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Observation of same-sign WW production from double parton scattering in proton-proton collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 13$ TeV

The CMS Collaboration*

Abstract

The first observation of the production of $W^{\pm}W^{\pm}$ bosons from double parton scattering processes using same-sign electron-muon and dimuon events in proton-proton collisions is reported. The data sample corresponds to an integrated luminosity of 138 fb^{-1} recorded at a center-of-mass energy of 13 TeV using the CMS detector at the CERN LHC. Multivariate discriminants are used to distinguish the signal process from the main backgrounds. A binned maximum likelihood fit is performed to extract the signal cross section. The measured cross section for production of same-sign W bosons decaying leptonically is $80.7 \pm 11.2 (\text{stat})_{-8.6}^{+9.5} (\text{syst}) \pm 12.1 (\text{model}) \text{ fb}$, whereas the measured fiducial cross section is $6.28 \pm 0.81 (\text{stat}) \pm 0.69 (\text{syst}) \pm 0.37 (\text{model}) \text{ fb}$. The observed significance of the signal is 6.2 standard deviations above the background-only hypothesis.

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Double parton scattering (DPS) events, in which two hard parton-parton interactions occur in a single proton-proton (pp) collision have been proposed and studied since the advent of the parton model and hadron colliders [1–9]. The study of such events sheds light on the internal structure of the colliding protons. Primarily, the study of DPS processes provides information on the transverse profile of the proton and its energy evolution, information that is otherwise not accessible in single parton scattering (SPS) events. In addition, processes with two or more hard parton-parton scatterings allow the study of correlations among the partons from the same proton in terms of momentum, flavor, color, and spin.

In the simplest theoretical model [10], the two parton-parton interactions in DPS can be considered entirely uncorrelated, and the expected DPS cross section can be written as the (normalized) product of the SPS cross sections to produce processes A and B independently, as

$$\sigma_{AB}^{\text{DPS}} = \frac{n}{2} \frac{\sigma_A \sigma_B}{\sigma_{\text{eff}}}, \quad (1)$$

where n is a combinatorial factor that takes a value of unity if $A = B$, and two otherwise. The denominator σ_{eff} can be interpreted as being proportional to the average squared transverse distance between the interacting partons, and it serves as a useful quantity to compare DPS processes in different production modes. Its experimental value ranges between 2–10 mb for gluon-initiated and 10–25 mb for quark-initiated DPS production processes [11–29].

As the center-of-mass energy of pp collisions increases, so does the density of sea quarks and gluons, which in turn leads to increased DPS contributions to many final states where pairs of heavy particles are produced. These additional DPS contributions can limit the precision of searches for new physics [30] and the accuracy of high-precision standard model analyses [31]. Therefore, it is important to study DPS processes in different production modes and final states. Theoretical advancements [8] have improved upon the simple “geometric” approach on which Eq. (1) is based. The introduction of interparton correlations via double parton distribution functions (dPDF) [32–35], which include parton splitting effects and impact parameter dependence, has led to the first dPDF-based Monte Carlo (MC) event generator for DPS events, dShower [36].

The production of leptonically decaying same-sign (SS) W boson pairs is a promising process to study DPS [37]. Its experimental signature is rather clean and easy to trigger on, and the SPS $W^\pm W^\pm$ production is highly suppressed because of two additional partons produced in the final state compared with the opposite-sign configuration. Figure 1 illustrates the production of $W^\pm W^\pm$ via the DPS and SPS processes at leading order (LO) accuracy in electroweak and perturbative quantum chromodynamics (QCD). The DPS $W^\pm W^\pm$ production has not been observed experimentally, and the existing searches for the process are not statistically significant due to the size of the available data samples [25, 38].

This Letter presents the first observation of DPS $W^\pm W^\pm$ production using pp collision data at $\sqrt{s} = 13$ TeV. The data sample corresponds to an integrated luminosity of 138 fb^{-1} collected using the CMS detector during the 2016–2018 operation of the LHC. The W bosons are required to decay into final states consisting of two SS leptons ($e^\pm \mu^\pm$ or $\mu^\pm \mu^\pm$), including the contributions from leptonic τ decays. As in Refs. [25, 38], the dielectron final state is not considered because of the larger background, but the overall analysis strategy has been reoptimized to enhance the signal sensitivity.

The CMS apparatus [39] is a multipurpose, nearly hermetic detector, designed to trigger on [40, 41] and identify electrons, muons, photons, and hadrons [42–45]. A global “particle-flow” (PF) algorithm [46] reconstructs all individual particles in an event, combining information

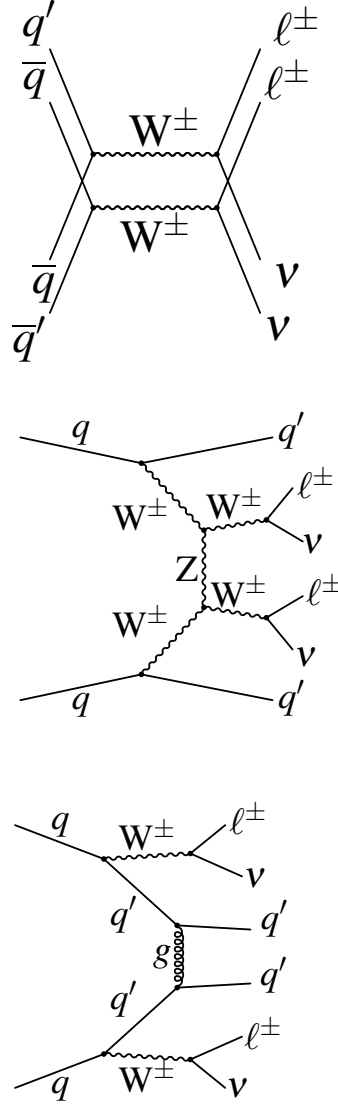


Figure 1: Example Feynman diagrams for leptonically decaying $W^\pm W^\pm$ bosons produced via DPS (upper) and SPS (middle and lower) processes.

from the silicon tracker, the crystal electromagnetic (ECAL), and the brass-scintillator hadron calorimeters, which all operate within a 3.8 T superconducting solenoid, with data from the gas-ionization muon detectors embedded in the flux-return yoke outside the solenoid. Details of the event reconstruction used to define the primary vertex (PV) and build leptons, jets, hadronically decaying τ leptons (τ_h), and missing transverse momentum (p_T^{miss}) are provided in Refs. [47–52]. Events of interest are selected using a two-tiered trigger system. The first level (L1), composed of custom hardware processors, selects events at a rate of around 100 kHz [40]. The second level, known as the high-level trigger, further reduces the event rate to around 1 kHz before data storage [41].

Charged leptons are required to originate from the primary vertex (PV) to avoid contributions from additional pp interactions in the same and nearby bunch crossings (pileup). Electrons are identified using a multivariate analysis (MVA) discriminant that combines observables sensitive to the matching of charged-particle tracks in the tracker to the energy deposits in the ECAL

and the amount of bremsstrahlung photons emitted along their trajectory [42, 53]. The identification of muons is based on linking track segments reconstructed in the silicon tracker to hits in the muon detectors [43]. Further selection criteria are applied to ensure the correct assignment of the electric charge of the leptons in the reconstruction [42]. Lepton isolation requirements are imposed following the same approach as in Ref. [54]. The electron (muon) candidates are required to pass minimal kinematic selection criteria of $p_T > 10$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.5$ (2.4) and are referred to as “loose” leptons. The “tight” lepton selection used in the analysis employs an MVA discriminant to separate prompt leptons coming from the decays of W or Z (V) bosons, or τ leptons and nonprompt leptons [54]. The nonprompt leptons originate from the decays of light- and heavy-flavor hadrons inside jets produced via strong interactions (QCD multijet), hadrons misidentified as leptons, and electrons from photon conversions. The MVA discriminant is trained using a set of observables related to the lepton kinematics, isolation, and identification, as well as variables relating the lepton to the PV and to the nearest reconstructed PF jet [54]. Reconstructed jets must not overlap with identified electrons, muons, or τ_h within $\Delta R = \sqrt{(\Delta\eta)^2 + (\Delta\phi)^2} < 0.4$, where ϕ is the azimuthal angle in radians. The DEEPJET b tagging algorithm [55, 56] is used to identify jets originating from the hadronization of b quarks. The chosen working point corresponds to a b-tagging efficiency of 84% and a mistag rate of 11% for light-flavor quark and gluon jets.

Collision events are collected using a combination of single-lepton and dilepton triggers that require the presence of one or two isolated leptons above certain p_T thresholds [41]. The resulting trigger efficiency is above 98% for events passing the subsequent offline selection criteria.

The dominant background contribution arises from the WZ process, in which both bosons decay leptonically and one of the leptons from the Z boson decay is either out of the detector acceptance or does not pass the lepton identification criteria. The nonprompt-lepton backgrounds include predominantly W+jets and QCD multijet events, with smaller contributions from $t\bar{t}$ production. Other sources of background include $W\gamma^*$ events, $V\gamma$ events with a photon conversion, and ZZ, as well as rare backgrounds, which include SPS $W^\pm W^\pm$, VVV, and $t\bar{t}V$ production. A minor background contribution stems from Drell–Yan (DY) events when the charge of one lepton is mismeasured. The charge mismeasurement in dimuon events is negligible [43], although it is nonzero for electrons [42]. Hence, the lepton charge misidentification (“charge misid.”) background contributes to the $e^\pm\mu^\pm$ channel only. The contribution to the signal yield from the production of two overlapping W bosons from pileup is negligible.

The signal process is characterized by the presence of a SS lepton pair with a moderate amount of p_T^{miss} and little jet activity. The signal region (SR) selection requires events with exactly one pair of $e^\pm\mu^\pm$ or $\mu^\pm\mu^\pm$ with $p_T > 25$ (20) GeV for the leading (subleading) lepton. To reduce the contribution from WZ background, events having either a third loosely identified lepton with $p_T > 10$ GeV or a τ_h candidate with $p_T > 20$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.3$ are rejected. The contributions from nonprompt-lepton backgrounds are reduced by selecting events with $p_T^{\text{miss}} > 15$ GeV and dilepton invariant mass, $m_{\ell\ell} > 12$ GeV.

Events are required to have at most one jet with $p_T^{\text{jet}} > 30$ GeV within $|\eta_{\text{jet}}| < 2.4$. Events with a b-tagged jet having $p_T^{\text{bjet}} > 25$ GeV and $|\eta_{\text{bjet}}| < 2.4$ are vetoed to reject top quark events. For the $e^\pm\mu^\pm$ channel, the dilepton transverse momentum should satisfy $p_T^{\ell\ell} > 20$ GeV to suppress contributions from $V\gamma$ and DY processes. To increase the signal sensitivity, events in the SR are split into four lepton flavor and charge categories: $e^+\mu^+$, $e^-\mu^-$, $\mu^+\mu^+$, and $\mu^-\mu^-$.

The normalization of the WZ (ZZ) background is estimated using WZ $\rightarrow 3\ell\nu$ (ZZ $\rightarrow 4\ell$) lepton control regions (CR) by means of a maximum likelihood (ML) fit to the invariant mass

of the three- (four-)lepton system. The $WZ \rightarrow 3\ell\nu$ CR is defined by requiring three tight leptons including at least one opposite-sign same-flavor (OSSF) lepton pair with $|m_{\ell\ell} - m_Z| < 10$ GeV. The invariant mass of the three-lepton system must be > 100 GeV. The leading lepton is required to have $p_T > 25$ GeV, and trailing leptons with $p_T > 15$ GeV are selected. The p_T^{miss} threshold is raised to 50 GeV for this CR, and the rest of the selection requirements are taken from the SR. The $ZZ \rightarrow 4\ell$ CR requires an additional fourth tight lepton with $p_T > 10$ GeV without any requirement on jets and p_T^{miss} . Both the OSSF lepton pairs should have $m_{\ell\ell}$ compatible with the Z boson mass.

