Search for new physics with same-sign isolated dilepton events with jets and missing transverse energy

The CMS Collaboration

Abstract

A search for new physics is performed in events with two same-sign isolated leptons, hadronic jets, and missing transverse energy in the final state. The analysis is based on a data sample corresponding to an integrated luminosity of 4.98 fb$^{-1}$ produced in pp collisions at a center-of-mass energy of 7 TeV collected by the CMS experiment at the LHC. This constitutes a factor of 140 increase in integrated luminosity over previously published results. The observed yields agree with the standard model predictions and thus no evidence for new physics is found. The observations are used to set upper limits on possible new physics contributions and to constrain supersymmetric models. To facilitate the interpretation of the data in a broader range of new physics scenarios, information on the event selection, detector response, and efficiencies is provided.

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*See Appendix A for the list of collaboration members
The standard model (SM) is a very successful theory of elementary particles and their interactions. It is generally believed that new physics (NP) could manifest itself at the TeV scale. Supersymmetry (SUSY) is one of these attractive possibilities. It leads to gauge coupling unification at very high energy, provides a mechanism to mitigate large radiative corrections to the Higgs mass and, in its R-parity-conserving realization, can provide a dark matter candidate. A comprehensive program of searches for the production of supersymmetric particles has been underway since 2010 at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). Since SUSY models vary widely, these searches target a broad range of possible final states, including purely hadronic states, leptonic states with one lepton, two leptons of the opposite sign, two leptons of the same sign, and three or more leptons; as well as photonic final states.

In this Letter we report on a search for NP based on isolated same-sign (SS) dileptons, missing transverse energy ($E_{\text{miss}}^{\text{T}}$), and hadronic jets. In SUSY SS dileptons can arise, for example, from pair production of colored super-partners (gluinos and/or squarks), with a lepton in the decay chain of each primary SUSY particle; more generally, this signature is sensitive to final states with same-sign $W$ bosons and/or top quarks. The rarity of SS dileptons in the SM makes a NP search in this final state particularly attractive.

All types of charged leptons, $e$, $\mu$, and hadronically decaying $\tau$s, are included in our search. These final states are indicators of the possible presence of SUSY particles as well as other possible NP scenarios. The results are based on a data sample corresponding to $4.98 \pm 0.11 \text{ fb}^{-1}$ of $pp$ collisions at a center-of-mass energy of $7 \text{ TeV}$ collected in 2011 by the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS) experiment at the LHC. This study results in a major improvement in sensitivity with respect to the search performed with data collected in 2010 because of the 140-fold increase in the integrated luminosity of the data sample. These results are interpreted using the constrained minimal supersymmetric extension of the standard model (CMSSM). In addition, this analysis provides information on the event selection and detector response in order to facilitate the application of our results to a broader range of NP scenarios.

A detailed description of the CMS detector is found elsewhere. Its central feature is a superconducting solenoid providing an axial magnetic field of 3.8 T. Muons are measured in gas detectors embedded in the steel return yoke of the magnet, while all other particle detection systems are located inside the bore of the solenoid. Charged particle trajectories are measured by a silicon pixel and strip tracker system, covering $|\eta| < 2.5$, where the pseudorapidity is defined as $\eta = -\ln[\tan(\theta/2)]$, and $\theta$ is the polar angle with respect to the counterclockwise beam direction. A crystal electromagnetic calorimeter (ECAL) and a brass/scintillator hadronic calorimeter surround the tracker volume. In addition, the CMS detector has an extensive forward calorimeter and nearly hermetic $4\pi$ coverage. The CMS trigger consists of a two-stage system. The first level of the CMS trigger system, composed of custom hardware processors, uses information from the calorimeters and muon detectors to select a subset of the events. The High Level Trigger processor farm further decreases the event rate from around 100 kHz to around 300 Hz, before data storage.

All lepton candidates are required to have $|\eta| < 2.4$ and to be consistent with a common interaction vertex.Muon candidates are reconstructed by matching tracks in the silicon detector to signals in the muon system. The reconstruction of muons is refined further by imposing track quality and calorimeter energy deposition requirements. Electron candidates are reconstructed starting from a cluster of energy deposits in the ECAL, which is then matched to signals in the silicon tracker. The energy shower in the ECAL must have a shape consistent with expectations for electron showers and its position is required to be well matched to the extrapolated track. Both electrons and muons are required to be isolated from other activity.
in the event. This is achieved using a scalar sum of transverse track momenta and transverse calorimeter energy deposits, within $\Delta R \equiv \sqrt{(\Delta \phi)^2 + (\Delta \eta)^2} < 0.3$ of the candidate’s direction, where $\phi$ is the azimuthal angle. The sum is required to be less than 15% of the candidate’s transverse momentum ($p_T$). Hadronic $\tau$ candidates are reconstructed using the Hadron plus Strip algorithm \cite{25}. We select isolated hadronic $\tau$ candidates with one or three charged hadrons in a narrow cone around the $\tau$ direction.

Jets and $E_T^{miss}$ are reconstructed using the particle-flow technique \cite{26,27}. For jet clustering, the anti-$k_T$ algorithm is used with the distance parameter $R = 0.5$ \cite{28}. We require selected jets to have $p_T > 40 \text{ GeV}$ and $|\eta| < 2.5$ to be considered for analysis. The $H_T$ is defined to be the scalar sum of the $p_T$ of all selected jets whose angular distance to the nearest lepton satisfies $\Delta R > 0.4$. Events are required to have two same-sign leptons and at least two jets. A minimum dilepton invariant mass of 8 GeV is required in order to suppress the low-mass dilepton background. Events having a third lepton are removed if two of the leptons form a Z boson candidate with an invariant mass within $\pm 15 \text{ GeV}$ of the Z boson mass.

Three selection strategies are followed to maximize the sensitivity to the presence of NP. The first one is to use a fully efficient dilepton and $H_T$ based trigger in the $e\mu, \mu\mu$, and $e\mu$ channels with $p_T^e > 5 \text{ GeV}$ and $p_T^\mu > 10 \text{ GeV}$, and a requirement of $H_T > 200 \text{ GeV}$ applied to the offline reconstructed objects. The second strategy trades an increased lepton $p_T$ threshold against a reduced $H_T$ threshold. Here both leptons are required to have $p_T > 10 \text{ GeV}$ and at least one to have $p_T > 20 \text{ GeV}$. Such events are collected with a purely lepton trigger with no requirement on $H_T$. The third strategy focuses on $\tau e, \tau \mu$, and $\tau \tau$ final states with $p_T^{\tau} > 5 \text{ GeV}, p_T^e > 10 \text{ GeV}$, and $p_T^\mu > 15 \text{ GeV}$. Triggers for hadronic $\tau$-leptons typically lead to high rates. For this reason dedicated triggers are used that rely on significant $H_T$ and $E_T^{miss}$, in addition to the presence of a single lepton or two hadronic $\tau$-leptons.

Using R-parity-conserving SUSY as a guiding example, we note that the simplest incarnation of the topology probed by this analysis involves three distinct mass scales. In this example, these masses would belong to the gluino, chargino, and lightest SUSY particle (LSP). The mass differences of these particles can strongly influence the kinematics of the final state objects, hence affecting several main observables used in this analysis: lepton $p_T$, $H_T$, and $E_T^{miss}$. Therefore, in order to maximize the sensitivity of our analysis to a variety of NP scenarios, we define multiple search regions in the $(H_T, E_T^{miss})$ plane: Region 1 ($H_T > 80 \text{ GeV}, E_T^{miss} > 120 \text{ GeV}$), Region 2 ($H_T > 200 \text{ GeV}, E_T^{miss} > 120 \text{ GeV}$), Region 3 ($H_T > 450 \text{ GeV}, E_T^{miss} > 50 \text{ GeV}$), Region 4 ($H_T > 450 \text{ GeV}$ and $E_T^{miss} > 120 \text{ GeV}$), and Region 5 ($H_T > 450 \text{ GeV}$ and $E_T^{miss} > 0 \text{ GeV}$). The $H_T$ requirements of 200 GeV and 450 GeV are also motivated in part by trigger thresholds. A scatter plot of events observed in these search regions is shown in Fig. 1.

The background for the same-sign dilepton topology has three components: irreducible background from rare SM processes; leptons resulting from semileptonic decays within a jet, or jets mimicking leptons in events with zero or one genuine isolated lepton; and opposite-sign dilepton events where the charge of one of the two leptons has been mismeasured.

The irreducible backgrounds are dominated by $t\bar{t} + W^\pm/Z$, $W^\pm W^\pm qq$, and $W^\pm Z$ production, combining in similar parts to about 95% of the total. The remaining contributions originate from processes such as tri-boson and ZZ production, $W^\pm Z + \gamma$, and double-parton scattering $2 \times (q\bar{q} \rightarrow W^\pm)$, in descending order of importance. All irreducible backgrounds are estimated using leading-order Monte Carlo simulation normalized to the next-to-leading order (NLO) production cross sections. Events are generated with the MADGRAPH \cite{29} event generator and then passed on to PYTHIA \cite{30} for parton shower and hadronization. The generated events are processed by the CMS event simulation and the same chain of reconstruction programs used.
Figure 1: Selected SS dilepton events in the various search regions displayed in the $H_T$, $E_T^{miss}$ plane.

for collision data. A 50% systematic uncertainty is assigned to this irreducible background prediction. These processes constitute 35-75% of the total background, depending on the search region.

