

Search for CP violation in $D_{(s)}^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ decays



The LHCb collaboration

E-mail: carolina.bolognani@cern.ch

ABSTRACT: A search for direct CP violation in the Cabibbo-suppressed decay $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ and in the doubly Cabibbo-suppressed decay $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ is reported. The analysis is performed with data collected by the LHCb experiment in proton-proton collisions at a centre-of-mass energy of 13 TeV corresponding to an integrated luminosity of 5.6 fb^{-1} . The search is conducted by comparing the $D_{(s)}^+$ and $D_{(s)}^-$ Dalitz-plot distributions through a model-independent binned technique, based on fits to the $K^- K^+ K^+$ invariant-mass distributions, with a total of 0.97 (1.27) million D_s^+ (D^+) signal candidates. The results are given as p -values for the hypothesis of CP conservation and are found to be 13.3% for the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ decay and 31.6% for the $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ decay. No evidence for CP violation is observed in these decays.

KEYWORDS: Charm Physics, CP Violation, Flavour Physics, Hadron-Hadron Scattering

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1 Introduction

Since its first observation almost six decades ago, charge-parity (CP) violation has been extensively studied, with clear manifestation in decays of K and B mesons. In the Standard Model (SM), CP violation (CPV) is realised through the complex phase of the Cabibbo-Kobayashi-Maskawa (CKM) matrix [1]. For the charm sector, given the CKM hierarchy [2], CPV effects are very small: direct CPV (i.e. in the decay) can occur only for Cabibbo-suppressed (CS) decays for which CP asymmetries are expected at $\mathcal{O}(10^{-3})$ or less [3–18]. For doubly Cabibbo-suppressed (DCS) decays, CPV is essentially forbidden, thus its observation would indicate a manifestation of physics beyond the SM (BSM) [3, 4, 19].

To date there is only one observation of CPV in the charm sector, through the difference of CP asymmetries in $D^0 \rightarrow K^-K^+$ and $D^0 \rightarrow \pi^-\pi^+$ decays [20], which is mainly a direct CPV observable [21, 22]. New evidence indicates the main source for this CPV effect to be from the $D^0 \rightarrow \pi^-\pi^+$ channel [23]. Although the measured CP asymmetry, at the 0.1% level, is consistent with some estimates within the SM [11–14] other estimates indicate that BSM contributions are required to explain this result [24–26]. It is thus important to extend the studies to different charm-hadron species decaying into a broad range of final states, including not only CS but also DCS decays [4].

Direct CPV occurs when a given final state is produced through amplitudes with different weak phases while the presence of different strong phases is also required [27, 28]. Three-body charm decays are particularly interesting in this context: final states are reached mainly through resonances, providing an important source of strong-phase differences that vary across the two-dimensional Dalitz plot [29, 30]. This feature can

enhance the sensitivity to CP asymmetries in localised regions of the phase space when compared to global charge asymmetries (i.e. integrated over the Dalitz plot) [31–34] — as observed in charmless B^+ decays [35]. Compared to B decays, however, the expected effects for charm are very small and there is no indication on how they would appear throughout the Dalitz plot. For this reason, recent studies usually make use of model-independent methods either in bins of the Dalitz plot [36–41] or via unbinned techniques [40–43] to search for signs of CP violation and establish a p -value for the hypothesis of CP conservation.

This paper describes a model-independent search for direct CPV in the Dalitz plots of the CS $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ and DCS $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ decays¹ with data collected by the LHCb experiment from 2016 to 2018 in proton-proton (pp) collisions at a centre-of-mass energy $\sqrt{s} = 13$ TeV corresponding to an integrated luminosity of 5.6 fb^{-1} . The applied search method is a variation of the original *Miranda* technique [36, 44], which has been used in several studies [38–41, 45]. The method involves dividing the Dalitz plot in two-dimensional bins and computing, for each bin, the significance of the difference in the numbers of $D_{(s)}^+$ candidates and $D_{(s)}^-$ candidates, where the latter is corrected for global charge asymmetry. A two-sample χ^2 test is then performed on the $D_{(s)}^+$ and $D_{(s)}^-$ samples. In the original *Miranda* approach, these numbers are obtained by counting the candidates within a defined $K^- K^+ K^+$ invariant-mass signal region, including background. In the approach used here, instead, the yields of $D_{(s)}^+$ and $D_{(s)}^-$ signal candidates are obtained in each Dalitz-plot bin by a fit to the $K^- K^+ K^+$ invariant-mass spectrum of candidates lying in that bin, thus background candidates are not counted. Given the number of degrees of freedom, the probability (p -value) of observing a χ^2 greater than the measured value is computed under the null hypothesis, which in this case is CP conservation. The method is insensitive to global sources of charge asymmetries, but relies on the absence of residual local nuisance asymmetries, for instance from production and detection. This assumption is validated using simulation, by studying the background in the $K^- K^+ K^+$ samples, and by analysing large samples of the Cabibbo-favoured modes $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+$ and $D^+ \rightarrow K^- \pi^+ \pi^+$ for which CPV is not allowed.