Various MC event generators are used to simulate the signal and background processes. The signal process is simulated at LO using the PYTHIA [57], HERWIG [58], and dShower [36] generators. The PYTHIA sample, with leptonically-decaying W bosons, is taken as the nominal signal sample and it predicts a signal cross section value of $\sigma_{\text{DPS}}^{W^+W^\pm} = 86.4$ fb with the tune CUETP8M1 [14]. The tune dependence of the PYTHIA8 cross section is around 40%, emphasizing the need for an experimental measurement. The sample from HERWIG is used for estimating systematic uncertainties. The PYTHIA v8.226 (8.230) using the NNPDF 2.3 [59] parton distribution functions (PDFs) with the underlying tune CUETP8M1 (CP5 [60]) is used for the simulation of the 2016 (2017 and 2018) data-taking periods. The event generator HERWIG++ (v2.7) [58, 61] using the CTEQ6L1 [62] PDF set with the tune CUETHpps1 [14] is used for the 2016 data-taking period, whereas HERWIG7 (v7.1.4) using the NNPDF 3.1 [63] with PDF set CH3 tune [64] is employed for 2017 and 2018. The dShower generator uses dPDF [33, 65] developed using the LO MSTW2008 [65] PDF set. For a given event generator, neither the underlying event tune nor the PDF sets used to simulate the signal samples impact the kinematic observables relevant to the analysis.

The WZ background is simulated at next-to-LO (NLO) in QCD with the MADGRAPH5_aMC@NLO v2.4.2 (2.6.5) generator [66] using the FxFx jet merging scheme [67] for the 2016 (2017 and 2018) data-taking period. The MADGRAPH5_aMC@NLO generator is also used to simulate $V\gamma$, $t\bar{t}V$, and triboson (VVV) production. The POWHEG BOX (v2.0) code [68–70] is used to simulate SPS $W^\pm W^\pm$, ZZ, and $W\gamma^*$ production processes. The simulated samples of backgrounds for the 2016 data-taking period use the NNPDF 3.0 [71, 72] PDF set whereas the NNPDF 3.1 set is used for 2017 and 2018. Background simulations and the dShower event generator are interfaced with PYTHIA8 for modeling of the parton showering, hadronization, and underlying event processes, which have similar versions and tunes as the signal process. The CMS detector response is modeled using GEANT4 [73], and the simulated events are reconstructed with the same algorithms used for the data. Simulated events are weighted to reproduce the pileup distribution measured in the data. The average number of pileup interactions was 23 (32) in 2016 (2017 and 2018). Scale factors are applied to simulated samples to correct for differences in the reconstruction and selection of physics objects and in the trigger efficiencies between simulation and data. These scale factors are measured with the “tag-and-probe” method using DY events [74].

The nonprompt-lepton background is estimated directly from data using the lepton misidentification rate method [54]. The probability for a loose nonprompt lepton to pass the tight lepton selection criteria (f_p) is estimated using a data control sample dominated by nonprompt leptons and is parameterized as a function of p_T and $|\eta|$. Events in a sideband of the SR, with at least one lepton failing the tight lepton selection criteria, are reweighted with f_p to estimate the nonprompt-lepton background contribution. A similar approach is used to estimate the background contribution from “charge misidentification” events by applying the lepton charge misidentification rate to opposite-sign events in data. The charge misidentification rate is about 0.01 (0.10)% for electrons in the barrel (endcap) regions.

Due to the topological differences between the dominant WZ and nonprompt-lepton backgrounds, two separate boosted decision tree (BDT) discriminants [75] are trained to distinguish the signal from these background components. Addition of the BDT discriminant trained against the nonprompt-lepton backgrounds improves the signal sensitivity by 13%. The BDT training against the WZ sample is done using its simulated sample, whereas the training against nonprompt leptons is carried out using a “tight-loose” control sample in data. Kinematic differences between the signal and these backgrounds are explored to define a set of input variables for the training of two discriminants, which are optimized based on their discriminating power. These input variables include: transverse momenta of the two leptons; p_T^{miss} ; product and absolute sum of the η of the two leptons; separation in ϕ between the leptons; separation in ϕ between the subleading lepton and p_T^{miss} ; separation in ϕ between the dilepton system and the subleading lepton; transverse mass of the two leptons; transverse mass of the leading lepton and p_T^{miss} ; and the “stransverse mass” of the dilepton and p_T^{miss} system [76, 77]. The two BDT scores are mapped into a two-dimensional (2D) plane in both discriminants. Further, the 2D plane is divided into 13 contiguous regions on which the final fit is performed. This division into regions is performed through optimization of the expected signal significance.

The integrated luminosities for the 2016, 2017, and 2018 data-taking years have individual uncertainties of 1.2–2.5% [78–80], while the overall uncertainty for the 2016–2018 period is 1.6%. The simulation of pileup events assumes an inelastic pp cross section of 69.2 mb, with an associated uncertainty of 5% [81], which impacts the expected signal and background yields by 1%. The uncertainties in data to simulation scale factors corresponding to the lepton trigger, reconstruction, and identification result in an uncertainty of 3.3 (2.8)% for the $e^\pm\mu^\pm$ ($\mu^\pm\mu^\pm$) final states. This also includes an uncertainty in the scale factors applied to account for the L1 trigger inefficiency observed in the $|\eta| > 2.0$ region for the 2016 and 2017 data-taking periods [40]. The jet energy scale uncertainties affect the expected event yields by 3%. Uncertainties in the p_T^{miss} are calculated by varying the momenta of unclustered particles that are identified neither as a jet nor as a lepton and affect the expected event yields by $\approx 2\%$. The uncertainty in the b tagging efficiency has an effect of $\approx 1.8\%$ on the expected event yields.

For the $e^\pm\mu^\pm$ ($\mu^\pm\mu^\pm$) channels, a normalization uncertainty of 30 (25)% in the nonprompt-lepton background accounts for the observed variations in the background estimation method when applied to simulated samples. The dependence of f_p on the kinematics of the event sample in which it is measured is included as a shape uncertainty [54]. A normalization uncertainty of 20% is applied to the “charge misid.” background, covering the differences in the measurement of the charge misidentification rate in data and simulation. The data-to-MC normalization factors of the $V\gamma$ background, measured using a dedicated CR [82], are close to unity.

A 50% normalization uncertainty is applied to all other small simulated backgrounds, accounting for the theoretical uncertainties in the predicted cross sections. The theoretical uncertainties associated with the choice of the renormalization and factorization scales and the variations in the PDFs and the strong coupling constant [83, 84] affect the simulated background yields by $\approx 1\%$. The effect of variation in PDF sets is negligible for the signal simulations. Any residual model dependence of the signal process is estimated by allowing the shape of the final BDT discriminant to vary between the PYTHIA and HERWIG simulations and the resulting effect is small. The statistical uncertainties due to the limited size of the MC samples are treated according to the Barlow–Beeston–lite method [85, 86].

The yield of the $\text{DPS } W^\pm W^\pm$ process in the SR is obtained by performing a binned ML fit simultaneously in the SR and in the two CRs [87–89], i.e., the normalization factors for the

WZ and ZZ backgrounds are included as free parameters in the fit together with the signal process. The fit is performed after combining all the background and signal processes in the aforementioned lepton flavor and charge categories, resulting in four independent distributions of the final BDT discriminant per data-taking year. An excess of events with respect to the background-only hypothesis is observed, which is quantified by calculating the p-value using a profile likelihood ratio test statistic [87]. Figure 2 shows the BDT discriminant distribution after the ML fit (postfit) for the four lepton flavor and sign categories. The contributions from different backgrounds and the signal processes are stacked on top of each other and the associated postfit uncertainties are also shown. The distributions of the kinematic variables used to train the BDT discriminants along with the two BDT discriminants are shown in Appendix A.

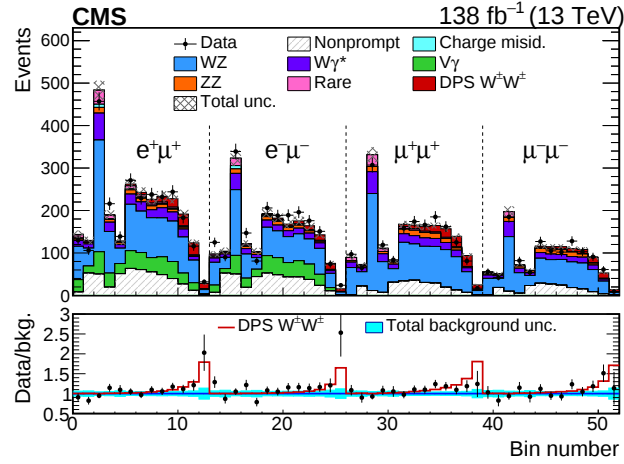


Figure 2: Postfit distribution of the final BDT discriminant output for the four lepton flavor and sign categories. The SPS $W^\pm W^\pm$, $t\bar{t}V$, and VVV contributions are grouped as the “Rare” background. The total postfit uncertainty in the signal and background predictions is shown as the hatched band. The bottom panels show the ratio of data to the sum of all background contributions as the black data points along with the extracted signal shown by the red line. The vertical error bars on the data points represent the statistical uncertainty of the data.

The measured value of $\sigma_{\text{DPS}}^{W^\pm W^\pm}$ is 80.7 ± 11.2 (stat) $^{+9.5}_{-8.6}$ (syst) ± 12.1 (model) fb, where the model uncertainty accounts for the difference in cross sections obtained in the experimental acceptance region with the PYTHIA and HERWIG simulations. The observed statistical significance of the signal is 6.2 standard deviations above the background-only hypothesis. Separate fits to the $e^\pm \mu^\pm$ and $\mu^\pm \mu^\pm$ channels indicate that the two measurements agree within 1.7 standard deviations. The $\text{DPS } W^\pm W^\pm$ production cross section is also measured in a fiducial volume, defined using two generator-level SS “dressed” leptons ($e^\pm \mu^\pm$ or $\mu^\pm \mu^\pm$) from W boson decays excluding the events with leptonically decaying τ leptons. The leptons are dressed by adding the momenta of generator-level photons within a cone of $\Delta R(\ell, \gamma) < 0.1$ to their momenta, and are required to pass kinematic requirements on the p_T , η , $m_{\ell\ell}$, and $p_T^{\ell\ell}$ variables from the SR selection. The measured fiducial cross section is 6.28 ± 0.81 (stat) ± 0.69 (syst) ± 0.37 (model) fb, where the model uncertainty represents the observed difference in reconstruction efficiencies within the fiducial region obtained using the PYTHIA and HERWIG simulations. The measured value of the inclusive (fiducial) cross section is in agreement with the predicted value of 86.4 (6.74) fb by PYTHIA8 with the tune CUETP8M1 and dShower. A value of σ_{eff} is extracted from Eq. (1), using the measured $\sigma_{\text{DPS}}^{W^\pm W^\pm}$ value and the next-to-NLO prediction for the single W^+ (W^-) production cross section including leptonic decays of 35.4 ± 1.4 (26.0 ± 1.0) nb [91, 92]. This procedure results in a value of $12.2^{+2.9}_{-2.2}$ mb, consistent with previous measurements of this quantity from

final states with vector bosons [19, 26]. Tabulated results are provided in HEPData [93].

In summary, the first observation of $W^\pm W^\pm$ production from double parton scattering processes in proton-proton collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 13$ TeV has been reported. The analyzed data set corresponds to an integrated luminosity of 138 fb^{-1} , collected in 2016–2018 using the CMS detector at the LHC. Events are selected by requiring same-sign electron-muon or dimuon pairs with moderate missing transverse momentum and low jet multiplicity. Boosted decision trees are used to discriminate between the signal and the dominant background processes. A fiducial cross section of 6.28 ± 0.81 (stat) ± 0.69 (syst) ± 0.37 (model) fb is extracted, and an inclusive cross section of 80.7 ± 11.2 (stat) $^{+9.5}_{-8.6}$ (syst) ± 12.1 (model) fb is measured. This corresponds to an observed significance of the signal above the background-only hypothesis of 6.2 standard deviations. A value of the DPS effective cross section, characterizing the transverse distribution of partons in the proton, $\sigma_{\text{eff}} = 12.2^{+2.9}_{-2.2} \text{ mb}$ is extracted.