The background due to lepton candidates originating from jets, hereafter referred as non-prompt, forms 20-60% of the total background. Such candidates can be genuine leptons, for example from heavy-flavor decays, hadrons reconstructed as leptons, or jets fluctuating to give hadronic $\tau$ signatures. We have developed and validated a set of techniques to measure this background from data. In each case, a tag-and-probe method is applied to a control sample rich in two-jet events containing leptons selected with loose requirements to measure the conditional probability that the probe jet yields a candidate passing tight lepton requirements. This probability, measured as a function of jet kinematics and event characteristics, is then applied to signal sidebands to estimate non-prompt lepton backgrounds. This suite of techniques encompasses a range of control samples, jet tags, lepton requirements, and variations in the jet kinematics to provide independent and complementary assessments of 50% systematic uncertainties. Full details are given in Ref. [8]. At least two techniques are used in all non-$\tau$ dilepton modes and they yield consistent results within their respective uncertainties.

We quantify backgrounds from events with lepton charge mis-reconstruction by analyzing SS ee or $\tau\tau$ events inside the Z mass peak [8]. This background forms less than 5% of the total background across all search regions. The charge mis-reconstruction probability for muons is of the order of $10^{-5}$ and can be neglected.

We determine the performance of the background prediction methods using the low $H_T$ and low $E_T^{miss}$ region in the data that is expected to be dominated by SM events. We find good agreement between observed yields and the predicted background.

We show the predicted background contributions from each source mentioned above as well as the observed event yields in Fig. 2 and summarize them in Table 1 for each search region. The beam related multiple interactions do not alter these results. There is no evidence of an excess over the expected SM predictions. This measurement is used together with the uncertainty on the signal acceptance to set an upper limit (UL) on the contribution from NP events.
Figure 2: Summary of background predictions and observed yields in the various search regions. Leptons from decays of $W$, $Z$, and NP particles are referred to as prompt leptons. The hatched bands represent the total uncertainty on the background predictions.

Table 1: Observed number of events in data compared to the predicted background yields for the considered search regions. The uncertainties include the statistical and systematic components added in quadrature with correlations taken into account. The 95% CL upper limit (UL) on the contribution from NP events is also given.

| Region | Mode or $p_T$ threshold | Total | UL |
|--------|----------------------|-------|----|
|        | High $p_T$: $p_T^{1/2} > 20, 10$ GeV |       |    |
|        | $e\mu$               |       |    |
|        | ee                   | 6.8 ± 2.7 | 34.1 ± 12.2 |
|        | $\mu\mu$             | 8.6 ± 3.3 | 13.7 |
|        | $e\mu$               | 18.7 ± 6.9 |     |
|        | 1                    | 5       | 7   | 12   | 24   | 13.7 |
|        | 2                    | 4.3 ± 1.9 | 12.2 ± 4.6 | 22.6 ± 8.3 |
|        | 4                    | 6       | 6    | 11   | 21   | 15.1 |
|        | 3                    | 3.8 ± 1.7 | 6.1 ± 2.4 | 13.0 ± 4.9 |
|        | 4                    | 2       | 2    | 5    | 11   | 9.6  |
|        | 4                    | 1.1 ± 1.1 | 2.6 ± 1.4 | 4.9 ± 2.6 |
|        | 1                    | 0       | 3    | 4    | 6.2  |
|        | 5                    | 9.1 ± 3.6 | 9.8 ± 3.7 | 23.6 ± 8.4 |
|        | 7                    | 4       | 5    | 16   | 10.4 |
|        | Low $p_T$: $p_T^{e\mu} > 10$ GeV |       |    |
|        | $e\mu$               |       |    |
|        | ee                   | 4.4 ± 1.8 | 16.5 ± 6.4 | 35.0 ± 13.4 |
|        | $\mu\mu$             | 14.1 ± 6.0 | 28    | 16.9 |
|        | $e\mu$               | 16.5 ± 6.4 |     |
|        | 2                    | 4       | 10   | 14   | 28   |     |
|        | 3                    | 3.4 ± 1.6 | 8.9 ± 3.6 | 18.8 ± 7.1 |
|        | 4                    | 6       | 6    | 8    | 18   | 14.0 |
|        | 4                    | 1.0 ± 0.8 | 3.2 ± 1.5 | 6.6 ± 2.8 |
|        | 1                    | 2       | 3    | 6    | 7.4  |
|        | Tau channels: $p_T^{e\mu,\tau} > 10, 5, 15$ GeV |       |    |
|        | $e\tau$             |       |    |
|        | ee                   | 2.6 ± 1.0 | 0.0 ± 0.1 | 7.1 ± 2.8 |
|        | $\mu\tau$           | 4.4 ± 2.2 |     |
|        | $\tau\tau$          | 0.0 ± 0.1 | 6    | 7.1  |
We measure the electron and muon selection efficiencies in data and simulation using Z events to derive simulation-to-data correction factors. The uncertainty on the combined lepton selection efficiency decreases with lepton $p_T$, from 5% at the lowest $p_T$ to 3% above 20 GeV. We assign an additional 5% systematic uncertainty per lepton to cover potential mismodeling of the lepton isolation efficiency due to varying hadronic activity in signal events. We estimate in a sample of $Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$ events the uncertainty on the $\tau$ selection and reconstruction efficiency to be 10% [25].

We conservatively choose to attribute a flat uncertainty of 7.5% to the energy measurement of all jets as well as to the hadronic component used for the $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ observable. The cumulative effect of this uncertainty on the signal acceptance is intrinsically model dependent. We observe uncertainties below 3% for models with characteristically high $H_T$ requirements. For models with characteristic $H_T$ scales near or below the $H_T$ requirements, uncertainties due to jet energy calibration can be as high as 30%.

The theoretical uncertainties on the signal acceptance due to the modeling of initial- and final-state radiation and knowledge of the parton distribution functions are estimated to be 2%. Using the LM6 benchmark model (CMSSM point with $m_0 = 85$ GeV, $m_{1/2} = 400$ GeV, $\tan\beta = 10$, $A_0 = 0$, and $\mu > 0$ [31] as a signal model, the total experimental and theoretical uncertainties in the signal yield add up to 14% or 20% depending on the search region. This includes a 2.2% systematic uncertainty in the integrated luminosity [32].

We set a 95% confidence level (CL) upper limits on the number of observed events using the modified frequentist construction CL$_s$ method [33–35]. We assume log-normal distributions for the efficiency and background uncertainties. As a reference, we provide in Table 1 the upper limits based on a 20% signal acceptance uncertainty.

In order to compare our signal sensitivity to that of other searches for SUSY, we interpret the results in the context of the CMSSM model. We compare the observed upper limits on the number of signal events reported in Table 1 to the expected number of events in each signal region in the CMSSM model in a plane of $(m_0,m_{1/2})$ for $\tan\beta = 10$, $A_0 = 0$, and $\mu > 0$. For each point in the CMSSM, we choose the signal region providing the best expected upper limit on the cross section to evaluate the observed limit; in all cases the best limit is achieved in Region 4, where high $p_T$ leptons, large $H_T > 450$ GeV, and $E_T^{\text{miss}} > 120$ GeV are required. We interpret all points having mean expected values above the corresponding observed upper limit as excluded at the 95% CL. For this exercise the systematic uncertainty on the signal acceptance is re-evaluated for each point in order for the upper limit to reflect the varying influences of the jet energy scale uncertainty. We display the observed exclusion region in Fig. 3. For $m_0 > 1.3$ TeV, the exclusion curve flattens out at about $m_{1/2} \sim 290$ GeV, which corresponds to a wino-like $\tilde{\chi}_1^\pm$ mass of $\sim 200$ GeV. The new result extends the excluded CMSSM region to gluino masses of 710 GeV. This exclusion includes a -1$\sigma$ reduction to account for theory uncertainty [36–44] on the cross section; the limit is independent of the squark masses.

One of the challenges of signature-based searches is to convey information in a form that can be used to test a variety of NP models. In Ref. [8], additional information is presented that can be used to confront NP models in an approximate way through generator-level simulation studies. The approximate model of lepton, jet, and $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ selection efficiencies in terms of the generator-level quantities are shown to be sufficiently accurate to reproduce the constraints on NP models that otherwise would require the full CMS detector simulation. The efficiency dependence can be parameterized as a function of $p_T$ (expressed in GeV) as $0.72\{\text{erf}((p_T - 10)/22.5)\} + 0.22\{1 - \text{erf}((p_T - 10)/22.5)\}$ for electrons, $0.79\{\text{erf}((p_T - 5)/19.5)\} + 0.41\{1 - \text{erf}((p_T - 5)/19.5)\}$ for muons, and $0.341 - \exp[-0.052(p_T - 15)]$ for taus, where erf is the error function. We stud-
Figure 3: Exclusion region, below the red curve, in the CMSSM corresponds to the observed upper limits on the number of events from NP. The central observed curve, which includes experimental uncertainties, is obtained using high $p_T$ leptons with $H_T > 450$ GeV and $E_T^{\text{miss}} > 120$ GeV. The hatched region corresponds to the theoretical uncertainties on the cross section, whereas the shaded region shows the experimental errors with ±1σ variation. We also show the result of the previous analysis [8] to illustrate the improvement.