2 LHCb detector

The LHCb detector [46, 47] is a single-arm forward spectrometer covering the pseudorapidity range $2 < \eta < 5$, designed for the study of particles containing b or c quarks. The detector includes a high-precision tracking system consisting of a silicon-strip vertex detector surrounding the pp interaction region, a large-area silicon-strip detector located upstream of a dipole magnet with a bending power of about 4 Tm, and three stations of silicon-strip detectors and straw drift tubes placed downstream of the magnet. The magnetic field deflects oppositely charged particles in opposite directions which can lead to detection asymmetries. Periodically reversing the magnetic field polarity throughout data-taking cancels most of this effect. The tracking system provides a measurement of the momentum, p , of charged particles with a relative uncertainty that varies from 0.5% at low

¹The inclusion of charge-conjugate processes is implied throughout, unless otherwise stated.

momentum to 1.0% at 200 GeV.² The minimum distance of a track to a primary pp collision vertex (PV), the impact parameter (IP), is measured with a resolution of $(15 + 29/p_T)$ μm , where p_T is the component of the momentum transverse to the beam, in GeV. Different types of charged hadrons are distinguished using information from two ring-imaging Cherenkov detectors. Photons, electrons and hadrons are identified by a calorimeter system consisting of scintillating-pad and preshower detectors, and an electromagnetic and a hadronic calorimeter. Muons are identified by a system composed of alternating layers of iron and multiwire proportional chambers. The online event selection is performed by a trigger, which consists of a hardware stage followed by a two-level software stage. In between the two software stages, an alignment and calibration of the detector is performed in near real-time and their results are used in the trigger [48]. This offers the opportunity to perform physics analyses directly using candidates reconstructed in the trigger [49, 50] which the present analysis exploits. Only the reconstructed quantities of triggered candidates are stored, which reduces the event size by an order of magnitude. Trigger decisions at the hardware stage are associated with reconstructed particles, and the decisions with associations are available in the offline selection. Hence requirements are made on the trigger decision on whether it was due to the signal candidates, due to other particles in the pp collision, or a combination of both.

Simulation is used to model the shape of the signal $K^-K^+K^+$ mass distribution accounting for the effects of the detector acceptance, reconstruction and selection criteria. In the simulation, pp collisions are generated using PYTHIA [51, 52] with a specific LHCb configuration [53]. Decays of unstable particles are described by EVTGEN [54], in which final-state radiation is generated using PHOTOS [55]. The interaction of the generated particles with the detector, and its response, are implemented using the GEANT4 toolkit [56, 57] as described in ref. [58]. The underlying pp interaction is reused multiple times, with an independently generated signal decay for each [59].

3 Candidate selection and final data samples

The $D^+ \rightarrow K^-K^+K^+$ and $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^-K^+K^+$ decay candidates are selected online by a dedicated software trigger. Three charged particles identified as kaons are combined to form a good-quality decay vertex, detached from any PV. The PV with the smallest value of χ_{IP}^2 is associated to the decay candidate, where χ_{IP}^2 is defined as the difference in the vertex-fit χ^2 of the PV reconstructed with and without the particle under consideration, in this case the $D_{(s)}^+$ candidate. Further requirements are applied on the $D_{(s)}^+$ decay time; on the angle between the reconstructed $D_{(s)}^+$ momentum vector and the vector connecting the PV to the decay vertex; on the χ^2 of the $D_{(s)}^+$ decay vertex fit; and on the momentum, the transverse momentum and the χ_{IP}^2 of the $D_{(s)}^+$ candidate and its decay products. The invariant masses of the D^+ and D_s^+ candidates are required to be within the interval 1805–1935 MeV and 1905–2035 MeV, respectively.

²Natural units with $\hbar = c = 1$ are used throughout.

In the offline selection, further particle identification (PID) requirements are applied to the decay products to reduce the cross-feed from other charm-hadron decays. For the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ channel, the most significant contribution comes from the $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+$ decay, which is reduced by a stringent PID requirement on the two same-charge kaons. This also reduces contributions from $\Lambda_c^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ p$ and $\Lambda_c^+ \rightarrow K^- \pi^+ p$ decays. For the $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ channel, the only significant cross-feeds are the aforementioned Λ_c^+ decays, which are sufficiently reduced by the PID requirements that maximise the statistical significance for the signal.

A small fraction of $D_{(s)}^+$ candidates is rejected when two tracks or segments of tracks are duplicates of each other, resulting in reconstructed same-charge kaon candidates with very similar momenta. Fiducial requirements are applied in order to remove small regions of the phase space where large charge asymmetries are observed, typically caused by low-momentum tracks being swept out of the detector acceptance by the magnetic field.