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A Supplemental material

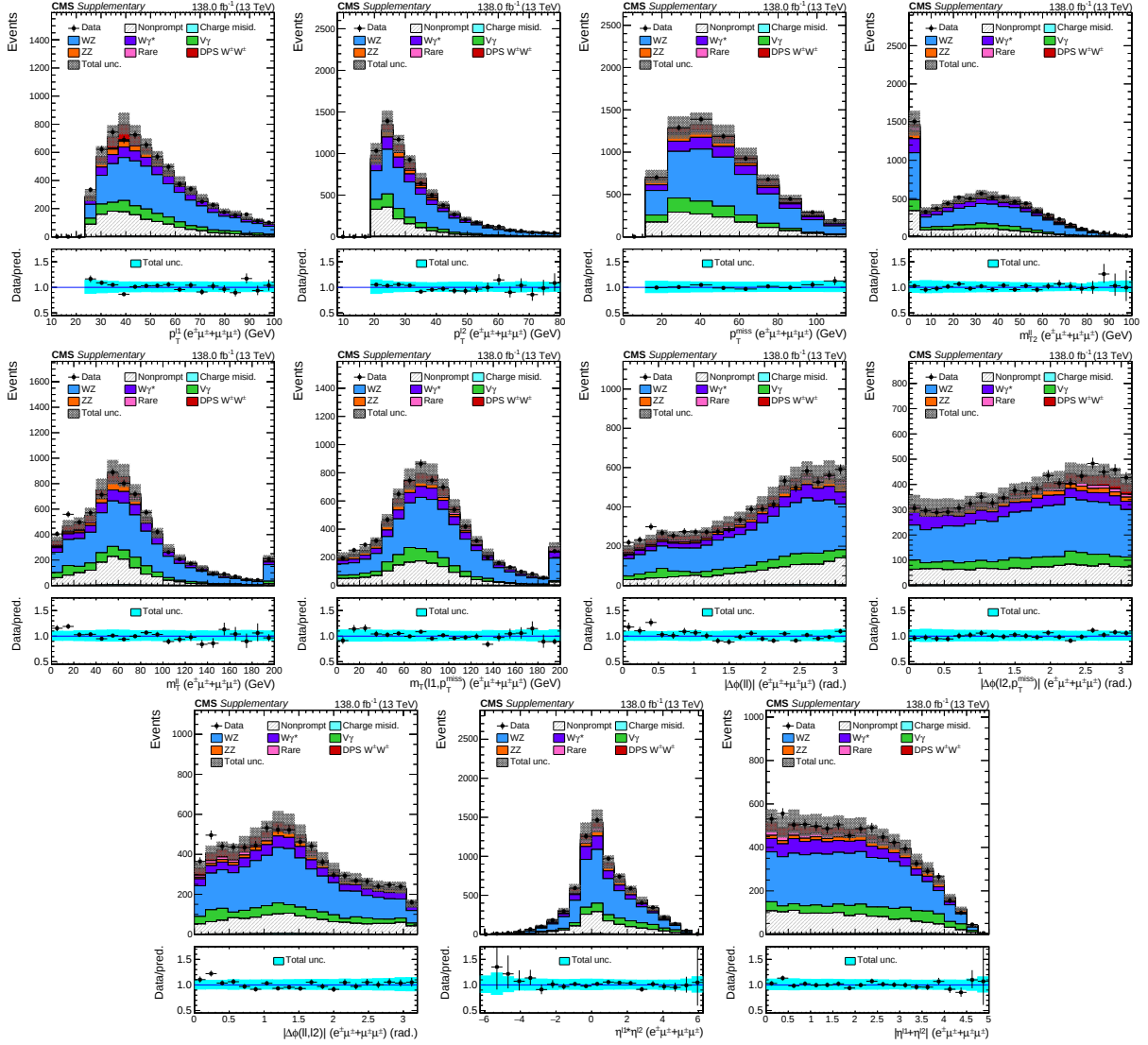


Figure A.1: Distributions of the kinematic variables used for the training of the BDT discriminants for the combined $e^\pm\mu^\pm$ and $\mu^\pm\mu^\pm$ final states: $p_T^{\ell 1}$, $p_T^{\ell 2}$, p_T^{miss} , $m_{T2}(\ell\ell)$, $m_T(\ell\ell)$, $m_T(\ell 1, p_T^{\text{miss}})$, $|\Delta\phi(\ell\ell)|$, $|\Delta\phi(\ell 2, p_T^{\text{miss}})|$, $|\Delta\phi(\ell\ell, \ell 2)|$, $\eta^{\ell 1} * \eta^{\ell 2}$, and, $|\eta^{\ell 1} + \eta^{\ell 2}|$. The signal and background yields have been normalized to their respective postfit yields. The uncertainty bands represent the total expected uncertainty on the predicted yields, which includes both the statistical and systematic components.

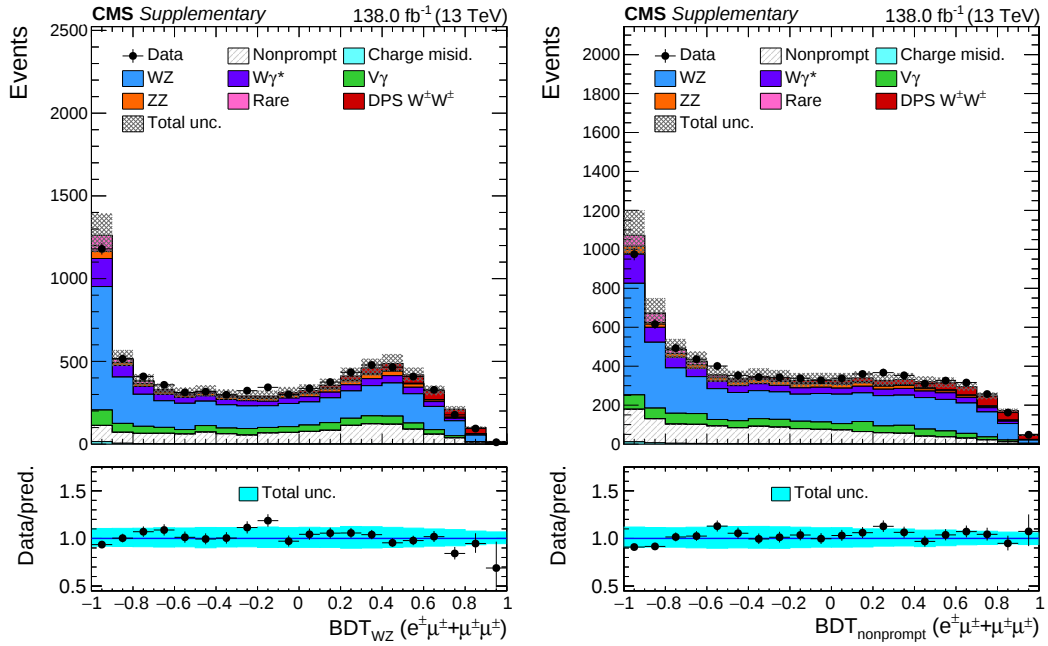


Figure A.2: Distributions of the two single BDT discriminants for the combined $e^\pm\mu^\pm$ and $\mu^\pm\mu^\pm$ final states. The BDT discriminant trained against the WZ (nonprompt leptons) background is labeled as BDT_{WZ} ($\text{BDT}_{\text{nonprompt}}$). The signal and background yields have been normalized to their respective postfit yields. The uncertainty bands represent the total expected uncertainty on the predicted yields, which includes both the statistical and systematic components.

B The CMS Collaboration

Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia

A. Tumasyan¹ 

Institut für Hochenergiephysik, Vienna, Austria

W. Adam , J.W. Andrejkovic , T. Bergauer , S. Chatterjee , K. Damanakis , M. Dragicevic , A. Escalante Del Valle , P.S. Hussain , M. Jeitler² , N. Krammer , L. Lechner , D. Liko , I. Mikulec , P. Paulitsch , F.M. Pitters , J. Schieck² , R. Schöfbeck , D. Schwarz , S. Templ , W. Waltenberger , C.-E. Wulz² 

Universiteit Antwerpen, Antwerpen, Belgium

M.R. Darwish³ , T. Janssen , T. Kello⁴ , H. Rejeb Sfar , P. Van Mechelen 

Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussel, Belgium

E.S. Bols , J. D'Hondt , A. De Moor , M. Delcourt , H. El Faham , S. Lowette , S. Moortgat , A. Morton , D. Müller , A.R. Sahasransu , S. Tavernier , W. Van Doninck , D. Vannerom 

Université Libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, Belgium

B. Clerbaux , G. De Lentdecker , L. Favart , D. Hohov , J. Jaramillo , K. Lee , M. Mahdavihorrami , I. Makarenko , A. Malara , S. Paredes , L. Pétré , N. Postiau , E. Starling , L. Thomas , M. Vanden Bemden , C. Vander Velde , P. Vanlaer 

Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

D. Dobur , J. Knolle , L. Lambrecht , G. Mestdach , M. Niedziela , C. Rendón , C. Roskas , A. Samalan , K. Skovpen , M. Tytgat , N. Van Den Bossche , B. Vermassen , L. Wezenbeek 

Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

A. Benecke , G. Bruno , F. Bury , C. Caputo , P. David , C. Delaere , I.S. Donertas , A. Giammanco , K. Jaffel , Sa. Jain , V. Lemaître , K. Mondal , J. Prisciandaro , A. Talierecio , T.T. Tran , P. Vischia , S. Wertz 

Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Fisicas, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

G.A. Alves , E. Coelho , C. Hensel , A. Moraes , P. Rebello Teles 

Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

W.L. Aldá Júnior , M. Alves Gallo Pereira , M. Barroso Ferreira Filho , H. Brandao Malbouisson , W. Carvalho , J. Chinellato⁵ , E.M. Da Costa , G.G. Da Silveira⁶ , D. De Jesus Damiao , V. Dos Santos Sousa , S. Fonseca De Souza , J. Martins⁷ , C. Mora Herrera , K. Mota Amarilo , L. Mundim , H. Nogima , A. Santoro , S.M. Silva Do Amaral , A. Sznajder , M. Thiel , F. Torres Da Silva De Araujo⁸ , A. Vilela Pereira 

Universidade Estadual Paulista, Universidade Federal do ABC, São Paulo, Brazil

C.A. Bernardes⁶ , L. Calligaris , T.R. Fernandez Perez Tomei , E.M. Gregores , P.G. Mercadante , S.F. Novaes , Sandra S. Padula 

Institute for Nuclear Research and Nuclear Energy, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria

A. Aleksandrov , G. Antchev , R. Hadjiiska , P. Iaydjiev , M. Misheva , M. Rodozov , M. Shopova , G. Sultanov 

University of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria

A. Dimitrov , T. Ivanov , L. Litov , B. Pavlov , P. Petkov , A. Petrov, E. Shumka 

Beihang University, Beijing, China

T. Cheng , T. Javaid⁹, M. Mittal , L. Yuan 

Department of Physics, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China

M. Ahmad , G. Bauer¹⁰, Z. Hu , S. Lezki , K. Yi^{10,11}

Institute of High Energy Physics, Beijing, China

G.M. Chen⁹ , H.S. Chen⁹ , M. Chen⁹ , F. Iemmi , C.H. Jiang, A. Kapoor , H. Liao , Z.-A. Liu¹² , V. Milosevic , F. Monti , R. Sharma , J. Tao , J. Thomas-Wilsker , J. Wang , H. Zhang , J. Zhao 

State Key Laboratory of Nuclear Physics and Technology, Peking University, Beijing, China

A. Agapitos , Y. An , Y. Ban , C. Chen, A. Levin , C. Li , Q. Li , X. Lyu, Y. Mao, S.J. Qian , X. Sun , D. Wang , J. Xiao , H. Yang

Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangzhou, China

J. Li, M. Lu , Z. You 

Institute of Modern Physics and Key Laboratory of Nuclear Physics and Ion-beam Application (MOE) - Fudan University, Shanghai, China

X. Gao⁴ , D. Leggat, H. Okawa , Y. Zhang 

Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China

Z. Lin , C. Lu , M. Xiao 

Universidad de Los Andes, Bogota, Colombia

C. Avila , D.A. Barbosa Trujillo, A. Cabrera , C. Florez , J. Fraga 

Universidad de Antioquia, Medellin, Colombia

J. Mejia Guisao , F. Ramirez , M. Rodriguez , J.D. Ruiz Alvarez 

University of Split, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, Split, Croatia