...the efficiency for an event to pass a given reconstructed $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ ($H_T$) threshold as a function of the generator-level $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ ($H_T$), where in the latter case $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ is computed using neutrinos and the LSPs and $H_T$ is the scalar sum of the transverse momenta of the partons that satisfy the same jet selection criteria used in this analysis. The dependences are parameterized by $0.5\epsilon_\infty \{ \text{erf}(x - x_{1/2})/\sigma + 1 \}$, where $x$ corresponds to the generator-level $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ or $H_T$, $\epsilon_\infty$ is the selection efficiency plateau at high values of $x$, $x_{1/2}$ is the value of $x$ corresponding to half the plateau efficiency, and $\sigma$ determines how fast the efficiency changes with $x$. For the $H_T$ selections of 200 and 450 GeV, the values of ($\epsilon_\infty, x_{1/2}, \sigma$) are (0.997, 185 GeV, 99 GeV), and (0.992, 441 GeV, 120 GeV), respectively. For the $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ selections of 50 and 120 GeV, the parameters are (0.999, 43 GeV, 39 GeV), and (0.999, 123 GeV, 37 GeV), respectively. We tested the parameterized efficiency model in the CMSSM, and the results obtained agree at the 15% level with the full simulation results.

In summary, we conducted a search for physics beyond the standard model based on same-sign dileptons in the $ee$, $\mu\mu$, $e\mu$, $e\tau$, $\mu\tau$, and $\tau\tau$ final states, and find no evidence for an excess over the expected standard model background. We set 95% CL upper limits on contributions from new physics processes based on an integrated luminosity of 4.98 fb$^{-1}$ in the range of 6.2 to 16.9 events, depending on the signal search region. These are the most restrictive limits in this particular final state to date. We have also shown the excluded region in the CMSSM parameter space.

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A The CMS Collaboration

Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia
S. Chatrchyan, V. Khachatryan, A.M. Sirunyan, A. Tumasyan

Institut für Hochenergiephysik der OeAW, Wien, Austria
W. Adam, T. Bergauer, M. Dragicevic, J. Erö, C. Fabjan1, M. Friedl, R. Frühwirth1, V.M. Ghete, J. Hammer, N. Hörmann, J. Hrubeck, M. Jeitler1, W. Kiesenhofer, V. Knünz, M. Krammer1, D. Liko, I. Mikulec, M. Pernicka1, B. Rahbaran, C. Rohringer, H. Rohringer, R. Schönbeck, J. Strauss, A. Taurok, P. Wagner, W. Waltenberger, G. Walzel, E. Widl, C.-E. Wulz1

National Centre for Particle and High Energy Physics, Minsk, Belarus
V. Mossolov, N. Shumeiko, J. Suarez Gonzalez

Universiteit Antwerpen, Antwerpen, Belgium
S. Bansal, T. Cornelis, E.A. De Wolf, X. Janssen, S. Luyckx, T. Maes, L. Mucibello, S. Ochesanu, B. Roland, R. Rougny, M. Selvaggi, Z. Staykova, H. Van Haevermaet, P. Van Mechelen, N. Van Remortel, A. Van Spilbeeck

Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussel, Belgium
F. Blekman, S. Blyweert, J. D’Hondt, R. Gonzalez Suarez, A. Kalogeropoulos, M. Maes, A. Olbrechts, W. Van Doninck, P. Van Mulders, G.P. Van Onsem, I. Villella

Université Libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, Belgium
O. Charaf, B. Clerbaux, G. De Lentdecker, V. Dero, A.P.R. Gay, T. Hreus, A. Léonard, P.E. Marage, T. Reis, L. Thomas, C. Vander Velde, P. Vanlaer, J. Wang

Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium
V. Adler, K. Beernaert, A. Cimmino, S. Costantini, G. Garcia, M. Grunewald, B. Klein, J. Lellouch, A. Marinov, J. Mccartin, A.A. Ocampo Rios, D. Ryckbosch, N. Strobbe, F. Thyssen, M. Tytgat, L. Vanelderen, P. Verwilligen, S. Walsh, E. Yazgan, N. Zaganidis

Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium
S. Basegmez, G. Bruno, R. Castello, A. Caudron, L. Cear, C. Delaere, T. du Pree, D. Favart, L. Forthomme, A. Giammanco2, J. Hollar, V. Lemaître, J. Liao, O. Militaru, C. Nuttens, D. Pagano, L. Perrini, A. Pin, K. Piotrzkowski, N. Schul, J.M. Vizan Garcia

Université de Mons, Mons, Belgium
N. Beliy, T. Caebargs, E. Daubie, G.H. Hammad

Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Fisicas, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
G.A. Alves, M. Correa Martins Junior, D. De Jesus Damiao, T. Martins, M.E. Pol, M.H.G. Souza

Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
W.L. Aldá Júnior, W. Carvalho, A. Custódio, E.M. Da Costa, C. De Oliveira Martins, S. Fonseca De Souza, D. Matos Figueiredo, L. Mundim, H. Nogima, V. Oguri, W.L. Prado Da Silva, A. Santoro, L. Soares Jorge, A. Sznajder

Instituto de Fisica Teorica, Universidade Estadual Paulista, Sao Paulo, Brazil
C.A. Bernardes3, F.A. Dias4, T.R. Fernandez Perez Tomei, E. M. Gregores3, C. Lagana, F. Marinho, P.G. Mercadante3, S.F. Novaes, Sandra S. Padula

Institute for Nuclear Research and Nuclear Energy, Sofia, Bulgaria
V. Genchev5, P. Iaydjieva5, S. Piperov, M. Rodozov, S. Stoykova, G. Sultanov, V. Tcholakov, R. Trayanov, M. Vutova
University of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria
A. Dimitrov, R. Hadjiiska, V. Kozhuharov, L. Litov, B. Pavlov, P. Petkov

Institute of High Energy Physics, Beijing, China
J.G. Bian, G.M. Chen, H.S. Chen, C.H. Jiang, D. Liang, S. Liang, X. Meng, J. Tao, J. Wang, X. Wang, Z. Wang, H. Xiao, M. Xu, J. Zang, Z. Zhang

State Key Lab. of Nucl. Phys. and Tech., Peking University, Beijing, China
C. Asawatangtrakuldee, Y. Ban, S. Guo, Y. Guo, W. Li, S. Liu, Y. Mao, S.J. Qian, H. Teng, S. Wang, B. Zhu, W. Zou

Universidad de Los Andes, Bogota, Colombia
C. Avila, J.P. Gomez, B. Gomez Moreno, A.F. Osorio Oliveros, J.C. Sanabria

Technical University of Split, Split, Croatia
N. Godinovic, D. Lesa, R. Plestina, D. Polic, I. Puljak

University of Split, Split, Croatia
Z. Antunovic, M. Kovac

Institute Rudjer Boskovic, Zagreb, Croatia
V. Briljevic, S. Duric, K. Kadija, J. Luetic, S. Morovic

University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
A. Attikis, M. Galanti, G. Mavromanolakis, J. Mousa, C. Nicolaou, F. Ptochos, P.A. Razis

Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
M. Finger, M. Finger Jr.

Academy of Scientific Research and Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Egyptian Network of High Energy Physics, Cairo, Egypt
Y. Assran, S. Elgammal, A. Ellithi Kamel, S. Khalil, M.A. Mahmoud, A. Radi

National Institute of Chemical Physics and Biophysics, Tallinn, Estonia
M. Kadastik, M. Muntel, M. Raidal, L. Rebane, A. Tiko

Department of Physics, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland
V. Azzolini, P. Eerola, G. Fedi, M. Voutilainen

Helsinki Institute of Physics, Helsinki, Finland
J. Harkonen, A. Heikkinen, V. Karimaki, R. Kinnunen, M.J. Kortelainen, T. Lampen, K. Lassila-Perini, S. Lehti, T. Lindén, P. Luukka, T. Mäenpää, T. Peltola, E. Tuominen, J. Tuominiemi, E. Tuovinen, D. Ungaro, L. Wendland

Lappeenranta University of Technology, Lappeenranta, Finland
K. Banzuzi, A. Korpela, T. Tuuva

DSM/IRFU, CEA/Saclay, Gif-sur-Yvette, France
M. Besancon, S. Choudhury, M. Dejardin, D. Denegri, B. Fabbro, J.L. Faure, F. Ferri, S. Ganjour, A. Givernaud, P. Gras, G. Hamel de Monchenault, P. Jarry, E. Locci, J. Malcles, L. Millischer, A. Nayak, J. Rander, A. Rosowsky, I. Shreyber, M. Titov

Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, Ecole Polytechnique, IN2P3-CNRS, Palaiseau, France
S. Baffioni, F. Beaudette, L. Benhabib, L. Bianchini, M. Bluj, C. Broutin, P. Busson, C. Charlot, N. Daci, T. Dahms, L. Dobrzynski, R. Granier de Cassagnac, M. Haguenaier, P. Miné, C. Mironov, M. Nguyen, C. Ochando, P. Paganini, D. Sabes, R. Salerno, Y. Sirois, C. Veelken, A. Zabi
Institut Pluridisciplinaire Hubert Curien, Université de Strasbourg, Université de Haute Alsace Mulhouse, CNRS/IN2P3, Strasbourg, France
J.-L. Agram¹⁴, J. Andrea, D. Bloch, D. Bodin, J.-M. Brom, M. Cardaci, E.C. Chabert, C. Collard, E. Conte¹⁴, F. Drouhin¹⁴, C. Ferro, J.-C. Fontaine¹⁴, D. Gelé, U. Goerlach, P. Juillot, M. Karim¹⁴, A.-C. Le Bihan, P. Van Hove