The remaining background, mostly due to random combinations of tracks, is reduced by using a boosted decision tree (BDT) classifier [60, 61], as implemented in the TMVA toolkit [62, 63]. Only quantities related to the three-track combinations are used as inputs for the BDT classifier. In addition to quantities used in the online selection, such as flight direction, the quantities IP, χ_{IP}^2 , the distance between the PV and the $D_{(s)}^+$ decay vertex and its significance are also used. Approximately 3% of the data is used to train the algorithm and discarded for the rest of the analysis. The signal and the background samples are obtained from this fraction of the data via the *sPlot* technique [64] using the $K^- K^+ K^+$ invariant mass as discriminating variable. Separate BDT classifiers are trained for the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ and $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ samples. The requirements on the BDT outputs are chosen to maximise the statistical significance of the signal yields.

The $K^- K^+ K^+$ invariant-mass distributions for the final samples are shown in figure 1, with the results of maximum-likelihood fits overlaid. The signal shape is described by a Gaussian and two Crystal-Ball [65] functions (CB) with a common mean. Each CB has a width defined as a factor times the Gaussian width. The CB tails are on opposite sides. All the parameters describing the signal shape, apart from the Gaussian width and mean, are fixed to the values obtained from simulation, including the relative fraction of each component. The background is parameterised by a third-order Bernstein polynomial. The selection results in signal yields of 0.97 million $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ decays and 1.27 million $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ decays. Roughly 1% of the events contain multiple signal candidates. The purity of the samples in a region comprising 95% of the signal candidates is about 64% and 78% for D_s^+ and D^+ decays, respectively.

The Dalitz plots are defined in terms of the variables s_{high} and s_{low} , which represent the higher and lower values of the squared invariant masses formed by the two $K^- K^+$ combinations. The momenta used to compute these quantities are obtained from a kinematic fit [66] in which the invariant mass of the reconstructed candidates is constrained to the known $D_{(s)}^+$ mass [2]. These Dalitz plots can be seen in figure 2 for candidates within the $K^- K^+ K^+$ invariant-mass region comprising 95% of the signal candidates. For both decay modes the contribution of the $\phi(1020)K^+$ channel is visible. An amplitude analysis was performed recently for the $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ decay [67] where the $f_0(980)K^+$ and

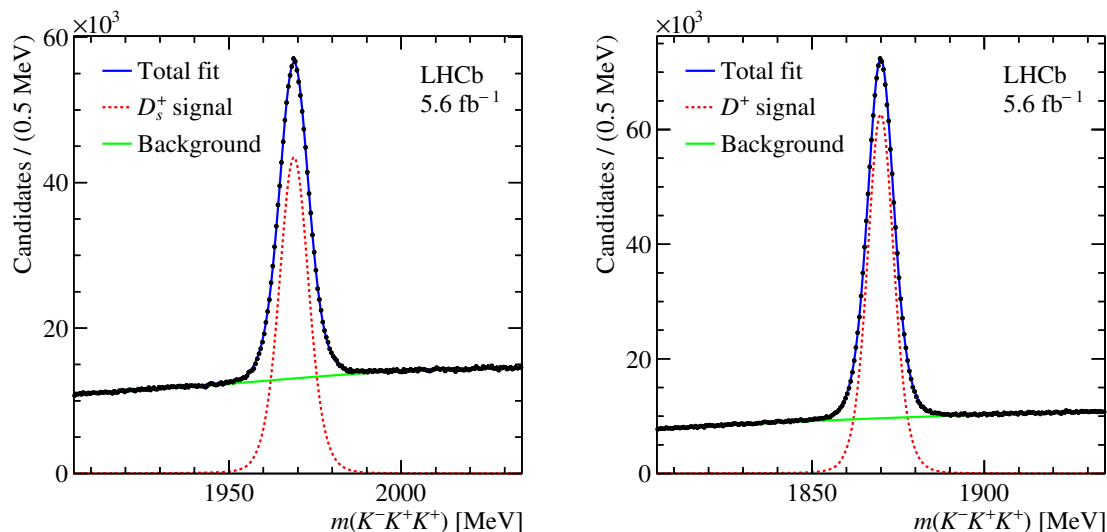


Figure 1. Invariant-mass distributions for (left) $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^-K^+K^+$ and (right) $D^+ \rightarrow K^-K^+K^+$ candidates. The data are shown as points with the fit overlaid.

$f_0(1370)K^+$ channels were also found to contribute. To date, no amplitude analysis exists for the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^-K^+K^+$ decay, but its Dalitz distribution seems to follow qualitatively the same pattern of that of the D^+ decay: a clear $\phi(1020)$ signature plus a rather smooth distribution elsewhere.