D. Giljanovic , N. Godinovic , D. Lelas , I. Puljak 

University of Split, Faculty of Science, Split, Croatia

Z. Antunovic, M. Kovac , T. Sculac 

Institute Rudjer Boskovic, Zagreb, Croatia

V. Brigljevic , B.K. Chitroda , D. Ferencek , D. Majumder , M. Roguljic , A. Starodumov¹³ , T. Susa 

University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

A. Attikis , K. Christoforou , G. Kole , M. Kolosova , S. Konstantinou , J. Mousa , C. Nicolaou, F. Ptochos , P.A. Razis , H. Rykaczewski, H. Saka 

Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

M. Finger¹³ , M. Finger Jr.¹³ , A. Kveton 

Escuela Politecnica Nacional, Quito, Ecuador

E. Ayala 

Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Quito, Ecuador

E. Carrera Jarrin 

Academy of Scientific Research and Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Egyptian

Network of High Energy Physics, Cairo, Egypt

Y. Assran^{14,15}, S. Elgammal¹⁵

Center for High Energy Physics (CHEP-FU), Fayoum University, El-Fayoum, Egypt

M.A. Mahmoud , Y. Mohammed 

National Institute of Chemical Physics and Biophysics, Tallinn, Estonia

S. Bhowmik , R.K. Dewanjee , K. Ehataht , M. Kadastik, T. Lange , S. Nandan , C. Nielsen , J. Pata , M. Raidal , L. Tani , C. Veelken 

Department of Physics, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

P. Eerola , H. Kirschenmann , K. Osterberg , M. Voutilainen 

Helsinki Institute of Physics, Helsinki, Finland

S. Bharthuar , E. Brücken , F. Garcia , J. Havukainen , M.S. Kim , R. Kinnunen, T. Lampén , K. Lassila-Perini , S. Lehti , T. Lindén , M. Lotti, L. Martikainen , M. Myllymäki , J. Ott , M.m. Rantanen , H. Siikonen , E. Tuominen , J. Tuominiemi 

Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology, Lappeenranta, Finland

P. Luukka , H. Petrow , T. Tuuva

IRFU, CEA, Université Paris-Saclay, Gif-sur-Yvette, France

C. Amendola , M. Besancon , F. Couderc , M. Dejardin , D. Denegri, J.L. Faure, F. Ferri , S. Ganjour , P. Gras , G. Hamel de Monchenault , P. Jarry , V. Lohezic , J. Malcles , J. Rander, A. Rosowsky , M.Ö. Sahin , A. Savoy-Navarro¹⁶ , P. Simkina , M. Titov 

Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, CNRS/IN2P3, Ecole Polytechnique, Institut Polytechnique de Paris, Palaiseau, France

C. Baldenegro Barrera , F. Beaudette , A. Buchot Perraguin , P. Busson , A. Cappati , C. Charlot , F. Damas , O. Davignon , B. Diab , G. Falmagne , B.A. Fontana Santos Alves , S. Ghosh , R. Granier de Cassagnac , A. Hakimi , B. Harikrishnan , G. Liu , J. Motta , M. Nguyen , C. Ochando , L. Portales , J. Rembser , R. Salerno , U. Sarkar , J.B. Sauvan , Y. Sirois , A. Tarabini , E. Vernazza , A. Zabi , A. Zghiche 

Université de Strasbourg, CNRS, IPHC UMR 7178, Strasbourg, France

J.-L. Agram¹⁷ , J. Andrea, D. Apparu , D. Bloch , G. Bourgatte, J.-M. Brom , E.C. Chabert , C. Collard , D. Darej, U. Goerlach , C. Grimault, A.-C. Le Bihan , P. Van Hove 

Institut de Physique des 2 Infinis de Lyon (IP2I), Villeurbanne, France

S. Beauceron , C. Bernet , B. Blancon , G. Boudoul , A. Carle, N. Chanon , J. Choi , D. Contardo , P. Depasse , C. Dozen¹⁸ , H. El Mamouni, J. Fay , S. Gascon , M. Gouzevitch , G. Grenier , B. Ille , I.B. Laktineh, M. Lethuillier , L. Mirabito, S. Perries, V. Sordini , L. Torterotot , M. Vander Donckt , P. Verdier , S. Viret

Georgian Technical University, Tbilisi, Georgia

G. Adamov, I. Lomidze , Z. Tsamalaidze¹³ 

RWTH Aachen University, I. Physikalisches Institut, Aachen, Germany

V. Botta , L. Feld , K. Klein , M. Lipinski , D. Meuser , A. Pauls , N. Röwert , M. Teroerde 

RWTH Aachen University, III. Physikalisches Institut A, Aachen, Germany

S. Diekmann , A. Dodonova , N. Eich , D. Eliseev , M. Erdmann , P. Fackeldey 

D. Fasanella , B. Fischer , T. Hebbeker , K. Hoepfner , F. Ivone , M.y. Lee , L. Mastrolorenzo, M. Merschmeyer , A. Meyer , S. Mondal , S. Mukherjee , D. Noll , A. Novak , F. Nowotny, A. Pozdnyakov , Y. Rath, W. Redjeb , H. Reithler , A. Schmidt , S.C. Schuler, A. Sharma , L. Vigilante, S. Wiedenbeck , S. Zaleski

RWTH Aachen University, III. Physikalisches Institut B, Aachen, Germany

C. Dziwok , G. Flügge , W. Haj Ahmad¹⁹ , O. Hlushchenko, T. Kress , A. Nowack , O. Pooth , A. Stahl²⁰ , T. Ziemons , A. Zotz 

Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron, Hamburg, Germany

H. Aarup Petersen, M. Aldaya Martin , P. Asmuss, S. Baxter , M. Bayatmakou , O. Behnke, A. Bermúdez Martínez , S. Bhattacharya , A.A. Bin Anuar , F. Blekman²¹ , K. Borras²² , D. Brunner , A. Campbell , A. Cardini , C. Cheng, F. Colombina, S. Consuegra Rodríguez , G. Correia Silva , M. De Silva , L. Didukh , G. Eckerlin, D. Eckstein, L.I. Estevez Banos , O. Filatov , E. Gallo²¹ , A. Geiser , A. Giraldi , G. Greau, A. Grohsjean , V. Guglielmi , M. Guthoff , A. Jafari²³ , N.Z. Jomhari , B. Kaech , A. Kasem²² , M. Kasemann , H. Kaveh , C. Kleinwort , R. Kogler , M. Komm , D. Krücker , W. Lange, D. Leyva Pernia, K. Lipka , W. Lohmann²⁴ , R. Mankel , I.-A. Melzer-Pellmann , M. Mendizabal Morentin , J. Metwally, A.B. Meyer , G. Milella , M. Mormile , A. Mussgiller , A. Nürnberg , Y. Otariid, D. Pérez Adán , A. Raspereza, B. Ribeiro Lopes , J. Rübenach, A. Saggio , A. Saibel , M. Savitskyi , M. Scham^{25,22} , V. Scheurer, S. Schnake²² , P. Schütze , C. Schwanenberger²¹ , M. Shchedrolosiev , R.E. Sosa Ricardo , D. Stafford, N. Tonon[†] , M. Van De Klundert , F. Vazzoler , A. Ventura Barroso , R. Walsh , D. Walter , Q. Wang , Y. Wen , K. Wichmann, L. Wiens²² , C. Wissing , S. Wuchterl , Y. Yang, A. Zimmermann Castro Santos 

University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany

R. Aggleton, A. Albrecht , S. Albrecht , M. Antonello , S. Bein , L. Benato , M. Bonanomi , P. Connor , K. De Leo , M. Eich, K. El Morabit , F. Feindt, A. Fröhlich, C. Garbers , E. Garutti , M. Hajheidari, J. Haller , A. Hinzmann , H.R. Jabusch , G. Kasieczka , R. Klanner , W. Korcari , T. Kramer , V. Kutzner , J. Lange , A. Lobanov , C. Matthies , A. Mehta , L. Moureaux , M. Mrowietz, A. Nigamova , Y. Nissan, A. Paasch , K.J. Pena Rodriguez , M. Rieger , O. Rieger, P. Schleper , M. Schröder , J. Schwandt , H. Stadie , G. Steinbrück , A. Tews, M. Wolf 

Karlsruher Institut fuer Technologie, Karlsruhe, Germany

J. Bechtel , S. Brommer , M. Burkart, E. Butz , R. Caspart , T. Chwalek , A. Dierlamm , A. Droll, N. Faltermann , M. Giffels , J.O. Gosewisch, A. Gottmann , F. Hartmann²⁰ , M. Horzela , U. Husemann , P. Keicher, M. Klute , R. Koppenhöfer , S. Maier , S. Mitra , Th. Müller , M. Neukum, G. Quast , K. Rabbertz , J. Rauser, D. Savoie , M. Schnepf, D. Seith, I. Shvetsov, H.J. Simonis , N. Trevisani , R. Ulrich , J. van der Linden , R.F. Von Cube , M. Wassmer , M. Weber , S. Wieland , R. Wolf , S. Wozniowski , S. Wunsch

Institute of Nuclear and Particle Physics (INPP), NCSR Demokritos, Aghia Paraskevi, Greece

G. Anagnostou, P. Assiouras , G. Daskalakis , A. Kyriakis, A. Stakia 

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece

M. Diamantopoulou, D. Karasavvas, P. Kontaxakis , A. Manousakis-Katsikakis , A. Panagiotou, I. Papavergou , N. Saoulidou , K. Theofilatos , E. Tziaferi , K. Vellidis , E. Vourliotis , I. Zisopoulos 

National Technical University of Athens, Athens, Greece

G. Bakas , T. Chatzistavrou, K. Kousouris , I. Papakrivopoulos , G. Tsipolitis, A. Zacharopoulou

University of Ioánnina, Ioánnina, Greece

K. Adamidis, I. Bestintzanos, I. Evangelou , C. Foudas, P. Gianneios , C. Kamtsikis, P. Katsoulis, P. Kokkas , P.G. Kosmoglou Kioseoglou , N. Manthos , I. Papadopoulos , J. Strologas 

MTA-ELTE Lendület CMS Particle and Nuclear Physics Group, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

M. Csanád , K. Farkas , M.M.A. Gadallah²⁶ , C. Komjáti , S. Lökös²⁷ , P. Major , K. Mandal , G. Pásztor , A.J. Rádl²⁸ , O. Surányi , G.I. Veres 

Wigner Research Centre for Physics, Budapest, Hungary

M. Bartók²⁹ , G. Bencze, C. Hajdu , D. Horvath^{30,31} , F. Sikler , V. Veszpremi 

Institute of Nuclear Research ATOMKI, Debrecen, Hungary

N. Beni , S. Czellar, J. Karancsi²⁹ , J. Molnar, Z. Szillasi, D. Teyssier 

Institute of Physics, University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary

P. Raics, B. Ujvari³² 

Karoly Robert Campus, MATE Institute of Technology, Gyongyos, Hungary

T. Csorgo²⁸ , F. Nemes²⁸ , T. Novak 

Panjab University, Chandigarh, India

J. Babbar , S. Bansal , S.B. Beri, V. Bhatnagar , G. Chaudhary , S. Chauhan , N. Dhingra³³ , R. Gupta, A. Kaur , A. Kaur , H. Kaur , M. Kaur , S. Kumar , P. Kumari , M. Meena , K. Sandeep , T. Sheokand, J.B. Singh³⁴ , A. Singla , A. K. Viridi 

University of Delhi, Delhi, India

A. Ahmed , A. Bhardwaj , B.C. Choudhary , M. Gola, S. Keshri , A. Kumar , M. Naimuddin , P. Priyanka , K. Ranjan , S. Saumya , A. Shah 

Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, HBNI, Kolkata, India

S. Baradia , S. Barman³⁵ , S. Bhattacharya , D. Bhowmik, S. Dutta , S. Dutta, B. Gomber³⁶ , M. Maity³⁵ , P. Palit , P.K. Rout , G. Saha , B. Sahu , S. Sarkar

Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Madras, India

P.K. Behera , S.C. Behera , P. Kalbhor , J.R. Komaragiri³⁷ , D. Kumar³⁷ , A. Muham-mad , L. Panwar³⁷ , R. Pradhan , P.R. Pujahari , A. Sharma , A.K. Sikdar , P.C. Tiwari³⁷ , S. Verma 

Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai, India

K. Naskar³⁸ 

Tata Institute of Fundamental Research-A, Mumbai, India

T. Aziz, I. Das , S. Dugad, M. Kumar , G.B. Mohanty , P. Suryadevara

Tata Institute of Fundamental Research-B, Mumbai, India

S. Banerjee , R. Chudasama , M. Guchait , S. Karmakar , S. Kumar , G. Majumder , K. Mazumdar , S. Mukherjee , A. Thachayath 

