic solvents, liquid crystals, polymers, liquid crystal polymers and mixtures thereof.

11. The electrochromic composition according to claims 1 to 10, wherein the dye is selected from the group consisting of:

- organic or inorganic photochromic and/or dichroic substances,
- electrochromic substances distinct from the first constituent of this invention, and which may be selected among the above compounds of Formulas (I) and/or (II) or among different electrochromic compounds,
- organic and inorganic pigments, especially in the form of nanoparticles,
- organic dyes,
- optical brighteners,
- or mixtures thereof.

12. Electrochromic device comprising the composition as defined in claims 1 to 11.

13. The electrochromic device according to claim 12, wherein said electrochromic device comprises a mechanism for holding the composition in a mechanically stable environment.

14. The electrochromic device according to claim 12 or 13, wherein said electrochromic device comprises at least one transparent electrochromic cell comprising a pair of opposed substrates facing each other and forming a gap, and the gap is filled with the electrochromic composition as defined in claims 1 to 11.

15. The electrochromic device according to any one of claims 12 to 14, wherein said electrochromic device is selected from optical article such as optical lenses or optical

filters, windows, visors, mirrors and displays, preferably optical lenses, more preferably ophthalmic lenses.