4 Method

The binned model-independent technique used in this analysis compares the Dalitz-plot distributions for particles and antiparticles, and it is a variation of the original Miranda technique [36, 44]. For each Dalitz-plot bin, the local CP observable \mathcal{S}_{CP} is defined as³

$$\mathcal{S}_{CP}^i = \frac{N^i(D_{(s)}^+) - \alpha N^i(D_{(s)}^-)}{\sqrt{\alpha(\delta_{N^i(D_{(s)}^+)}^2) + \delta_{N^i(D_{(s)}^-)}^2}}, \quad \text{with } \alpha = \frac{\sum_i N^i(D_{(s)}^+)}{\sum_i N^i(D_{(s)}^-)}, \quad (4.1)$$

where $N^i(D_{(s)}^+)$ and $N^i(D_{(s)}^-)$ represent the number of signal candidates in the i^{th} bin of the $D_{(s)}^+$ and $D_{(s)}^-$ Dalitz plots, respectively, and $\delta_{N^i(D_{(s)}^+)}$, $\delta_{N^i(D_{(s)}^-)}$ their corresponding statistical uncertainties. The factor α normalises the total (Dalitz-plot integrated) $D_{(s)}^-$ yield to that of $D_{(s)}^+$. The method is therefore only sensitive to local CP asymmetries, while global effects such as production and detection asymmetries, if uniform across the Dalitz plot, are corrected for. In the absence of CPV, the values of \mathcal{S}_{CP}^i follow a standard normal distribution. A two-sample χ^2 test is conducted, with $\chi^2 = \sum(\mathcal{S}_{CP}^i)^2$, and with the number of degrees of freedom (ndof) being the number of bins minus one (due to the constraint of the α normalisation). The resulting p -value from this test is defined as the

³This expression is the same as used in previous publications [39–41] and although it differs in the denominator from that in ref. [36], for α close to one the values of \mathcal{S}_{CP} are nearly identical.

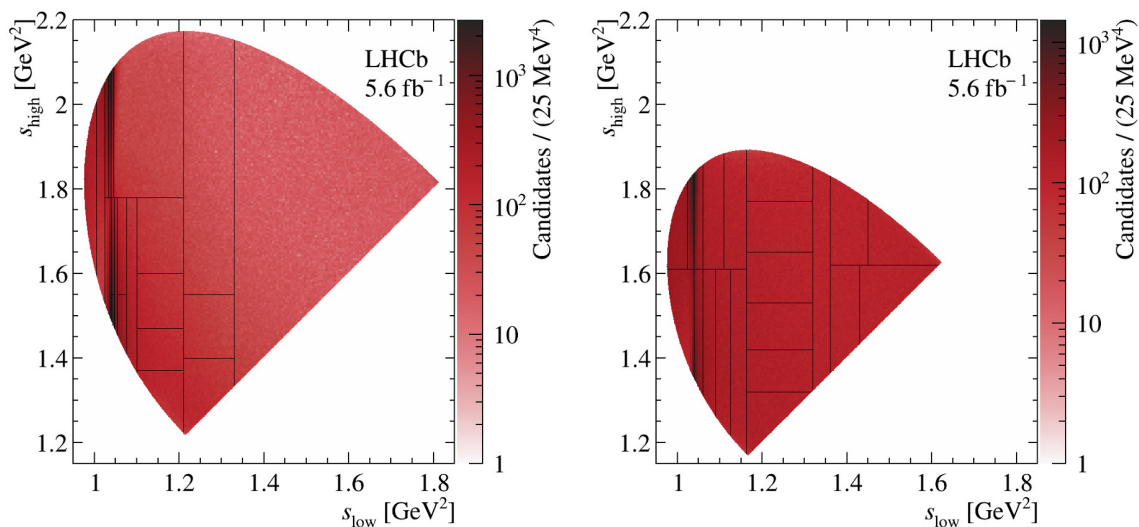


Figure 2. Dalitz plot distribution of (left) $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ and (right) $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ candidates, within a $K^- K^+ K^+$ mass region comprising 95% of the total amount of signal candidates. The binning scheme with 21 bins is overlaid in each case. The Dalitz plots are displayed within the same ranges for s_{low} and s_{high} for a better comparison.

probability of obtaining a χ^2 that is at least as high as the value observed, under the assumption of CP conservation (null hypothesis). The criterion used is that CP violation is observed for p -values less than 3×10^{-7} .

The original Miranda method relies on counting the number of particle and antiparticle candidates in each bin, including contributions from both signal and background, with corresponding uncertainties given by their square roots. In this paper, a novel approach is introduced, in which the test is performed by obtaining $N^i(D_{(s)}^\pm)$ and corresponding uncertainties through fits to the $K^\mp K^\pm K^\pm$ invariant-mass distribution of the candidates in each bin. By doing so, the effect of the background contribution to the calculation of \mathcal{S}_{CP} is removed. This is particularly relevant for large samples with a significant level of background: when a source of global charge asymmetry (such as that from production effects) affects the signal and the background differently, the α factor calculated using the original Miranda method, which includes contributions from both signal and background, may introduce a bias as shown below.