National Institute of Science Education and Research, An OCC of Homi Bhabha National

Institute, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

S. Bahinipati³⁹ , A.K. Das, C. Kar , P. Mal , T. Mishra , V.K. Muraleedharan Nair Bindhu⁴⁰ , A. Nayak⁴⁰ , P. Saha , N. Sur , S.K. Swain, D. Vats⁴⁰ 

Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune, India

A. Alpana , S. Dube , B. Kansal , A. Laha , S. Pandey , A. Rastogi , S. Sharma 

Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, Iran

H. Bakhshiansohi⁴¹ , E. Khazaie , M. Zeinali⁴² 

Institute for Research in Fundamental Sciences (IPM), Tehran, Iran

S. Chenarani⁴³ , S.M. Etesami , M. Khakzad , M. Mohammadi Najafabadi 

University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

M. Grunewald 

INFN Sezione di Bari^a, Università di Bari^b, Politecnico di Bari^c, Bari, Italy

M. Abbrescia^{a,b} , R. Aly^{a,c,44} , C. Aruta^{a,b} , A. Colaleo^a , D. Creanza^{a,c} , N. De Filippis^{a,c} , M. De Palma^{a,b} , A. Di Florio^{a,b} , W. Elmetenawee^{a,b} , F. Errico^{a,b} , L. Fiore^a , G. Iaselli^{a,c} , M. Ince^{a,b} , G. Maggi^{a,c} , M. Maggi^a , I. Margjeka^{a,b} , V. Mastrapasqua^{a,b} , S. My^{a,b} , S. Nuzzo^{a,b} , A. Pellecchia^{a,b} , A. Pompili^{a,b} , G. Pugliese^{a,c} , R. Radogna^a , D. Ramos^a , A. Ranieri^a , G. Selvaggi^{a,b} , L. Silvestris^a , F.M. Simone^{a,b} , Ü. Sözbilir^a , A. Stamerra^a , R. Venditti^a , P. Verwilligen^a 

INFN Sezione di Bologna^a, Università di Bologna^b, Bologna, Italy

G. Abbiendi^a , C. Battilana^{a,b} , D. Bonacorsi^{a,b} , L. Borghonovi^a , L. Brigliadori^a, R. Campanini^{a,b} , P. Capiluppi^{a,b} , A. Castro^{a,b} , F.R. Cavallo^a , M. Cuffiani^{a,b} , G.M. Dallavalle^a , T. Diotallevi^{a,b} , F. Fabbri^a , A. Fanfani^{a,b} , P. Giacomelli^a , L. Giommi^{a,b} , C. Grandi^a , L. Guiducci^{a,b} , S. Lo Meo^{a,45} , L. Lunerti^{a,b} , S. Marcellini^a , G. Masetti^a , F.L. Navarria^{a,b} , A. Perrotta^a , F. Primavera^{a,b} , A.M. Rossi^{a,b} , T. Rovelli^{a,b} , G.P. Siroli^{a,b} 

INFN Sezione di Catania^a, Università di Catania^b, Catania, Italy

S. Costa^{a,b,46} , A. Di Mattia^a , R. Potenza^{a,b}, A. Tricomi^{a,b,46} , C. Tuve^{a,b} 

INFN Sezione di Firenze^a, Università di Firenze^b, Firenze, Italy

G. Barbagli^a , B. Camaiani^{a,b} , A. Cassese^a , R. Ceccarelli^{a,b} , V. Ciulli^{a,b} , C. Civinini^a , R. D'Alessandro^{a,b} , E. Focardi^{a,b} , G. Latino^{a,b} , P. Lenzi^{a,b} , M. Lizzo^{a,b} , M. Meschini^a , S. Paoletti^a , R. Seidita^{a,b} , G. Sguazzoni^a , L. Viliani^a 

INFN Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, Frascati, Italy

L. Benussi , S. Bianco , S. Meola²⁰ , D. Piccolo 

INFN Sezione di Genova^a, Università di Genova^b, Genova, Italy

M. Bozzo^{a,b} , F. Ferro^a , R. Mulargia^a , E. Robutti^a , S. Tosi^{a,b} 

INFN Sezione di Milano-Bicocca^a, Università di Milano-Bicocca^b, Milano, Italy

A. Benaglia^a , G. Boldrini^a , F. Brivio^{a,b} , F. Cetorelli^{a,b} , F. De Guio^{a,b} , M.E. Dinardo^{a,b} , P. Dini^a , S. Gennai^a , A. Ghezzi^{a,b} , P. Govoni^{a,b} , L. Guzzi^{a,b} , M.T. Lucchini^{a,b} , M. Malberti^a , S. Malvezzi^a , A. Massironi^a , D. Menasce^a , L. Moroni^a , M. Paganoni^{a,b} , D. Pedrini^a , B.S. Pinolini^a, S. Ragazzi^{a,b} , N. Redaelli^a , T. Tabarelli de Fatis^{a,b} , D. Zuolo^{a,b} 

INFN Sezione di Napoli^a, Università di Napoli 'Federico II'^b, Napoli, Italy; Università della

Basilicata^c, Potenza, Italy; Università G. Marconi^d, Roma, Italy

S. Buontempo^a , F. Carnevali^{a,b}, N. Cavallo^{a,c} , A. De Iorio^{a,b} , F. Fabozzi^{a,c} , A.O.M. Iorio^{a,b} , L. Lista^{a,b,47} , P. Paolucci^{a,20} , B. Rossi^a , C. Sciacca^{a,b} 

INFN Sezione di Padova^a, Università di Padova^b, Padova, Italy; Università di Trento^c, Trento, Italy

P. Azzi^a , N. Bacchetta^{a,48} , P. Bortignon^a , A. Bragagnolo^{a,b} , R. Carlin^{a,b} , P. Checchia^a , U. Gasparini^{a,b} , G. Grosso^a, L. Layer^{a,49}, E. Lusiani^a , M. Margoni^{a,b} , A.T. Meneguzzo^{a,b} , M. Passaseo^a , J. Pazzini^{a,b} , P. Ronchese^{a,b} , R. Rossin^{a,b} , M. Sgaravatto^a , F. Simonetto^{a,b} , G. Strong^a , M. Tosi^{a,b} , S. Ventura^a , H. Yarar^{a,b}, M. Zanetti^{a,b} , P. Zotto^{a,b} , A. Zucchetta^{a,b} , G. Zumerle^{a,b} 

INFN Sezione di Pavia^a, Università di Pavia^b, Pavia, Italy

S. Abu Zeid^{a,50} , C. Aimè^{a,b} , A. Braghieri^a , S. Calzaferri^{a,b} , D. Fiorina^{a,b} , P. Montagna^{a,b} , V. Re^a , C. Riccardi^{a,b} , P. Salvini^a , I. Vai^a , P. Vitulo^{a,b} 

INFN Sezione di Perugia^a, Università di Perugia^b, Perugia, Italy

P. Asenov^{a,51} , G.M. Bilei^a , D. Ciangottini^{a,b} , L. Fanò^{a,b} , M. Magherini^{a,b} , G. Mantovani^{a,b}, V. Mariani^{a,b} , M. Menichelli^a , F. Moscatelli^{a,51} , A. Piccinelli^{a,b} , M. Presilla^{a,b} , A. Rossi^{a,b} , A. Santocchia^{a,b} , D. Spiga^a , T. Tedeschi^{a,b} 

INFN Sezione di Pisa^a, Università di Pisa^b, Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa^c, Pisa, Italy; Università di Siena^d, Siena, Italy

P. Azzurri^a , G. Bagliesi^a , V. Bertacchi^{a,c} , R. Bhattacharya^a , L. Bianchini^{a,b} , T. Boccali^a , E. Bossini^{a,b} , D. Bruschini^{a,c} , R. Castaldi^a , M.A. Ciocci^{a,b} , V. D'Amante^{a,d} , R. Dell'Orso^a , M.R. Di Domenico^{a,d} , S. Donato^a , A. Giassi^a , F. Ligabue^{a,c} , E. Manca^{a,c} , G. Mandorli^{a,c} , D. Matos Figueiredo^a, A. Messineo^{a,b} , M. Musich^{a,b} , F. Palla^a , S. Parolia^{a,b} , G. Ramirez-Sanchez^{a,c} , A. Rizzi^{a,b} , G. Rolandi^{a,c} , S. Roy Chowdhury^{a,c} , T. Sarkar^{a,35} , A. Scribano^a , N. Shafiei^{a,b} , P. Spagnolo^a , R. Tenchini^a , G. Tonelli^{a,b} , N. Turini^{a,d} , A. Venturi^a , P.G. Verdini^a 

INFN Sezione di Roma^a, Sapienza Università di Roma^b, Roma, Italy

P. Barria^a , M. Campana^{a,b} , F. Cavallari^a , D. Del Re^{a,b} , E. Di Marco^a , M. Diemoz^a , E. Longo^{a,b} , P. Meridiani^a , G. Organtini^{a,b} , F. Pandolfi^a , R. Paramatti^{a,b} , C. Quaranta^{a,b} , S. Rahatlou^{a,b} , C. Rovelli^a , F. Santanastasio^{a,b} , L. Soffi^a , R. Tramontano^{a,b} 

INFN Sezione di Torino^a, Università di Torino^b, Torino, Italy; Università del Piemonte Orientale^c, Novara, Italy

N. Amapane^{a,b} , R. Arcidiacono^{a,c} , S. Argiro^{a,b} , M. Arneodo^{a,c} , N. Bartosik^a , R. Bellan^{a,b} , A. Bellora^{a,b} , J. Berenguer Antequera^{a,b} , C. Biino^a , N. Cartiglia^a , M. Costa^{a,b} , R. Covarelli^{a,b} , N. Demaria^a , M. Grippo^{a,b} , B. Kiani^{a,b} , F. Legger^a , C. Mariotti^a , S. Maselli^a , A. Mecca^{a,b} , E. Migliore^{a,b} , E. Monteil^{a,b} , M. Monteno^a , M.M. Obertino^{a,b} , G. Ortona^a , L. Pacher^{a,b} , N. Pastrone^a , M. Pelliccioni^a , M. Ruspa^{a,c} , K. Shchelina^a , F. Siviero^{a,b} , V. Sola^a , A. Solano^{a,b} , D. Soldi^{a,b} , A. Staiano^a , M. Tornago^{a,b} , D. Trocino^a , G. Umoret^{a,b} , A. Vagnerini^{a,b} 

INFN Sezione di Trieste^a, Università di Trieste^b, Trieste, Italy

S. Belforte^a , V. Candelise^{a,b} , M. Casarsa^a , F. Cossutti^a , A. Da Rold^{a,b} , G. Della Ricca^{a,b} , G. Sorrentino^{a,b} 

Kyungpook National University, Daegu, Korea

S. Dogra , C. Huh , B. Kim , D.H. Kim , G.N. Kim , J. Kim, J. Lee , S.W. Lee , C.S. Moon , Y.D. Oh , S.I. Pak , M.S. Ryu , S. Sekmen , Y.C. Yang 

Chonnam National University, Institute for Universe and Elementary Particles, Kwangju, Korea

H. Kim , D.H. Moon 

Hanyang University, Seoul, Korea

E. Asilar , T.J. Kim , J. Park 

Korea University, Seoul, Korea

S. Cho, S. Choi , S. Han, B. Hong , K. Lee, K.S. Lee , J. Lim, J. Park, S.K. Park, J. Yoo 

Kyung Hee University, Department of Physics, Seoul, Korea

J. Goh 

Sejong University, Seoul, Korea

H. S. Kim , Y. Kim, S. Lee

Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea

J. Almond, J.H. Bhyun, J. Choi , S. Jeon , W. Jun , J. Kim , J. Kim , J.S. Kim, S. Ko , H. Kwon , H. Lee , J. Lee , S. Lee, B.H. Oh , M. Oh , S.B. Oh , H. Seo , U.K. Yang, I. Yoon 

University of Seoul, Seoul, Korea

W. Jang , D.Y. Kang, Y. Kang , D. Kim , S. Kim , B. Ko, J.S.H. Lee , Y. Lee , J.A. Merlin, I.C. Park , Y. Roh, D. Song, Watson, I.J. , S. Yang 