Centre de Calcul de l’Institut National de Physique Nucleaire et de Physique des Particules (IN2P3), Villeurbanne, France
F. Fassi, D. Mercier

Université de Lyon, Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1, CNRS-IN2P3, Institut de Physique Nucléaire de Lyon, Villeurbanne, France
S. Beaucaeron, N. Beaufere, O. Bondu, G. Boudoul, H. Brun, J. Chasseron, R. Chierici⁵, D. Contardo, P. Depasse, H. El Mamouni, J. Fay, S. Gascon, M. Gouzevitch, B. Ille, T. Kurca, M. Lethuillier, L. Mirabito, S. Perries, V. Sordini, S. Tosi, Y. Tschudi, P. Verdier, S. Viret

Institute of High Energy Physics and Informatization, Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia
Z. Tsamalaidze¹⁵

RWTH Aachen University, I. Physikalisches Institut, Aachen, Germany
G. Anagnostou, S. Beranek, M. Edelhoff, L. Feld, N. Heracleous, O. Hindrichs, R. Jussen, K. Klein, J. Merz, A. Ostapchuk, A. Perieanu, F. Raupach, J. Sammet, S. Schael, D. Sprenger, H. Weber, B. Wittmer, V. Zhukov¹⁶

RWTH Aachen University, III. Physikalisches Institut A, Aachen, Germany
M. Ata, J. Caudron, E. Dietz-Laursonn, D. Duchardt, M. Erdmann, R. Fischer, A. Güth, T. Hebbeker, C. Heidemann, K. Hoepfner, D. Klingebiel, P. Kreuzer, J. Lingemann, C. Magass, M. Merschmeyer, A. Meyer, M. Olschewski, P. Papacz, H. Pieta, H. Reithler, S.A. Schmitz, L. Sonnenschein, J. Steggemann, D. Teyssier, M. Weber

RWTH Aachen University, III. Physikalisches Institut B, Aachen, Germany
M. Bontenackels, V. Cherepanov, M. Davids, G. Flügge, H. Geenen, M. Geisler, W. Haj Ahmad, F. Hoehle, B. Kargoll, T. Kress, Y. Kuessell, A. Linn, A. Nowack, L. Perchalla, O. Pooth, J. Rennefeld, P. Sauerland, A. Stahl

Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron, Hamburg, Germany
M. Aldaya Martin, J. Behr, W. Behrenhoff, U. Behrens, M. Bergholz¹⁷, A. Bethani, K. Borras, A. Burgmeier, A. Cakir, L. Calligaris, A. Campbell, E. Castro, F. Costanza, D. Dammann, G. Eckerlin, D. Eckstein, K. Fischer, G. Flucke, A. Geiser, I. Glushkov, V. Gunnella, S. Habib, J. Hauk, G. Hellwig, H. Jung⁵, M. Kasemann, P. Katsas, C. Kleinwort, H. Kluge, A. Knutsson, M. Krämer, D. Krücker, E. Kuznetsova, W. Lange, W. Lohmann¹⁷, B. Lutz, R. Mankel, I. Marin, M. Marienfeld, I.-A. Melzer-Pellmann, A.B. Meyer, J. Mnich, A. Musagiler, S. Naumann-Emme, J. Olzem, H. Perrey, A. Petrukhin, D. Pitzl, A. Raspereza, P.M. Ribeiro Cipriano, C. Riedl, M. Rosin, J. Salfeld-Nebgen, R. Schmidt¹⁷, T. Schoerner-Sadenius, N. Sen, A. Spiridonov, M. Stein, R. Walsh, C. Wissing

University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany
C. Autermann, V. Blobel, S. Bobrovskyi, J. Draeger, H. Enderle, J. Erfe, U. Gebbert, M. Görner, T. Hermanns, R.S. Höing, K. Kaschube, G. Kaussen, H. Kirschenmann, R. Klanner, J. Lange, B. Mura, F. Nowak, T. Peiffer, N. Pietsch, D. Rathjens, C. Sander, H. Schettler, P. Schleper, E. Schlieckau, A. Schmidt, M. Schröder, T. Schum, M. Seidel, H. Stadie, G. Steinbrück, J. Thomsen
Institut für Experimentelle Kernphysik, Karlsruhe, Germany
C. Barth, J. Berger, C. Böser, T. Chwalek, W. De Boer, A. Descroix, A. Dierlamm, M. Feindt, M. Guthoff, C. Hackstein, F. Hartmann, T. Hauth, M. Heinrich, H. Held, K.H. Hoffmann, S. Honc, I. Katkov, J.R. Komaragiri, D. Martschei, S. Mueller, Th. Müller, M. Niegel, A. Nürnberg, O. Oberst, A. Oehler, J. Ott, G. Quast, K. Rabbertz, F. Ratnikov, N. Ratnikova, S. Röcker, A. Scheurer, F.-P. Schilling, G. Schott, H.J. Simonis, F.M. Stober, D. Troendle, R. Ulrich, J. Wagner-Kuhr, S. Wayand, T. Weiler, M. Zeise

Institute of Nuclear Physics “Demokritos”, Aghia Paraskevi, Greece
G. Daskalakis, T. Geralis, S. Kesisoglou, A. Kyriakis, D. Loukas, I. Manolakos, A. Markou, C. Markou, C. Mavrommatis, E. Ntomari

University of Athens, Athens, Greece
L. Gouskos, T.J. Mertzimekis, A. Panagiotou, N. Saoulidou

University of Ioánnina, Ioánnina, Greece
I. Evangelou, C. Foudas, P. Kokkas, N. Manthos, I. Papadopoulos, V. Patras

KFKI Research Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Budapest, Hungary
G. Bencze, C. Hajdu, P. Hidas, D. Horvath, K. Krajczar, B. Radics, F. Sikler, V. Veszpremi, G. Vesztergombi

Institute of Nuclear Research ATOMKI, Debrecen, Hungary
N. Beni, S. Czellar, J. Molnar, J. Palinkas, Z. Szillasi

University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary
J. Karancsi, P. Raics, Z.L. Trocsanyi, B. Ujvari

Panjab University, Chandigarh, India
S.B. Beri, V. Bhatnagar, N. Dhingra, R. Gupta, M. Jindal, M. Kaur, J.M. Kohli, M.Z. Mehta, N. Nishu, L.K. Saini, A. Sharma, J. Singh

University of Delhi, Delhi, India
S. Ahuja, A. Bhardwaj, B.C. Choudhary, A. Kumar, A. Kumar, S. Malhotra, M. Naimuddin, K. Ranjan, V. Sharma, R.K. Shivpuri

Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, Kolkata, India
S. Banerjee, S. Bhattacharya, S. Dutta, B. Gomber, Sa. Jain, Sh. Jain, R. Khurana, S. Sarkar, M. Sharan

Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai, India
A. Abdulsalam, R.K. Choudhury, D. Dutta, S. Kailas, V. Kumar, P. Mehta, A.K. Mohanty, L.M. Pant, P. Shukla

Tata Institute of Fundamental Research - EHEP, Mumbai, India
T. Aziz, S. Ganguly, M. Guchait, M. Maity, G. Majumder, K. Mazumdar, G.B. Mohanty, B. Parida, K. Sudhakar, N. Wickramage

Tata Institute of Fundamental Research - HECR, Mumbai, India
S. Banerjee, S. Dugad

Institute for Research in Fundamental Sciences (IPM), Tehran, Iran
H. Arfaei, H. Bakhshiansohi, S.M. Etessami, A. Fahim, M. Hashemi, H. Hesari, A. Jafari, M. Khazdzad, A. Mohammad, M. Mohammad Najafabadi, S. Paktinat Mehdia, B. Safarzadeh, M. Zeinali
INFN Sezione di Bari, Università di Bari, Politecnico di Bari, Bari, Italy
M. Abbrescia, L. Barbone, C. Calabria, S.S. Chhibra, A. Colaleo, D. Creanza, N. De Filippis, M. De Palma, L. Fiore, G. Iaselli, L. Lusito, G. Maggi, B. Marangelli, S. My, S. Nuzzo, N. Pacifico, A. Pompili, G. Pugliese, G. Selvaggi, L. Silvestris, G. Singh, L. Venditti, G. Zito

INFN Sezione di Bologna, Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy
G. Abbiendi, A.C. Benvenuti, D. Bonacorsi, S. Braibant-Giacomelli, L. Brigliadori, P. Capiluppi, A. Castro, F.R. Cavallo, M. Cuffiani, G.M. Dallavalle, F. Fabbri, A. Fanfani, D. Fasanella, P. Giacomelli, C. Grandi, L. Guiducci, S. Marcellini, G. Masetti, M. Meneghelli, A. Montanari, F.L. Navarria, F. Odivi, A. Perrotta, F. Primavera, A.M. Rossi, T. Rovelli, G. Sirolli, R. Travaglini

INFN Sezione di Catania, Università di Catania, Catania, Italy
S. Albergo, G. Cappello, M. Chiorboli, S. Costa, R. Potenza, A. Tricomi, C. Tuve