The binning scheme utilised in this analysis consists of 21 bins for each decay channel,⁴ chosen such that the number of signal candidates varies within roughly a factor of two among all bins. The division of the bins around $s_{\text{low}} \sim 1 \text{ GeV}^2$ is defined to enhance the sensitivity to CP asymmetries that may change sign when crossing the $\phi(1020)$ resonance mass or the node of its angular distribution, for instance due to S- and P-wave interference [68, 69]. The binning maps can be seen in figure 2. An alternative binning with 50

⁴Sensitivity studies with pseudoexperiments show that for this dataset size the optimal number of bins is about 20: fewer bins may result in loss of sensitivity by integrating potential local effects with opposite signs, while more bins lead to a loss of statistical power.

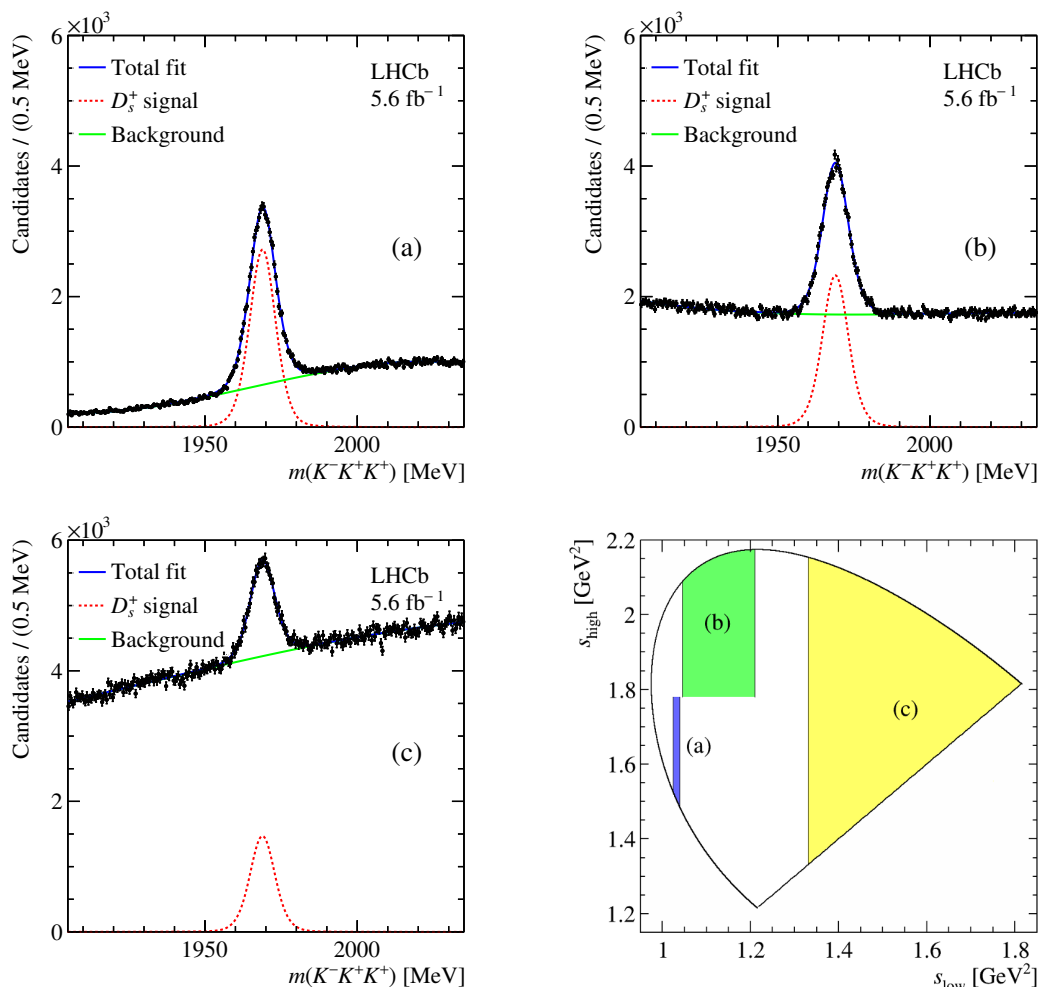


Figure 3. Mass distributions for the D_s^+ candidates in three representative Dalitz plot bins (a,b,c), defined in the lower right subfigure.

bins is used for cross-checks. For the $K^-K^+K^+$ invariant-mass fits in each Dalitz-plot bin, the signal and background models are those described in section 3, where the signal shape parameters are fixed to values obtained from simulation in each bin. Fits to the $K^-K^+K^+$ and $K^+K^-K^-$ mass spectra in each bin are performed independently. Figures 3 and 4 show examples of the mass fits for three representative bins.