Yonsei University, Department of Physics, Seoul, Korea

S. Ha , H.D. Yoo 

Sungkyunkwan University, Suwon, Korea

M. Choi , M.R. Kim , H. Lee, Y. Lee , Y. Lee , I. Yu 

College of Engineering and Technology, American University of the Middle East (AUM), Dasman, Kuwait

T. Beyrouthy, Y. Maghrbi 

Riga Technical University, Riga, Latvia

K. Dreimanis , A. Gaile , A. Potrebko , T. Torims, V. Veckalns 

Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania

M. Ambrozaitis , A. Carvalho Antunes De Oliveira , A. Juodagalvis , A. Rinkevicius , G. Tamulaitis 

National Centre for Particle Physics, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

N. Bin Norjoharuddeen , S.Y. Hoh⁵² , I. Yusuff⁵² , Z. Zolkapli

Universidad de Sonora (UNISON), Hermosillo, Mexico

J.F. Benitez , A. Castaneda Hernandez , H.A. Encinas Acosta, L.G. Gallegos Maríñez, M. León Coello , J.A. Murillo Quijada , A. Sehwat , L. Valencia Palomo 

Centro de Investigacion y de Estudios Avanzados del IPN, Mexico City, Mexico

G. Ayala , H. Castilla-Valdez , I. Heredia-De La Cruz⁵³ , R. Lopez-Fernandez , C.A. Mondragon Herrera, D.A. Perez Navarro , A. Sánchez Hernández 

Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico

C. Oropeza Barrera , F. Vazquez Valencia 

Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico

I. Pedraza , H.A. Salazar Ibarguen , C. Uribe Estrada 

University of Montenegro, Podgorica, Montenegro

I. Bubanja, J. Mijuskovic⁵⁴, N. Raicevic 

National Centre for Physics, Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan

A. Ahmad , M.I. Asghar, A. Awais , M.I.M. Awan, M. Gul , H.R. Hoorani , W.A. Khan , M. Shoaib , M. Waqas 

AGH University of Science and Technology Faculty of Computer Science, Electronics and Telecommunications, Krakow, Poland

V. Avati, L. Grzanka , M. Malawski 

National Centre for Nuclear Research, Swierk, Poland

H. Bialkowska , M. Bluj , B. Boimska , M. Górski , M. Kazana , M. Szeleper , P. Zalewski 

Institute of Experimental Physics, Faculty of Physics, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland

K. Bunkowski , K. Doroba , A. Kalinowski , M. Konecki , J. Krolikowski 

Laboratório de Instrumentação e Física Experimental de Partículas, Lisboa, Portugal

M. Araujo , P. Bargassa , D. Bastos , A. Boletti , P. Faccioli , M. Gallinaro , J. Hollar , N. Leonardo , T. Niknejad , M. Pisano , J. Seixas , O. Toldaiev , J. Varela 

VINCA Institute of Nuclear Sciences, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia

P. Adzic⁵⁵ , M. Dordevic , P. Milenovic , J. Milosevic 

Centro de Investigaciones Energéticas Medioambientales y Tecnológicas (CIEMAT), Madrid, Spain

M. Aguilar-Benitez, J. Alcaraz Maestre , A. Álvarez Fernández , M. Barrio Luna, Cristina F. Bedoya , C.A. Carrillo Montoya , M. Cepeda , M. Cerrada , N. Colino , B. De La Cruz , A. Delgado Peris , D. Fernández Del Val , J.P. Fernández Ramos , J. Flix , M.C. Fouz , O. Gonzalez Lopez , S. Goy Lopez , J.M. Hernandez , M.I. Josa , J. León Holgado , D. Moran , C. Perez Dengra , A. Pérez-Calero Yzquierdo , J. Puerta Pelayo , I. Redondo , D.D. Redondo Ferrero , L. Romero, S. Sánchez Navas , J. Sastre , L. Urda Gómez , J. Vazquez Escobar , C. Willmott

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

J.F. de Trocóniz 

Universidad de Oviedo, Instituto Universitario de Ciencias y Tecnologías Espaciales de Asturias (ICTEA), Oviedo, Spain

B. Alvarez Gonzalez , J. Cuevas , J. Fernandez Menendez , S. Folgueras , I. Gonzalez Caballero , J.R. González Fernández , E. Palencia Cortezon , C. Ramón Álvarez , V. Rodríguez Bouza , A. Soto Rodríguez , A. Trapote , C. Vico Villalba 

Instituto de Física de Cantabria (IFCA), CSIC-Universidad de Cantabria, Santander, Spain

J.A. Brochero Cifuentes , I.J. Cabrillo , A. Calderon , J. Duarte Campderros , M. Fernandez , C. Fernandez Madrazo , A. García Alonso, G. Gomez , C. Lasaosa García , C. Martinez Rivero , P. Martinez Ruiz del Arbol , F. Matorras , P. Matorras Cuevas , J. Piedra Gomez , C. Prieels, A. Ruiz-Jimeno , L. Scodellaro , I. Vila , J.M. Vizan Garcia 

University of Colombo, Colombo, Sri Lanka

M.K. Jayananda , B. Kailasapathy⁵⁶ , D.U.J. Sonnadara , D.D.C. Wickramarathna 

University of Ruhuna, Department of Physics, Matara, Sri Lanka

W.G.D. Dharmaratna , K. Liyanage , N. Perera , N. Wickramage 

CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research, Geneva, Switzerland

D. Abbaneo , J. Alimena , E. Auffray , G. Auzinger , J. Baechler, P. Baillon[†], D. Barney , J. Bendavid , M. Bianco , B. Bilin , A. Bocci , E. Brondolin , C. Caillol , T. Camporesi , G. Cerminara , N. Chernyavskaya , S.S. Chhibra , S. Choudhury, M. Cipriani , L. Cristella , D. d'Enterria , A. Dabrowski , A. David , A. De Roeck , M.M. Defranchis , M. Deile , M. Dobson , M. Dünser , N. Dupont, A. Elliott-Peisert, F. Fallavollita⁵⁷, A. Florent , L. Forthomme , G. Franzoni , W. Funk , S. Ghosh , S. Giani, D. Gigi, K. Gill, F. Glege , L. Gouskos , E. Govorkova , M. Haranko , J. Hegeman , V. Innocente , T. James , P. Janot , J. Kaspar , J. Kieseler , N. Kratochwil , S. Laurila , P. Lecoq , E. Leutgeb , A. Lintuluoto , C. Lourenço , B. Maier , L. Malgeri , M. Mannelli , A.C. Marini , F. Meijers , S. Mersi , E. Meschi , F. Moortgat , M. Mulders , S. Orfanelli, L. Orsini, F. Pantaleo , E. Perez, M. Peruzzi , A. Petrilli , G. Petrucciani , A. Pfeiffer , M. Pierini , D. Piparo , M. Pitt , H. Qu , T. Quast, D. Rabady , A. Racz, G. Reales Gutiérrez, M. Rovere , H. Sakulin , J. Salfeld-Nebgen , S. Scarfi, M. Selvaggi , A. Sharma , P. Silva , P. Sphicas⁵⁸ , A.G. Stahl Leiton , S. Summers , K. Tatar , V.R. Tavolaro , D. Treille , P. Tropea , A. Tsiros, J. Wanczyk⁵⁹ , K.A. Wozniak , W.D. Zeuner

Paul Scherrer Institut, Villigen, Switzerland

L. Caminada⁶⁰ , A. Ebrahimi , W. Erdmann , R. Horisberger , Q. Ingram , H.C. Kaestli , D. Kotlinski , C. Lange , M. Missiroli⁶⁰ , L. Noehte⁶⁰ , T. Rohe 

ETH Zurich - Institute for Particle Physics and Astrophysics (IPA), Zurich, Switzerland

T.K. Aarrestad , K. Androsov⁵⁹ , M. Backhaus , P. Berger, A. Calandri , K. Datta , A. De Cosa , G. Dissertori , M. Dittmar, M. Donegà , F. Eble , M. Galli , K. Gedia , F. Glessgen , T.A. Gómez Espinosa , C. Grab , D. Hits , W. Lustermann , A.-M. Lyon , R.A. Manzoni , L. Marchese , C. Martin Perez , A. Mascellani⁵⁹ , M.T. Meinhard , F. Nessi-Tedaldi , J. Niedziela , F. Pauss , V. Perovic , S. Pigazzini , M.G. Ratti , M. Reichmann , C. Reissel , T. Reitenspiess , B. Ristic , F. Riti , D. Ruini, D.A. Sanz Becerra , J. Steggemann⁵⁹ , D. Valsecchi²⁰ , R. Wallny 

Universität Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland

C. Amsler⁶¹ , P. Bäertschi , C. Botta , D. Brzhechko, M.F. Canelli , K. Cormier , A. De Wit , R. Del Burgo, J.K. Heikkilä , M. Huwiler , W. Jin , A. Jofre-
hei , B. Kilminster , S. Leontsinis , S.P. Liehti , A. Macchiolo , P. Meiring , V.M. Mikuni , U. Molinatti , I. Neutelings , A. Reimers , P. Robmann, S. Sanchez Cruz , K. Schweiger , M. Senger , Y. Takahashi

National Central University, Chung-Li, Taiwan

C. Adloff⁶², C.M. Kuo, W. Lin, S.S. Yu 

National Taiwan University (NTU), Taipei, Taiwan

L. Ceard, Y. Chao , K.F. Chen , P.s. Chen, H. Cheng , W.-S. Hou , Y.y. Li , R.-S. Lu , E. Paganis , A. Psallidas, A. Steen , H.y. Wu, E. Yazgan , P.r. Yu

Chulalongkorn University, Faculty of Science, Department of Physics, Bangkok, Thailand

C. Asawatangtrakuldee , N. Srimanobhas 

Çukurova University, Physics Department, Science and Art Faculty, Adana, Turkey

D. Agyel , F. Boran , Z.S. Demiroglu , F. Dolek , I. Dumanoglu⁶³ , E. Eskut, Y. Guler⁶⁴ , E. Gurpinar Guler⁶⁴ , C. Isik , O. Kara, A. Kayis Topaksu , U. Kiminsu , G. Onengut , K. Ozdemir⁶⁵ , A. Polatoz , A.E. Simsek , B. Tali⁶⁶ , U.G. Tok , S. Turkcapar , E. Uslan , I.S. Zorbakir 

Middle East Technical University, Physics Department, Ankara, Turkey

G. Karapinar⁶⁷, K. Ocalan⁶⁸ , M. Yalvac⁶⁹ 

Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey

B. Akgun , I.O. Atakisi , E. Gülmez , M. Kaya⁷⁰ , O. Kaya⁷¹ , Ö. Özçelik , S. Tekten⁷² 

Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey

A. Cakir , K. Cankocak⁶³ , Y. Komurcu , S. Sen⁷³ 

Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey

O. Aydilek , S. Cerci⁶⁶ , B. Hacisahinoglu , I. Hos⁷⁴ , B. Isildak⁷⁵ , B. Kaynak , S. Ozkorucuklu , C. Simsek , D. Sunar Cerci⁶⁶ 

Institute for Scintillation Materials of National Academy of Science of Ukraine, Kharkiv, Ukraine

B. Grynyov 

National Science Centre, Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology, Kharkiv, Ukraine

L. Levchuk 

University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom

D. Anthony , E. Bhal , J.J. Brooke , A. Bundock , E. Clement , D. Cussans , H. Flacher , M. Glowacki, J. Goldstein , G.P. Heath, H.F. Heath , L. Kreczko , B. Krikler , S. Paramesvaran , S. Seif El Nasr-Storey, V.J. Smith , N. Stylianou⁷⁶ , K. Walkingshaw Pass, R. White 

Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom

A.H. Ball, K.W. Bell , A. Belyaev⁷⁷ , C. Brew , R.M. Brown , D.J.A. Cockerill , C. Cooke , K.V. Ellis, K. Harder , S. Harper , M.-L. Holmberg⁷⁸ , J. Linacre , K. Manolopoulos, D.M. Newbold , E. Olaiya, D. Petyt , T. Reis , G. Salvi , T. Schuh, C.H. Shepherd-Themistocleous , I.R. Tomalin, T. Williams 