INFN Sezione di Firenze, Firenze, Italy
G. Barbaggia, V. Ciulli, C. Cividini, R. D’Alessandro, E. Focardi, S. Frosali, E. Gallo, S. Gonzi, M. Meschini, S. Paoletti, G. Sguazzoni, A. Tropiano

INFN Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, Frascati, Italy
L. Benussi, S. Bianco, S. Colafranceschi, F. Fabbri, D. Piccolo

INFN Sezione di Genova, Genova, Italy
P. Fabbricatore, R. Menuchin

INFN Sezione di Milano-Bicocca, Università di Milano-Bicocca, Milano, Italy
A. Benaglia, F. De Guio, L. Di Matteo, S. Fiorendi, S. Gennai, A. Ghezzi, S. Malvezzi, R.A. Manzon, A. Martelli, A. Massironi, D. Menascé, L. Moroni, M. Paganoni, D. Pedrini, S. Ragazzi, N. Redaelli, S. Sala, T. Tabarelli de Fatis

INFN Sezione di Napoli, Università di Napoli “Federico II”, Napoli, Italy
S. Buontempo, C.A. Carrillo Montoya, N. Cavallo, A. De Cosa, O. Dogangun, F. Fabozzi, A.O.M. Iorio, L. Lista, S. Meola, M. Merola, P. Paolucci

INFN Sezione di Padova, Università di Padova, Università di Trento (Trento), Padova, Italy
P. Azzi, N. Bacchetta, P. Bellan, A. Branca, R. Carlin, P. Checchia, T. Dorigo, U. Dosselli, F. Gasparini, U. Gasparini, A. Gozzelino, K. Kanishchev, S. Lacaprara, I. Lazzizzera, M. Margoni, A.T. Meneguzzo, J. Pazzini, L. Ferrozzi, N. Pozzobon, P. Ronchese, F. Simonetto, E. Torassa, M. Tosi, S. Vanini, A. Zucchetta, G. Zumerle

INFN Sezione di Pavia, Università di Pavia, Pavia, Italy
M. Gabusi, S.P. Ratti, C. Riccardi, P. Torre, P. Vitulo

INFN Sezione di Perugia, Università di Perugia, Perugia, Italy
M. Biasini, G.M. Bilei, L. Fano, P. Lariccia, A. Lucaroni, G. Mantovani, M. Menichelli, A. Nappi, F. Romeo, A. Saha, A. Santocchia, S. Taroni

INFN Sezione di Roma, Università di Roma Tor Vergata, Università della Tuscia (Viterbo), Roma, Italy
P. Azzurri, G. Bagliesi, T. Boccali, G. Broccolo, R. Castaldi, R.T. D’Agnolo, R. Dell’Orso, F. Fiori, L. Foà, A. Giassi, A. Kraan, F. Ligabue, T. Lomtadze, L. Martini, A. Messineo, F. Palla, A. Rizzi, A.T. Serban, P. Spagnolo, P. Squillacioti, R. Tenchini, G. Tonelli, A. Venturi, P.G. Verdini
INFN Sezione di Roma $^a$, Università di Roma “La Sapienza” $^b$, Roma, Italy
L. Barone$^{a,b}$, F. Cavallari$^b$, D. Del Re$^{a,b,5}$, M. Diemoz$^a$, M. Grassi$^{a,b,5}$, E. Longo$^{a,b}$, P. Meridiani$^{a,b,5}$, F. Micheli$^{a,b}$, S. Nourbakhsh$^{a,b}$, G. Organtini$^{a,b}$, R. Paramatti$^a$, S. Rahatlou$^{a,b}$, M. Sigamani$^a$, L. Soffi$^{a,b}$

INFN Sezione di Torino $^a$, Università di Torino $^b$, Università del Piemonte Orientale (Novara) $^c$, Torino, Italy
N. Amapane$^{a,b}$, R. Arcidiacono$^{a,c}$, S. Argiro$^{a,b}$, M. Arneodo$^{a,c}$, C. Biino$^a$, C. Botta$^{a,b}$, N. Cartiglia$^a$, M. Costa$^{a,b}$, N. Demaria$^a$, A. Graziano$^{a,b}$, C. Mariotti$^{a,5}$, S. Maselli$^a$, E. Migliore$^{a,b}$, V. Monaco$^{a,b}$, M. Musich$^{a,5}$, M.M. Obertino$^{a,c}$, N. Pastrone$^a$, M. Pelliccioni$^a$, A. Potenza$^{a,b}$, A. Romero$^{a,b}$, M. Ruspa$^{a,c}$, R. Sacchi$^{a,b}$, V. Sola$^{a,b}$, A. Solano$^{a,b}$, A. Staiano$^a$, A. Vilela Pereira$^a$

INFN Sezione di Trieste $^a$, Università di Trieste $^b$, Trieste, Italy
S. Belforte$^a$, F. Cossutti$^a$, G. Della Ricca$^{a,b}$, B. Gobbo$^a$, M. Marone$^{a,b,5}$, D. Montanino$^{a,b,5}$, A. Penzo$^a$, A. Schizzi$^{a,b}$

Kangwon National University, Chunchon, Korea
S.G. Heo, T.Y. Kim, S.K. Nam

Kyungpook National University, Daegu, Korea
S. Chang, J. Chung, D.H. Kim, G.N. Kim, D.J. Kong, H. Park, S.R. Ro, D.C. Son, T. Son

Chonnam National University, Institute for Universe and Elementary Particles, Kwangju, Korea
J.Y. Kim, Zero J. Kim, S. Song

Konkuk University, Seoul, Korea
H.Y. Jo

Korea University, Seoul, Korea
S. Choi, D. Gyun, B. Hong, M. Jo, H. Kim, T.J. Kim, K.S. Lee, D.H. Moon, S.K. Park, E. Seo

University of Seoul, Seoul, Korea
M. Choi, S. Kang, H. Kim, J.H. Kim, C. Park, I.C. Park, S. Park, G. Ryu

Sungkyunkwan University, Suwon, Korea
Y. Cho, Y. Choi, Y.K. Choi, J. Goh, M.S. Kim, E. Kwon, B. Lee, J. Lee, S. Lee, H. Seo, I. Yu

Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania
M.J. Bilinskas, I. Grigelionis, M. Janulis, A. Juodagalvis

Centro de Investigacion y de Estudios Avanzados del IPN, Mexico City, Mexico
H. Castilla-Valdez, E. De La Cruz-Burelo, I. Heredia-de La Cruz, R. Lopez-Fernandez, R. Magaña Villalba, J. Martínez-Ortega, A. Sánchez-Hernández, L.M. Villasenor-Cendejas

Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico
S. Carrillo Moreno, F. Vazquez Valencia

Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico
H.A. Salazar Ibarguen

Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, San Luis Potosí, Mexico
E. Casimiro Linares, A. Morelos Pineda, M.A. Reyes-Santos

University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand
D. Krofcheck
University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand
A.J. Bell, P.H. Butler, R. Doesburg, S. Reucroft, H. Silverwood

National Centre for Physics, Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan
M. Ahmad, M.I. Asghar, H.R. Hoorani, S. Khalid, W.A. Khan, T. Khurshid, S. Qazi, M.A. Shah, M. Shoaib

Institute of Experimental Physics, Faculty of Physics, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland
G. Brona, K. Bunkowski, M. Cwiok, W. Dominik, K. Doroba, A. Kalinowski, M. Konecki, J. Krolikowski

Soltan Institute for Nuclear Studies, Warsaw, Poland
H. Bialkowska, B. Boimska, T. Frueboes, R. Gokili, M. Górski, M. Kazana, K. Nawrocki, K. Romanowska-Rybinska, M. Szleper, G. Wrochna, P. Zalewski

Laboratório de Instrumentação e Física Experimental de Partículas, Lisboa, Portugal
N. Almeida, P. Bargassa, A. David, P. Faccioli, M. Fernandes, P.G. Ferreira Parracho, M. Gallinaro, J. Seixas, J. Varela, P. Vischia

Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Dubna, Russia
I. Belotelov, P. Bunin, M. Gavrilenko, I. Golutvin, L. Gorbunov, A. Kamenev, V. Karjavin, G. Kozlov, A. Lanev, A. Malakhov, P. Moisenz, V. Palchik, V. Perelvgin, S. Shmatov, V. Smirnov, A. Volodko, A. Zarubin

Petersburg Nuclear Physics Institute, Gatchina (St Petersburg), Russia
S. Evstyukhin, V. Golovtsov, Y. Ivanov, V. Kim, P. Levchenko, V. Murzin, V. Oreshkin, I. Smirnov, V. Sulimov, L. Uvarov, S. Vavilov, V. Vorobyev, An. Vorobyev

Institute for Nuclear Research, Moscow, Russia
Yu. Andreev, A. Dermenev, S. Gninenko, N. Golubev, M. Kirsanov, N. Krasnikov, V. Matveev, A. Pashenkov, D. Tlisov, A. Toropin

Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow, Russia
V. Epshteyn, M. Erofeeva, V. Gavrilov, M. Kossos, N. Lychkovskaya, V. Popov, G. Safronov, S. Semenov, V. Stolin, E. Vlasov, A. Zhokin

Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia
A. Belyaev, E. Boos, M. Dubinin, L. Dudko, A. Ershov, A. Gribushin, V. Klyukhin, O. Kodolova, I. Lokhtin, A. Markina, S. Obraztsov, M. Perfilov, S. Petrushanko, A. Popov, L. Sarycheva, V. Savrin, A. Snigirev

P.N. Lebedev Physical Institute, Moscow, Russia
V. Andreev, M. Azarkin, I. Dremin, M. Kirakosyan, A. Leonidov, G. Mesyats, S.V. Rusakov, A. Vinogradov

State Research Center of Russian Federation, Institute for High Energy Physics, Protvino, Russia
I. Azhgirey, I. Bayshev, S. Bitioukov, V. Grishin, V. Kachanov, D. Konstantinov, A. Korabiev, V. Krychkine, V. Petrov, R. Ryutin, A. Sobol, L. Tourchanovitch, S. Trosnin, N. Tyurin, A. Uzunian, A. Volkov

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Physics and Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia
P. Adzic, M. Djordjevic, M. Ekmedzic, D. Krpic, J. Milosevic
Centro de Investigaciones Energéticas Medioambientales y Tecnológicas (CIEMAT), Madrid, Spain
M. Aguilar-Benitez, J. Alcaraz Maestre, P. Arce, C. Battilana, E. Calvo, M. Cerrada, M. Chamizo Llatas, N. Colino, B. De La Cruz, A. Delgado Peris, C. Diez Pardo, D. Domínguez Vázquez, C. Fernandez Bedoya, J.P. Fernández Ramos, A. Ferrando, J. Flix, M.C. Fouz, P. García-Abia, O. Gonzalez Lopez, S. Goy Lopez, J.M. Hernandez, M.I. Josa, G. Merino, J. Puerta Pelayo, A. Quintario Olmeda, I. Redondo, L. Romero, J. Santaolalla, M.S. Soares, C. Willmott

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain
C. Albajar, G. Codispoti, J.F. de Trocóniz

Universidad de Oviedo, Oviedo, Spain
J. Cuevas, J. Fernandez Menendez, S. Folgueras, I. Gonzalez Caballero, L. Lloret Iglesias, J. Piedra Gomez

Instituto de Física de Cantabria (IFCA), CSIC-Universidad de Cantabria, Santander, Spain
J.A. Brochero Cifuentes, I.J. Cabrillo, A. Calderon, S.H. Chuang, J. Duarte Campderros, M. Felcini, M. Fernandez, G. Gomez, J. Gonzalez Sanchez, C. Jorda, P. Lobelle Pardo, A. Lopez Virto, J. Marco, R. Marco, C. Martinez Rivero, F. Matorras, J.A. Coarasa Perez, D. D’Enterria, A. Dabrowski, A. De Roeck, S. Di Guida, M. Dobson, N. Dupont-Sagorin, A. Elliott-Peisert, B. Frisch, W. Funk, G. Georgiou, M. Giffels, D. Gigi, K. Gill, D. Giordano, M. Giunta, F. Glege, R. Gomez-Reino Garrido, P. Govoni, S. Gowdy, R. Guida, M. Hansen, P. Harris, C. Hartl, J. Harvey, B. Hegner, A. Hinzmann, V. Innocente, P. Janot, K. Kaadze, E. Karavakis, K. Kousouris, P. Lecoq, Y.-J. Lee, P. Lenzi, C. Lourenço, T. Máki, M. Malberti, L. Malgeri, M. Manneli, L. Masetti, F. Meijers, S. Mersi, E. Meschi, R. Moser, M.U. Mozer, M. Mulders, P. Musella, E. Nesvold, T. Orimoto, L. Orsini, E. Palencia Cortezon, E. Perez, A. Petrilli, A. Pfeiffer, M. Pierini, M. Pimiä, D. Piparo, G. Polese, L. Quertenmont, A. Racz, W. Reece, J. Rodrigues Antunes, G. Rolandi, C. Rovelli, M. Rovere, H. Sakulin, F. Santanastasio, C. Schäfer, C. Schwick, G. Schwick, I. Segoni, S. Sekmen, A. Sharma, P. Siegrist, P. Silva, M. Simon, P. Spichas, D. Spiga, M. Spiropulu, M. Stoye, A. Tsirou, G.I. Veres, J.R. Vlimant, H.K. Wöhri, S.D. Worm, W.D. Zeuner

Paul Scherrer Institut, Villigen, Switzerland
W. Bertl, K. Deiters, W. Erdmann, K. Gabathuler, R. Horisberger, Q. Ingram, H.C. Kaestli, S. König, D. Kotlinski, U. Langenegger, F. Meier, D. Renker, T. Rohe, J. Sibille

Institute for Particle Physics, ETH Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
L. Bäni, P. Bortignon, M.A. Buchmann, B. Casal, N. Chanon, Z. Chen, A. Deisher, G. Dissertori, M. Dittmar, M. Dünser, J. Eusgter, K. Freudenreich, C. Grab, D. Hits, P. Lecomte, W. Lustermann, A.C. Marini, P. Martinez Ruiz del Arbol, N. Mohr, F. Moortgat, C. Nägeli, P. Nef, F. Nessi-Tedaldi, F. Pandolfi, L. Pape, F. Pauss, M. Peruzzi, F.J. Ronga, M. Rossini, L. Sala, A.K. Sanchez, A. Starodumov, B. Stieger, M. Takahashi, L. Tauscher, A. Thea, K. Theofilatos, D. Treille, C. Urscheler, R. Wallny, H.A. Weber, L. Wehrli

Universität Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland
E. Aguilo, C. Amsler, V. Chiochia, S. De Visscher, C. Favaro, M. Ivova Rikova, B. Millan Mejias, P. Otiougova, P. Robmann, H. Snoek, S. Tupputi, M. Verzetti
National Central University, Chung-Li, Taiwan
Y.H. Chang, K.H. Chen, C.M. Kuo, S.W. Li, W. Lin, Z.K. Liu, Y.J. Lu, D. Mekterovic, A.P. Singh, R. Volpe, S.S. Yu

National Taiwan University (NTU), Taipei, Taiwan
P. Bartalini, P. Chang, Y.H. Chang, Y.W. Chang, Y. Chao, K.F. Chen, C. Dietz, U. Grundler, W.-S. Hou, Y. Hsiung, K.Y. Kao, Y.J. Lei, R.-S. Lu, D. Majumder, E. Petrakou, X. Shi, J.G. Shiu, Y.M. Tzeng, X. Wan, M. Wang

Cukurova University, Adana, Turkey
A. Adiguzel, M.N. Bakirci, S. Cerci, C. Dozen, I. Dumanoglu, E. Eskut, S. Girgis, G. Gokbulut, E. Gurpinar, I. Hos, E.E. Kangal, G. Karapinar, A. Kayis Topaksu, G. Onengut, K. Ozdemir, S. Ozturk, A. Polatoz, K. Sogut, D. Sunar Cerci, B. Tali, H. Topakli, L.N. Vergili, M. Vergili

Middle East Technical University, Physics Department, Ankara, Turkey
I.V. Akin, T. Aliiev, B. Bilin, S. Bilmis, M. Deniz, H. Gamsizkan, A.M. Guler, K. Ocalan, A. Ozpineci, M. Serin, R. Sever, U.E. Surat, M. Yalvac, E. Yildirim, M. Zeyrek

Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey
E. Gülmez, B. Isildak, M. Kaya, O. Kaya, S. Ozkorucuklu, N. Sonmez

Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey
K. Cankocak

National Scientific Center, Kharkov Institute of Physics and Technology, Kharkov, Ukraine
L. Levchuk

University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom
F. Bostock, J.J. Brooke, E. Clement, D. Cussans, H. Flacher, R. Frazier, J. Goldstein, M. Grimes, G.P. Heath, H.F. Heath, L. Kreczko, S. Metson, D.M. Newbold, K. Nirunpong, A. Poll, S. Senkin, V.J. Smith, T. Williams

Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom
L. Basso, K.W. Bell, A. Belyaev, C. Brew, R.M. Brown, D.J.A. Cockerill, J.A. Coughlan, K. Harder, S. Harper, J. Jackson, B.W. Kennedy, E. Olaiya, D. Petyt, B.C. Radburn-Smith, C.H. Shepherd-Themistoceous, I.R. Tomalin, W.J. Womersley

Imperial College, London, United Kingdom
R. Bainbridge, G. Ball, R. Beuselinck, O. Buchmuller, D. Colling, N. Cripps, M. Cutajar, P. Dauncey, G. Davies, M. Della Negra, W. Ferguson, J. Fulcher, D. Futyan, A. Gilbert, A. Guneratne Bryer, G. Hall, Z. Hatherell, J. Hays, G. Iles, M. Jarvis, G. Karapostoli, L. Lyons, A.-M. Magnan, J. Marrouche, B. Mathias, R. Nandi, J. Nash, A. Nikitenko, A. Papageorgiou, J. Pela, M. Pesaresi, K. Petrdis, M. Pioppi, D.M. Raymond, S. Rogerson, A. Rose, M.J. Ryan, C. Seez, P. Sharp, A. Sparrow, A. Tapper, M. Vazquez Acosta, T. Virdee, S. Wakefield, N. Wardle, T. Whyntie

Brunel University, Uxbridge, United Kingdom
M. Chadwick, J.E. Cole, P.R. Hobson, A. Khan, P. Kyberd, D. Leggat, D. Leslie, W. Martin, I.D. Reid, P. Symonds, L. Teodorescu, M. Turner