Studies are performed to validate the fit-per-bin method. Pseudoexperiments are generated with $K^-K^+K^+$ mass distributions following those obtained in data for D_s^+ and D_s^- decays, for the 21 Dalitz-plot bins. The total number of events is varied according to a Poisson distribution based on the yields obtained from fitting the samples in each bin without charge separation. The number of candidates, for both signal and background, is scaled by the relative fraction of D_s^+ and D_s^- candidates in the full data sample, in order to introduce an integrated asymmetry. With this test, it is possible to compare the response of the original Miranda method with the fit-per-bin method. The distributions

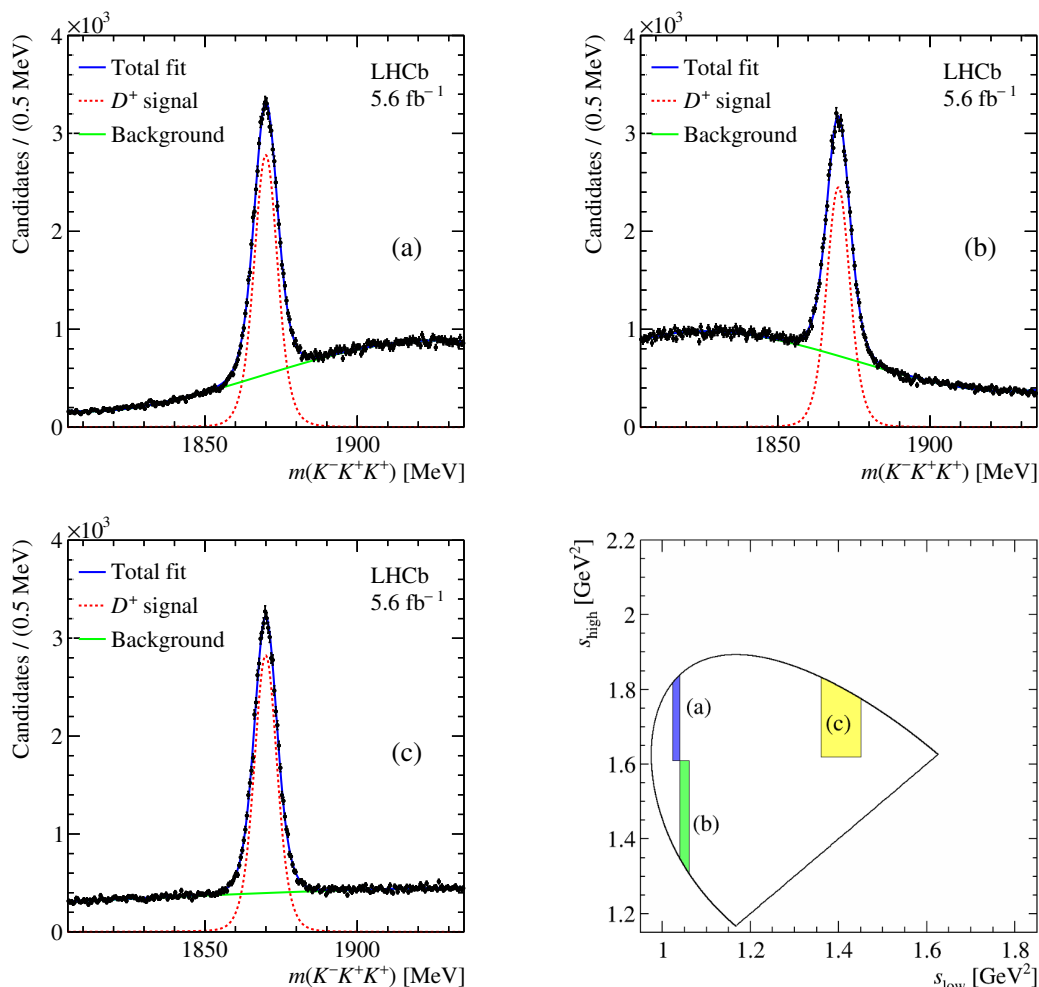


Figure 4. Mass distributions for the D^+ candidates in three representative Dalitz plot bins (a,b,c), defined in the lower right subfigure.

of the p -values for the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^-K^+K^+$ decay following the two methodologies can be seen in figure 5. For the current dataset size and level of background, the original Miranda method introduces a bias towards lower p -values whereas the fit-per-bin method leads to a uniform distribution as expected for the null-hypothesis. The fit-per-bin distribution of p -values is also seen to be uniform for $D^+ \rightarrow K^-K^+K^+$ pseudoexperiments.

A cross-check of the fit-per-bin method is also performed using data, where the final samples are divided randomly in two parts according to the overall proportions of $D_{(s)}^+$ and $D_{(s)}^-$ but with no charge separation. The method is applied for both channels using the baseline 21-bin scheme and also the alternative 50-bin scheme. The resulting p -values lie between 30% and 91%, compatible with the null-hypothesis.