Imperial College, London, United Kingdom

R. Bainbridge , P. Bloch , S. Bonomally, J. Borg , S. Breeze, C.E. Brown , O. Buchmuller, V. Caccchio, V. Cepaitis , G.S. Chahal⁷⁹ , D. Colling , J.S. Dancu, P. Dauncey , G. Davies , J. Davies, M. Della Negra , S. Fayer, G. Fedi , G. Hall , M.H. Hassanshahi , A. Howard, G. Iles , J. Langford , L. Lyons , A.-M. Magnan , S. Malik, A. Martelli , M. Mieskolainen , D.G. Monk , J. Nash⁸⁰ , M. Pesaresi, B.C. Radburn-Smith , D.M. Raymond, A. Richards, A. Rose , E. Scott , C. Seez , A. Shtipliyski, R. Shukla , A. Tapper , K. Uchida , G.P. Uttley , L.H. Vage, T. Virdee²⁰ , M. Vojinovic , N. Wardle , S.N. Webb , D. Winterbottom

Brunel University, Uxbridge, United Kingdom

K. Coldham, J.E. Cole , A. Khan, P. Kyberd , I.D. Reid 

Baylor University, Waco, Texas, USA

S. Abdullin , A. Brinkerhoff , B. Caraway , J. Dittmann , K. Hatakeyama , A.R. Kanuganti , B. McMaster , M. Saunders , S. Sawant , C. Sutantawibul , J. Wilson 

Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, USA

R. Bartek , A. Dominguez , R. Uniyal , A.M. Vargas Hernandez 

The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, USA

A. Buccilli , S.I. Cooper , D. Di Croce , S.V. Gleyzer , C. Henderson , C.U. Perez , P. Rumerio⁸¹ , C. West 

Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

A. Akpinar , A. Albert , D. Arcaro , C. Cosby , Z. Demiragli , C. Erice , E. Fontanesi , D. Gastler , S. May , J. Rohlf , K. Salyer , D. Sperka , D. Spitzbart , I. Suarez , A. Tsatsos , S. Yuan 

Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, USA

G. Benelli , B. Burkle , X. Coubez²² , D. Cutts , M. Hadley , U. Heintz , J.M. Hogan⁸² , T. Kwon , G. Landsberg , K.T. Lau , D. Li , J. Luo , M. Narain , N. Pervan , S. Sagir⁸³ , F. Simpson , E. Usai , W.Y. Wong , X. Yan , D. Yu , W. Zhang 

University of California, Davis, Davis, California, USA

J. Bonilla , C. Brainerd , R. Breedon , M. Calderon De La Barca Sanchez , M. Chertok , J. Conway , P.T. Cox , R. Erbacher , G. Haza , F. Jensen , O. Kukral , G. Mocellin , M. Mulhearn , D. Pellett , B. Regnery , D. Taylor , Y. Yao , F. Zhang 

University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, USA

M. Bachtis , R. Cousins , A. Datta , D. Hamilton , J. Hauser , M. Ignatenko , M.A. Iqbal , T. Lam , W.A. Nash , S. Regnard , D. Saltzberg , B. Stone , V. Valuev 

University of California, Riverside, Riverside, California, USA

Y. Chen , R. Clare , J.W. Gary , M. Gordon , G. Hanson , G. Karapostoli , O.R. Long , N. Manganelli , W. Si , S. Wimpenny 

University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, California, USA

J.G. Branson , P. Chang , S. Cittolin , S. Cooperstein , D. Diaz , J. Duarte , R. Gerosa , L. Giannini , J. Guiang , R. Kansal , V. Krutelyov , R. Lee , J. Letts , M. Masciovecchio , F. Mokhtar , M. Pieri , B.V. Sathia Narayanan , V. Sharma , M. Tadel , F. Würthwein , Y. Xiang , A. Yagil 

University of California, Santa Barbara - Department of Physics, Santa Barbara, California, USA

N. Amin , C. Campagnari , M. Citron , G. Collura , A. Dorsett , V. Dutta , J. Incandela , M. Kilpatrick , J. Kim , A.J. Li , B. Marsh , P. Masterson , H. Mei , M. Oshiro , M. Quinnan , J. Richman , U. Sarica , R. Schmitz , F. Setti , J. Sheplock , P. Siddireddy , D. Stuart , S. Wang 

California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California, USA

A. Bornheim , O. Cerri , I. Dutta , J.M. Lawhorn , N. Lu , J. Mao , H.B. Newman , T. Q. Nguyen , M. Spiropulu , J.R. Vlimant , C. Wang , S. Xie , R.Y. Zhu 

Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

J. Alison , S. An , M.B. Andrews , P. Bryant , T. Ferguson , A. Harilal , C. Liu , T. Mudholkar , S. Murthy , M. Paulini , A. Roberts , A. Sanchez , W. Terrill 

University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, Colorado, USA

J.P. Cumalat , W.T. Ford , A. Hassani , G. Karathanasis , E. MacDonald , F. Marini , R. Patel , A. Perloff , C. Savard , N. Schonbeck , K. Stenson , K.A. Ulmer , S.R. Wagner , N. Zipper 

Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA

J. Alexander , S. Bright-Thonney , X. Chen , D.J. Cranshaw , J. Fan , X. Fan , D. Gadkari , S. Hogan , J. Monroy , J.R. Patterson , D. Quach , J. Reichert , M. Reid , A. Ryd , J. Thom , P. Wittich , R. Zou 

Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Batavia, Illinois, USA

M. Albrow , M. Alyari , G. Apollinari , A. Apresyan , L.A.T. Bauerdick , D. Berry , J. Berryhill , P.C. Bhat , K. Burkett , J.N. Butler , A. Canepa , G.B. Cerati , H.W.K. Cheung , F. Chlebana , K.F. Di Petrillo , J. Dickinson , V.D. Elvira , Y. Feng , J. Freeman , A. Gandrakota , Z. Gecse , L. Gray , D. Green , S. Grünendahl , O. Gutsche , R.M. Harris , R. Heller , T.C. Herwig , J. Hirschauer , L. Horyn , B. Jayatilaka , S. Jindariani , M. Johnson , U. Joshi , T. Klijnsma , B. Klima , K.H.M. Kwok , S. Lammel , D. Lincoln , R. Lipton , T. Liu , C. Madrid , K. Maeshima , C. Mantilla , D. Mason , P. McBride , P. Merkel , S. Mrenna , S. Nahn , J. Ngadiuba , D. Noonan , V. Papadimitriou , N. Pastika , K. Pedro , C. Pena⁸⁴ , F. Ravera , A. Reinsvold Hall⁸⁵ , L. Ristori , E. Sexton-Kennedy , N. Smith , A. Soha , L. Spiegel , J. Strait , L. Taylor , S. Tkaczyk , N.V. Tran , L. Uplegger , E.W. Vaandering , H.A. Weber , I. Zoi

University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, USA

P. Avery , D. Bourilkov , L. Cadamuro , V. Cherepanov , R.D. Field , D. Guerrero , M. Kim , E. Koenig , J. Konigsberg , A. Korytov , K.H. Lo , K. Matchev , N. Menendez , G. Mitselmakher , A. Muthirakalayil Madhu , N. Rawal , D. Rosenzweig , S. Rosenzweig , K. Shi , J. Wang , Z. Wu

Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, USA

T. Adams , A. Askew , R. Habibullah , V. Hagopian , R. Khurana , T. Kolberg , G. Martinez , H. Prosper , C. Schiber , O. Viazlo , R. Yohay , J. Zhang

Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, Florida, USA

M.M. Baarmand , S. Butalla , T. Elkafrawy⁵⁰ , M. Hohlmann , R. Kumar Verma , M. Rahmani , F. Yumiceva 

University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Chicago, Illinois, USA

M.R. Adams , H. Becerril Gonzalez , R. Cavanaugh , S. Dittmer , O. Evdokimov , C.E. Gerber , D.J. Hofman , D. S. Lemos , A.H. Merrit , C. Mills , G. Oh , T. Roy , S. Rudrabhatla , M.B. Tonjes , N. Varelas , X. Wang , Z. Ye , J. Yoo

The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, USA

M. Alhusseini , K. Dilsiz⁸⁶ , L. Emediato , R.P. Gandrajula , G. Karaman , O.K. Köseyan , J.-P. Merlo , A. Mestvirishvili⁸⁷ , J. Nachtman , O. Neogi , H. Ogul⁸⁸ , Y. Onel , A. Penzo , C. Snyder , E. Tiras⁸⁹

Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, USA

O. Amram , B. Blumenfeld , L. Corcodilos , J. Davis , A.V. Gritsan , L. Kang , S. Kyriacou , P. Maksimovic , J. Roskes , S. Sekhar , M. Swartz , T.Á. Vámi

The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, USA

A. Abreu , L.F. Alcerro Alcerro , J. Anguiano , P. Baringer , A. Bean , Z. Flowers , T. Isidori , S. Khalil , J. King , G. Krintiras , M. Lazarovits , C. Le Mahieu , C. Lindsey , J. Marquez , N. Minafra , M. Murray , M. Nickel , C. Rogan , C. Royon , R. Salvatico , S. Sanders , E. Schmitz , C. Smith , Q. Wang , J. Williams , G. Wilson

Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, USA

B. Allmond , S. Duric, R. Gujju Gurunadha , A. Ivanov , K. Kaadze , D. Kim, Y. Maravin , T. Mitchell, A. Modak, K. Nam, J. Natoli , D. Roy 

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, California, USA

F. Rebassoo , D. Wright 

University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA

E. Adams , A. Baden , O. Baron, A. Belloni , A. Bethani , S.C. Eno , N.J. Hadley , S. Jabeen , R.G. Kellogg , T. Koeth , Y. Lai , S. Lascio , A.C. Mignerey , S. Nabili , C. Palmer , C. Papageorgakis , M. Seidel , L. Wang , K. Wong 

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

D. Abercrombie, R. Bi, W. Busza , I.A. Cali , Y. Chen , M. D'Alfonso , J. Eysermans , C. Freer , G. Gomez-Ceballos , M. Goncharov, P. Harris, M. Hu , D. Kovalskyi , J. Krupa , Y.-J. Lee , K. Long , C. Mironov , C. Paus , D. Rankin , C. Roland , G. Roland , Z. Shi , G.S.F. Stephans , J. Wang, Z. Wang , B. Wyslouch 

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

R.M. Chatterjee, B. Crossman, A. Evans , J. Hiltbrand , Sh. Jain , B.M. Joshi , C. Kapsiak , M. Krohn , Y. Kubota , J. Mans , M. Revering , R. Rusack , R. Saradhy , N. Schroeder , N. Strobbe , M.A. Wadud 

University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi, USA

L.M. Cremaldi 

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA

K. Bloom , M. Bryson, D.R. Claes , C. Fangmeier , L. Finco , F. Golf , C. Joo , I. Kravchenko , I. Reed , J.E. Siado , G.R. Snow[†], W. Tabb , A. Wightman , F. Yan , A.G. Zecchinelli 

State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, New York, USA

G. Agarwal , H. Bandyopadhyay , L. Hay , I. Iashvili , A. Kharchilava , C. McLean , M. Morris, D. Nguyen , J. Pekkanen , S. Rappoccio , A. Williams 

Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

G. Alverson , E. Barberis , Y. Haddad , Y. Han , A. Krishna , J. Li , J. Lidrych , G. Madigan , B. Marzocchi , D.M. Morse , V. Nguyen , T. Orimoto , A. Parker , L. Skinnari , A. Tishelman-Charny , T. Wamorkar , B. Wang , A. Wisecarver , D. Wood 

Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, USA

S. Bhattacharya , J. Bueghly, Z. Chen , A. Gilbert , T. Gunter , K.A. Hahn , Y. Liu , N. Odell , M.H. Schmitt , M. Velasco

University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, USA

R. Band , R. Bucci, S. Castells , M. Cremonesi, A. Das , R. Goldouzian , M. Hildreth , K. Hurtado Anampa , C. Jessop , K. Lannon , J. Lawrence , N. Loukas , L. Lutton , J. Mariano, N. Marinelli, I. Mcalister, T. McCauley , C. Mcgrady , K. Mohrman , C. Moore , Y. Musienko¹³ , H. Nelson , R. Ruchti , A. Townsend , M. Wayne , H. Yockey, M. Zarucki , L. Zygala 