Baylor University, Waco, USA
K. Hatakeyama, H. Liu, T. Scarborough
The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, USA
C. Henderson, P. Rumerio

Boston University, Boston, USA
A. Avetisyan, T. Bose, C. Fantasia, A. Heister, J. St. John, P. Lawson, D. Lazic, J. Rohlf, D. Sperka, L. Sulak

Brown University, Providence, USA
J. Alimena, S. Bhattacharya, D. Cutts, A. Ferapontov, U. Heintz, S. Jabeen, G. Kukartsev, E. Laird, G. Landsberg, M. Luk, M. Narain, D. Nguyen, M. Segala, T. Sinthuprasith, T. Speer, K.V. Tsang

University of California, Davis, Davis, USA
R. Breedon, G. Breto, M. Calderon De La Barca Sanchez, S. Chauhan, M. Chertok, J. Conway, R. Conway, P.T. Cox, J. Dolen, R. Erbacher, M. Gardner, R. Houtz, W. Ko, A. Kopecky, R. Lander, O. Mall, T. Miceli, R. Nelson, D. Pellett, B. Rutherford, M. Searle, J. Smith, M. Squires, M. Tripathi, R. Vasquez Sierra

University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, USA
V. Andreev, D. Cline, R. Cousins, J. Duris, S. Erhan, P. Everaerts, C. Farrell, J. Hauser, M. Ignatenko, C. Jarvis, C. Plager, G. Rakness, P. Schlein, J. Tucker, V. Valuev, M. Weber

University of California, Riverside, Riverside, USA
J. Babb, R. Clare, M.E. Dinardo, J. Ellison, J.W. Gary, F. Giordano, G. Hanson, G.Y. Jeng, H. Liu, O.R. Long, A. Luthra, H. Nguyen, S. Parameswaran, J. Sturdy, S. Sumowidagdo, R. Wilken, S. Wimpenny

University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, USA
W. Andrews, J.G. Branson, G.B. Cerati, S. Cittolin, D. Evans, F. Golf, A. Holzner, R. Kelley, M. Lebourgeois, J. Letts, I. Macneill, B. Mangano, S. Padhi, C. Palmer, G. Petrucciani, M. Pieri, M. Sani, V. Sharma, S. Simon, E. Sudano, M. Tadel, Y. Tu, A. Vartak, S. Wasserbaech, F. Würthwein, A. Yagil, J. Yoo

University of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, USA
D. Barge, R. Bellan, C. Campagnari, M. D’Alfonso, T. Danielson, K. Flowers, P. Geffert, J. Incandela, C. Justus, P. Kalavase, S.A. Koay, D. Kovalskyi, V. Krutelyov, S. Lowette, N. Mccoll, V. Pavlunin, F. Rebassoo, J. Ribnik, J. Richman, R. Rossin, D. Stuart, W. To, C. West

California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA
J. Apresyan, A. Bornheim, Y. Chen, E. Di Marco, J. Duarte, M. Gataullin, Y. Ma, A. Mott, H.B. Newman, C. Rogan, V. Timciuc, P. Traczyk, J. Veverka, R. Wilkinson, Y. Yang, R.Y. Zhu

Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, USA
B. Akgun, R. Carroll, T. Ferguson, Y. Iiyama, D.W. Jang, Y.F. Liu, M. Paulini, H. Vogel, I. Vorobiev

University of Colorado at Boulder, Boulder, USA
J.P. Cumalat, B.R. Drell, C.J. Edelman, W.T. Ford, A. Gaz, B. Heyburn, E. Luiggi Lopez, J.G. Smith, K. Stenson, K.A. Ulmer, S.R. Wagner

Cornell University, Ithaca, USA
J. Alexander, A. Chatterjee, N. Eggert, L.K. Gibbons, B. Heltsley, A. Khukhunaishvili, B. Kreis, N. Mirman, G. Nicolas Kaufman, J.R. Patterson, A. Ryd, E. Salvati, W. Sun, W.D. Teo, J. Thom, J. Thompson, J. Vaughan, Y. Weng, L. Winstrom, P. Wittich
Fairfield University, Fairfield, USA
D. Winn

Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Batavia, USA
S. Abdullin, M. Albrow, J. Anderson, L.A.T. Bauer Dick, A. Beretvas, J. Berryhill, P.C. Bhat, I. Bloch, K. Burkett, J.N. Butler, V. Chetluru, H.W.K. Cheung, F. Chlebana, V.D. Elvira, I. Fisk, J. Freeman, Y. Gao, D. Green, O. Gutsche, A. Hahn, J. Hanlon, R.M. Harris, J. Hirschauer, B. Hooberman, S. Jindariani, M. Johnson, U. Joshi, B. Kilminster, B. Klima, S. Kunori, S. Kwan, C. Leonidopoulos, D. Lincoln, R. Lipton, L. Lueking, J. Lykken, K. Maeshima, J.M. Marraffino, S. Maruyama, D. Mason, P. McBride, K. Mishra, S. Mrenna, Y. Musienko53, C. Newman-Holmes, V. O’Dell, O. Prokofyev, E. Sexton-Kennedy, S. Sharma, W.J. Spalding, L. Spiegel, P. Tan, L. Taylor, S. Tkaczyk, N.V. Tran, L. Uplegger, E.W. Vaandering, R. Vidal, J. Whitmore, W. Wu, F. Yang, F. Yumiceva, J.C. Yun

University of Florida, Gainesville, USA
D. Acosta, P. Avery, D. Bourilkov, M. Chen, S. Das, M. De Gruttola, G.P. Di Giovanni, D. Dobur, A. Drozdetskiy, R.D. Field, M. Fisher, Y. Fu, I.K. Furic, J. Gartner, J. Hugon, B. Kim, J. Konigsberg, A. Korytov, A. Kropivnitskaya, T. Kypreos, J.F. Low, K. Matchev, P. Milenovic54, G. Mitselmakher, L. Muniz, R. Remington, A. Rinkevicius, P. Sellers, N. Skhirtladze, M. Snowball, J. Yelton, M. Zakaria

Florida International University, Miami, USA
V. Gaultney, L.M. Lebolo, S. Linn, P. Markowitz, G. Martinez, J.L. Rodriguez

Florida State University, Tallahassee, USA
J.R. Adams, T. Adams, A. Askew, J. Bochenek, J. Chen, B. Diamond, S.V. Gleyzer, J. Haas, S. Hagopian, V. Hagopian, M. Jenkins, K.F. Johnson, H. Prosper, V. Veeraraghavan, M. Weinberg

Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, USA
M.M. Baarmand, B. Dorney, M. Hohlmann, H. Kalakhety, I. Vodopiyanov

University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Chicago, USA
M.R. Adams, I.M. Anghel, L. Apanasevich, Y. Bai, V.E. Bazterra, R.R. Betts, I. Bucinskaite, J. Callner, R. Cavanaugh, C. Dragoiu, O. Evdokimov, L. Gauthier, C.E. Gerber, S. Hamdan, D.J. Hofman, S. Khalatyan, F. Lacroix, M. Malek, C. O’Brien, C. Silkworth, D. Strom, N. Varelas

The University of Iowa, Iowa City, USA
U. Akgun, E.A. Albayrak, B. Bilki55, W. Clarida, F. Duru, S. Griffiths, J.-P. Merlo, H. Mermerkaya56, A. Mestvirishvili, A. Moeller, J. Nachtman, C.R. Newsom, E. Norbeck, Y. Onel, F. Ozok, S. Sen, E. Tiras, J. Wetzel, T. Yetkin, K. Yi

Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA
B.A. Barnett, B. Blumenfeld, S. Bolognesi, D. Fehling, G. Giurgiu, A.V. Gritsan, Z.J. Guo, G. Hu, P. Maksimovic, S. Rappoccio, M. Swartz, A. Whitbeck

The University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA
P. Baringer, A. Bean, G. Benelli, O. Grachov, R.P. Kenny Iii, M. Murray, D. Noonan, S. Sanders, R. Stringer, G. Tinti, J.S. Wood, V. Zhukova

Kansas State University, Manhattan, USA
A.F. Barfuss, T. Bolton, I. Chakaberia, A. Ivanov, S. Khalil, M. Makouski, Y. Maravin, S. Shrestha, I. Svintradze

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, USA
J. Gronberg, D. Lange, D. Wright
University of Maryland, College Park, USA
A. Baden, M. Boutemeur, B. Calvert, S.C. Eno, J.A. Gomez, N.J. Hadley, R.G. Kellogg, M. Kirn, T. Kolberg, Y. Lu, M. Marionneau, A.C. Mignerey, K. Pedro, A. Peterman, A. Skuja, J. Temple, M.B. Tonjes, S.C. Tonwar, E. Twedt

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA
G. Bauer, J. Bendavid, W. Busza, E. Butz, I.A. Cali, M. Chan, V. Dutta, G. Gomez Ceballos, M. Goncharov, K.A. Hahn, Y. Kim, M. Klute, W. Li, P.D. Luckey, T. Ma, S. Nahn, C. Paus, D. Ralph, C. Roland, G. Roland, M. Rudolph, G.S.F. Stephans, F. Stöckli, K. Sumorok, K. Sung, D. Velicanu, E.A. Wenger, R. Wolf, B. Wyslouch, S. Xie, M. Yang, Y. Yilmaz, A.S. Yoon, M. Zanetti