The approximate sensitivity of the current data samples to CP -violating effects is studied using simulated pseudoexperiments with similar resonant structure [67] and number of signal and background candidates as in data. In these pseudoexperiments, phases or rela-

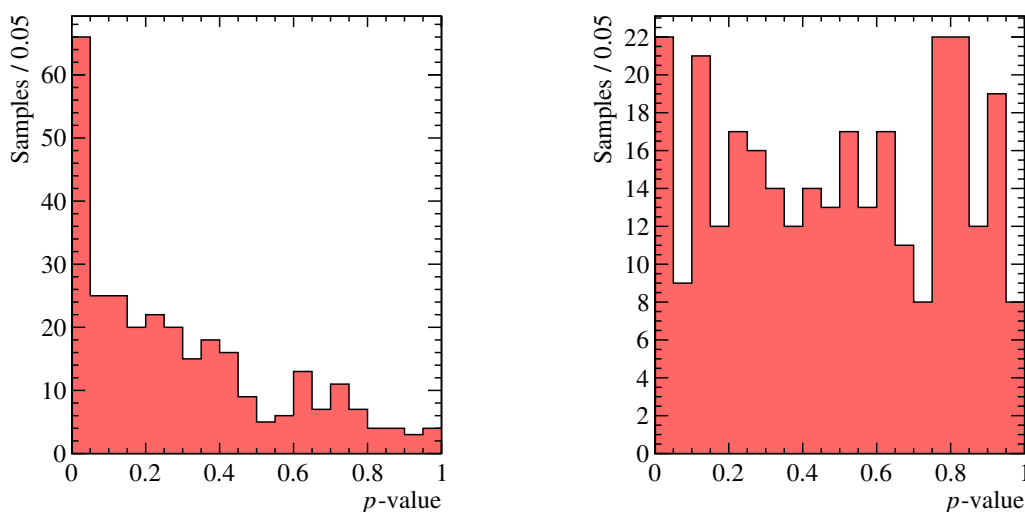


Figure 5. Distributions of the p -values for (left) the original Miranda method and for (right) the fit-per-bin method using 300 $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ pseudoexperiments.

tive magnitudes are set to different values in the key resonant states, such as $\phi(1020)K^+$ and $f_0(980)K^+$, between the $D_{(s)}^+$ and $D_{(s)}^-$ amplitudes. It is found that the p -value threshold of 3×10^{-7} can be achieved for a difference of 3° to 7° in phase or 3% to 7% in relative magnitude depending on the resonant state for which these effects are introduced in $D_{(s)}^+$ and $D_{(s)}^-$ decays. These input differences translate to CP asymmetries typically of the order of a few percent. For the CS mode $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ effects of this order are in principle still much higher than the SM expectation (see for instance ref. [18]).

5 Sensitivity to nuisance asymmetries

The sensitivity to possible nuisance localised charge asymmetries induced by detection efficiency or production rate is assessed through studies using fully simulated samples, the $K^- K^+ K^+$ background candidates in data, and Cabibbo-favoured control samples.

Using simulation samples, about 2.7 and 5.4 million $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ and $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ candidates, respectively, are retained after applying the same selection requirements as those in data. Since there is no background and the samples were generated with a flat distribution in phase space, the original Miranda method is used with a 21 same-size binning scheme. The p -values found are 37.7% and 76.4% for the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ and $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ decays, respectively, showing no induced asymmetries from the detector responses, according to simulation.

For the background study, there are in total about 3.4 and 2.5 million candidates in the D_s^+ and D^+ samples, respectively. The consistency with no charge asymmetry is tested using the fit-per-bin method described in section 4, where the signal yields and uncertainties are replaced with those of the background from the fits per bin. The resulting p -values are 46.0% and 75.7% for the D_s^+ and D^+ backgrounds, respectively, which indicate no effect of local charge symmetries.