The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, USA

B. Bylsma, M. Carrigan , L.S. Durkin , B. Francis , C. Hill , A. Lesauvage , M. Nunez Ornelas , K. Wei, B.L. Winer , B. R. Yates 

Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, USA

F.M. Addesa , B. Bonham , P. Das , G. Dezoort , P. Elmer , A. Frankenthal , B. Greenberg , N. Haubrich , S. Higginbotham , A. Kalogeropoulos , G. Kopp , S. Kwan , D. Lange , D. Marlow , K. Mei , I. Ojalvo , J. Olsen , D. Stickland , C. Tully 

University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, USA

S. Malik , S. Norberg

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA

A.S. Bakshi , V.E. Barnes , R. Chawla , S. Das , L. Gutay, M. Jones , A.W. Jung , D. Kondratyev , A.M. Koshy, M. Liu , G. Negro , N. Neumeister , G. Paspalaki , S. Piperov , A. Purohit , J.F. Schulte , M. Stojanovic , J. Thieman , F. Wang , R. Xiao , W. Xie 

Purdue University Northwest, Hammond, Indiana, USA

J. Dolen , N. Parashar 

Rice University, Houston, Texas, USA

D. Acosta , A. Baty , T. Carnahan , M. Decaro, S. Dildick , K.M. Ecklund , P.J. Fernández Manteca , S. Freed, P. Gardner, F.J.M. Geurts , A. Kumar , W. Li , B.P. Padley , R. Redjimi, J. Rotter , W. Shi , S. Yang , E. Yigitbasi , L. Zhang⁹⁰, Y. Zhang , X. Zuo 

University of Rochester, Rochester, New York, USA

A. Bodek , P. de Barbaro , R. Demina , J.L. Dulemba , C. Fallon, T. Ferbel , M. Galanti, A. Garcia-Bellido , O. Hindrichs , A. Khukhunaishvili , E. Ranken , R. Taus , G.P. Van Onsem 

The Rockefeller University, New York, New York, USA

K. Goulianos 

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Piscataway, New Jersey, USA

B. Chiarito, J.P. Chou , Y. Gershtein , E. Halkiadakis , A. Hart , M. Heindl , D. Jaroslawski , O. Karacheban²⁴ , I. Laflotte , A. Lath , R. Montalvo, K. Nash, M. Osherson , S. Salur , S. Schnetzer, S. Somalwar , R. Stone , S.A. Thayil , S. Thomas, H. Wang 

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, USA

H. Acharya, A.G. Delannoy , S. Fiorendi , T. Holmes , E. Nibigira , S. Spanier 

Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, USA

O. Bouhali⁹¹ , M. Dalchenko , A. Delgado , R. Eusebi , J. Gilmore , T. Huang , T. Kamon⁹² , H. Kim , S. Luo , S. Malhotra, R. Mueller , D. Overton , D. Rathjens , A. Safonov 

Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, USA

N. Akchurin , J. Damgov , V. Hegde , K. Lamichhane , S.W. Lee , T. Mengke, S. Muthumuni , T. Peltola , I. Volobouev , Z. Wang, A. Whitbeck 

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, USA

E. Appelt , S. Greene, A. Gurrola , W. Johns , A. Melo , F. Romeo , P. Sheldon , S. Tuo , J. Velkovska , J. Viinikainen 

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, USA

B. Cardwell , B. Cox , G. Cummings , J. Hakala , R. Hirosky , M. Joyce , A. Ledovskoy , A. Li , C. Neu , C.E. Perez Lara , B. Tannenwald 

Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, USA

P.E. Karchin , N. Poudyal 

University of Wisconsin - Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, USA

S. Banerjee , K. Black , T. Bose , S. Dasu , I. De Bruyn , P. Everaerts , C. Galloni, H. He , M. Herndon , A. Herve , C.K. Koraka , A. Lanaro, A. Loeliger , R. Loveless , J. Madhusudanan Sreekala , A. Mallampalli , A. Mohammadi , S. Mondal, G. Parida , D. Pinna, A. Savin, V. Shang , V. Sharma , W.H. Smith , D. Teague, H.F. Tsoi , W. Vetens 

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S. Afanasiev, V. Andreev , Yu. Andreev , T. Aushev , M. Azarkin , A. Babaev , A. Belyaev , V. Blinov⁹³, E. Boos , V. Borshch , D. Budkouski , V. Bunichev , V. Chekhovsky, R. Chistov⁹³ , M. Danilov⁹³ , A. Dermenev , T. Dimova⁹³ , I. Dremin , M. Dubinin⁸⁴ , L. Dudko , V. Epshteyn , A. Ershov , G. Gavrillov , V. Gavrillov , S. Gninenko , V. Golovtcov , N. Golubev , I. Golutvin, I. Gorbunov , V. Ivanchenko , Y. Ivanov , V. Kachanov , L. Kardapoltsev⁹³ , V. Karjavine , A. Karneyeu , V. Kim⁹³ , M. Kirakosyan, D. Kirpichnikov , M. Kirsanov , V. Klyukhin , O. Kodolova⁹⁴ , D. Konstantinov , V. Korenkov , A. Kozyrev⁹³ , N. Krasnikov , E. Kuznetsova⁹⁵, A. Lanev , P. Levchenko , A. Litomin, O. Lukina , N. Lychkovskaya , V. Makarenko , A. Malakhov , V. Matveev⁹³ , V. Murzin , A. Nikitenko⁹⁶ , S. Obraztsov , V. Okhotnikov , A. Oskin, I. Ovtin⁹³ , V. Palichik , P. Parygin , V. Perelygin , G. Pivovarov , S. Polikarpov⁹³ , V. Popov, O. Radchenko⁹³ , M. Savina , V. Savrin , D. Selivanova , V. Shalaev , S. Shmatov , S. Shulha , Y. Skovpen⁹³ , S. Slabospitskii , V. Smirnov , A. Snigirev , D. Sosnov , A. Stepenov , V. Sulimov , E. Tcherniaev , A. Terkulov , O. Teryaev , I. Tlisova , M. Toms , A. Toropin , L. Uvarov , A. Uzunian , E. Vlasov , A. Vorobyev, N. Voytishin , B.S. Yuldashev⁹⁷, A. Zarubin , I. Zhizhin , A. Zhokin 

†: Deceased

¹Also at Yerevan State University, Yerevan, Armenia

²Also at TU Wien, Vienna, Austria

³Also at Institute of Basic and Applied Sciences, Faculty of Engineering, Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, Alexandria, Egypt

⁴Also at Université Libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, Belgium

⁵Also at Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas, Brazil

⁶Also at Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil

⁷Also at UFMS, Nova Andradina, Brazil

⁸Also at The University of the State of Amazonas, Manaus, Brazil

⁹Also at University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China

¹⁰Also at Nanjing Normal University Department of Physics, Nanjing, China

¹¹Now at The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, USA

¹²Also at University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China

¹³Also at an institute or an international laboratory covered by a cooperation agreement with CERN

¹⁴Also at Suez University, Suez, Egypt

¹⁵Now at British University in Egypt, Cairo, Egypt

¹⁶Also at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA

-
- ¹⁷Also at Université de Haute Alsace, Mulhouse, France
- ¹⁸Also at Department of Physics, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China
- ¹⁹Also at Erzincan Binali Yildirim University, Erzincan, Turkey
- ²⁰Also at CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research, Geneva, Switzerland
- ²¹Also at University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany
- ²²Also at RWTH Aachen University, III. Physikalisches Institut A, Aachen, Germany
- ²³Also at Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, Iran
- ²⁴Also at Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus, Germany
- ²⁵Also at Forschungszentrum Jülich, Juelich, Germany
- ²⁶Also at Physics Department, Faculty of Science, Assiut University, Assiut, Egypt
- ²⁷Also at Karoly Robert Campus, MATE Institute of Technology, Gyongyos, Hungary
- ²⁸Also at Wigner Research Centre for Physics, Budapest, Hungary
- ²⁹Also at Institute of Physics, University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary
- ³⁰Also at Institute of Nuclear Research ATOMKI, Debrecen, Hungary
- ³¹Now at Universitatea Babes-Bolyai - Facultatea de Fizica, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
- ³²Also at Faculty of Informatics, University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary
- ³³Also at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, India
- ³⁴Also at UPES - University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, Dehradun, India
- ³⁵Also at University of Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, India
- ³⁶Also at University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, India
- ³⁷Also at Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, India
- ³⁸Also at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mumbai, India
- ³⁹Also at IIT Bhubaneswar, Bhubaneswar, India
- ⁴⁰Also at Institute of Physics, Bhubaneswar, India
- ⁴¹Also at Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron, Hamburg, Germany
- ⁴²Also at Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran
- ⁴³Also at Department of Physics, University of Science and Technology of Mazandaran, Behshahr, Iran
- ⁴⁴Also at Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt
- ⁴⁵Also at Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development, Bologna, Italy
- ⁴⁶Also at Centro Siciliano di Fisica Nucleare e di Struttura Della Materia, Catania, Italy
- ⁴⁷Also at Scuola Superiore Meridionale, Università di Napoli 'Federico II', Napoli, Italy
- ⁴⁸Also at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Batavia, Illinois, USA
- ⁴⁹Also at Università di Napoli 'Federico II', Napoli, Italy
- ⁵⁰Also at Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt
- ⁵¹Also at Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche - Istituto Officina dei Materiali, Perugia, Italy
- ⁵²Also at Department of Applied Physics, Faculty of Science and Technology, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia
- ⁵³Also at Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología, Mexico City, Mexico
- ⁵⁴Also at IRFU, CEA, Université Paris-Saclay, Gif-sur-Yvette, France
- ⁵⁵Also at Faculty of Physics, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
- ⁵⁶Also at Trincomalee Campus, Eastern University, Sri Lanka, Nilaveli, Sri Lanka
- ⁵⁷Also at INFN Sezione di Pavia, Università di Pavia, Pavia, Italy
- ⁵⁸Also at National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece
- ⁵⁹Also at Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland
- ⁶⁰Also at Universität Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland
- ⁶¹Also at Stefan Meyer Institute for Subatomic Physics, Vienna, Austria
- ⁶²Also at Laboratoire d'Annecy-le-Vieux de Physique des Particules, IN2P3-CNRS, Annecy-le-

Vieux, France

⁶³Also at Near East University, Research Center of Experimental Health Science, Mersin, Turkey

⁶⁴Also at Konya Technical University, Konya, Turkey

⁶⁵Also at Izmir Bakircay University, Izmir, Turkey

⁶⁶Also at Adiyaman University, Adiyaman, Turkey

⁶⁷Also at Istanbul Gedik University, Istanbul, Turkey

⁶⁸Also at Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Turkey

⁶⁹Also at Bozok Universitetesi Rektörlüğü, Yozgat, Turkey

⁷⁰Also at Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey

⁷¹Also at Milli Savunma University, Istanbul, Turkey

⁷²Also at Kafkas University, Kars, Turkey

⁷³Also at Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey

⁷⁴Also at Istanbul University - Cerrahpasa, Faculty of Engineering, Istanbul, Turkey

⁷⁵Also at Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey

⁷⁶Also at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussel, Belgium

⁷⁷Also at School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom

⁷⁸Also at University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom

⁷⁹Also at IPPP Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom

⁸⁰Also at Monash University, Faculty of Science, Clayton, Australia

⁸¹Also at Università di Torino, Torino, Italy

⁸²Also at Bethel University, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

⁸³Also at Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University, Karaman, Turkey

⁸⁴Also at California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California, USA

⁸⁵Also at United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, USA

⁸⁶Also at Bingöl University, Bingöl, Turkey

⁸⁷Also at Georgian Technical University, Tbilisi, Georgia

⁸⁸Also at Sinop University, Sinop, Turkey

⁸⁹Also at Erciyes University, Kayseri, Turkey

⁹⁰Also at Institute of Modern Physics and Key Laboratory of Nuclear Physics and Ion-beam Application (MOE) - Fudan University, Shanghai, China

⁹¹Also at Texas A&M University at Qatar, Doha, Qatar

⁹²Also at Kyungpook National University, Daegu, Korea

⁹³Also at another institute or international laboratory covered by a cooperation agreement with CERN

⁹⁴Also at Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia

⁹⁵Also at University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, USA

⁹⁶Also at Imperial College, London, United Kingdom

⁹⁷Also at Institute of Nuclear Physics of the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, Tashkent, Uzbekistan