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA
S.I. Cooper, P. Cushman, B. Dahmes, A. De Benedetti, G. Franzoni, A. Gude, J. Haupt, S.C. Kao, K. Klapproetke, Y. Kubota, J. Mans, N. Pastika, R. Rusack, M. Sasseville, A. Singovsky, N. Tambe, J. Turkewitz

University of Mississippi, University, USA
L.M. Cremaldi, R. Kroeger, L. Perera, R. Rahmat, D.A. Sanders

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, USA
E. Avdeeva, K. Bloom, S. Bose, J. Butt, D.R. Claes, A. Dominguez, M. Eads, P. Jindal, J. Keller, I. Kravchenko, J. Lazo-Flores, H. Malbouisson, S. Malik, G.R. Snow

State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, USA
U. Baur, A. Godshalk, I. Iashvili, S. Jain, A. Kharchilava, A. Kumar, S.P. Shipkowski, K. Smith

Northern University, Boston, USA
G. Alverson, E. Barberis, D. Baumgartel, M. Chasco, J. Haley, D. Nash, D. Trocino, D. Wood, J. Zhang

Northwestern University, Evanston, USA
A. Anastassov, A. Kubik, N. Mucia, N. Odell, R.A. Ofierzynski, B. Pollack, A. Pozdnyakov, M. Schmitt, S. Stoynev, M. Velasco, S. Won

University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, USA
L. Antonelli, D. Berry, A. Brinkerhoff, M. Hildreth, C. Jessop, D.J. Karmgard, J. Kolb, K. Lannon, W. Luo, S. Lynch, N. Marinelli, D.M. Morse, T. Pearson, R. Ruchti, J. Slaunwhite, N. Valls, M. Wayne, M. Wolf

The Ohio State University, Columbus, USA
B. Bylsma, L.S. Durkin, A. Hart, C. Hill, R. Hughes, K. Kotov, T.Y. Ling, D. Puigh, M. Rodenburg, C. Vuosalo, G. Williams, B.L. Winer

Princeton University, Princeton, USA
N. Adam, E. Berry, P. Elmer, D. Gerbaudo, V. Halyo, P. Hebda, J. Hegeman, A. Hunt, D. Lopes Pegna, P. Lujan, D. Marlow, T. Medvedeva, M. Mooney, J. Olsen, P. Piroué, X. Quan, A. Raval, H. Saka, D. Stickland, C. Tully, J.S. Werner, A. Zuranski

University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez, USA
J.G. Acosta, E. Brownson, X.T. Huang, A. Lopez, H. Mendez, S. Oliveros, J.E. Ramirez Vargas, A. Zatserklyaniy

Purdue University, West Lafayette, USA
E. Alagoz, V.E. Barnes, D. Benedetti, G. Bolla, D. Bortoletto, M. De Mattia, A. Everett, Z. Hu, M. Jones, O. Koybasi, M. Kress, A.T. Laasanen, N. Leonardo, V. Maroussov, P. Merkel,
D.H. Miller, N. Neumeister, I. Shipsey, D. Silvers, A. Svyatkovskiy, M. Vidal Marono, H.D. Yoo, J. Zablocki, Y. Zheng

Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, USA
S. Guragain, N. Parashar

Rice University, Houston, USA
A. Adair, C. Boulahouache, V. Cuplov, K.M. Ecklund, F.J.M. Geurts, B.P. Padley, R. Redjimi, J. Roberts, J. Zabel

University of Rochester, Rochester, USA
B. Betchart, A. Bodek, Y.S. Chung, R. Covarelli, P. de Barbaro, R. Demina, Y. Eshaq, A. Garcia-Bellido, P. Goldenzweig, Y. Gotra, J. Han, A. Harel, S. Korjenevski, D.C. Miner, D. Vishnevskiy, M. Zielinski

The Rockefeller University, New York, USA
A. Bhatti, R. Ciesielski, L. Demortier, K. Goulianos, G. Lungu, S. Malik, C. Mesropian

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, Piscataway, USA
S. Arora, A. Barker, J.P. Chou, C. Contreras-Campana, E. Contreras-Campana, D. Duggan, D. Ferencek, Y. Gershtein, R. Gray, E. Halkiadakis, D. Hidas, A. Lath, S. Panwalkar, M. Park, R. Patel, V. Rekovic, A. Richards, J. Robles, K. Rose, S. Salur, S. Schnetzer, C. Seitz, S. Somalwar, R. Stone, S. Thomas

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA
G. Cerizza, M. Hollingsworth, S. Spanier, Z.C. Yang, A. York

Texas A&M University, College Station, USA
R. Eusebi, W. Flanagan, J. Gilmore, T. Kamon57, V. Khotilovich, R. Montalvo, I. Osipenkov, Y. Pakhotin, A. Perloff, J. Roe, A. Safonov, T. Sakuma, S. Sengupta, I. Suarez, A. Tatarinov, D. Toback

Texas Tech University, Lubbock, USA
N. Akchurin, J. Damgov, P.R. Dudero, C. Jeong, K. Kovitanggoon, S.W. Lee, T. Libeiro, Y. Roh, I. Volobouev

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, USA
E. Appelt, D. Engh, C. Florez, S. Greene, A. Gurrola, W. Johns, C. Johnston, P. Kurt, C. Maguire, A. Melo, P. Sheldon, B. Snook, S. Tuo, J. Velkovska

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA
M.W. Arenton, M. Balazs, S. Bottle, B. Cox, B. Francis, J. Goodell, R. Hirosky, A. Ledovskoy, C. Lin, C. Neu, J. Wood, R. Yohay

Wayne State University, Detroit, USA
S. Gollapinni, R. Harr, P.E. Karchin, C. Kottachchi Kankanamge Don, P. Lamichhane, A. Sakharov

University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA
M. Anderson, M. Bachtis, D. Belknap, L. Borrello, D. Carlsmith, M. Cepeda, S. Dasu, L. Gray, K.S. Grogg, M. Grothe, R. Hall-Wilton, M. Herndon, A. Hervé, P. Klabbers, J. Klukas, A. Lanaro, C. Lazaridis, J. Leonard, R. Loveless, A. Mohapatra, I. Ojalvo, F. Palmonari, G.A. Pierro, I. Ross, A. Savin, W.H. Smith, J. Swanson

†: Deceased
1: Also at Vienna University of Technology, Vienna, Austria
2: Also at National Institute of Chemical Physics and Biophysics, Tallinn, Estonia
3: Also at Universidade Federal do ABC, Santo Andre, Brazil
4: Also at California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA
5: Also at CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research, Geneva, Switzerland
6: Also at Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, Ecole Polytechnique, IN2P3-CNRS, Palaiseau, France
7: Also at Suez Canal University, Suez, Egypt
8: Also at Zewail City of Science and Technology, Zewail, Egypt
9: Also at Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt
10: Also at Fayoum University, El-Fayoum, Egypt
11: Also at Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt
12: Now at British University, Cairo, Egypt
13: Also at Soltan Institute for Nuclear Studies, Warsaw, Poland
14: Also at Université de Haute-Alsace, Mulhouse, France
15: Now at Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Dubna, Russia
16: Also at Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia
17: Also at Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus, Germany
18: Also at Institute of Nuclear Research ATOMKI, Debrecen, Hungary
19: Also at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary
20: Also at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research - HECR, Mumbai, India
21: Also at University of Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, India
22: Also at Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran
23: Also at Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, Iran
24: Also at Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran
25: Also at Plasma Physics Research Center, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran
26: Also at Facoltà Ingegneria Università di Roma, Roma, Italy
27: Also at Università della Basilicata, Potenza, Italy
28: Also at Università degli Studi Guglielmo Marconi, Roma, Italy
29: Also at Università degli studi di Siena, Siena, Italy
30: Also at University of Bucharest, Faculty of Physics, București-Magurele, Romania
31: Also at Faculty of Physics of University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
32: Also at University of Florida, Gainesville, USA
33: Also at University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, USA
34: Also at Scuola Normale e Sezione dell’ INFN, Pisa, Italy
35: Also at INFN Sezione di Roma; Università di Roma ”La Sapienza”, Roma, Italy
36: Also at University of Athens, Athens, Greece
37: Also at Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom
38: Also at The University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA
39: Also at Paul Scherrer Institut, Villigen, Switzerland
40: Also at Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow, Russia
41: Also at Gaziosmanpasa University, Tokat, Turkey
42: Also at Adiyaman University, Adiyaman, Turkey
43: Also at The University of Iowa, Iowa City, USA
44: Also at Mersin University, Mersin, Turkey
45: Also at Ozyegin University, Istanbul, Turkey
46: Also at Kafkas University, Kars, Turkey
47: Also at Suleyman Demirel University, Isparta, Turkey
48: Also at Ege University, Izmir, Turkey
49: Also at School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Southampton, Southampton,
United Kingdom
50: Also at INFN Sezione di Perugia; Università di Perugia, Perugia, Italy
51: Also at University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
52: Also at Utah Valley University, Orem, USA
53: Also at Institute for Nuclear Research, Moscow, Russia
54: Also at University of Belgrade, Faculty of Physics and Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia
55: Also at Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne, USA
56: Also at Erzincan University, Erzincan, Turkey
57: Also at Kyungpook National University, Daegu, Korea