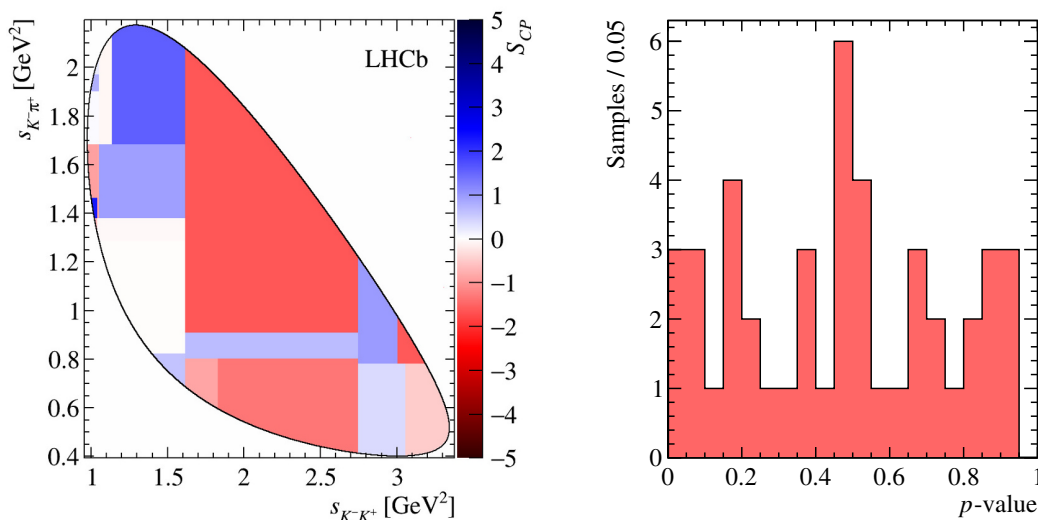


Figure 6. Left: values of \mathcal{S}_{CP} for one subset of $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+$ data with $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ selection criteria. Right: overall p -value distribution for the 45 $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+$ subsets using the scheme of 21 adaptive bins.

The Cabibbo-favoured $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+$ and $D^+ \rightarrow K^- \pi^+ \pi^+$ decays are used as control channels. These modes have much larger data samples than the analysed signal samples. To test whether local nuisance asymmetries are present in the data, the control samples are divided into multiple subsets of approximately five times the size of the signal channels. There are 45 samples of $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+$ decays and 85 of $D^+ \rightarrow K^- \pi^+ \pi^+$ decays with over 90% purity. Since the selection criteria are different for the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ and $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ samples, the control-channel samples are studied applying both sets of criteria (except the PID requirements for the pion candidates). To perform the search for local asymmetries, four binning schemes are tested: two uniform grids, of 5×5 and 8×8 , and two adaptive binnings such that all bins have the same population, with 21 and 50 bins in total. Due to the high purity of the samples, the original Miranda technique is used, i.e. simple counting to obtain the number of D_s^+ and D^+ candidates, respectively, in the $m(K^- K^+ \pi^+)$ region of 1950–1980 MeV and in the $m(K^- \pi^+ \pi^+)$ region of 1850–1890 MeV. The resulting p -value distributions for both control samples under the different selection criteria and binning schemes are found to be uniformly distributed, with no value incompatible with the null hypothesis. These results are thus consistent with the absence of local nuisance charge asymmetries. Figures 6 and 7 show examples of the \mathcal{S}_{CP} distribution for one control-mode subset and the overall p -value distribution for the adaptive 21-bin scheme for the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+$ and the $D^+ \rightarrow K^- \pi^+ \pi^+$ channels where the selection criteria of the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ channel are applied to both.

6 Results

Searches for CPV in the $D_{(s)}^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ decays are performed with the fit-per-bin strategy described in section 4. The total signal yields for each charge and the values of

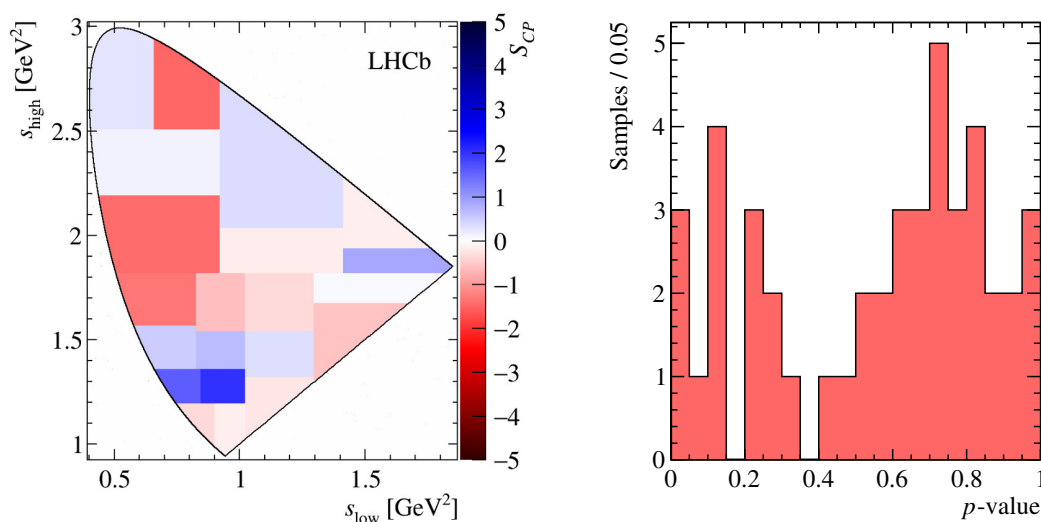


Figure 7. Left: values of \mathcal{S}_{CP} distribution for one subset of $D^+ \rightarrow K^- \pi^+ \pi^+$ data with $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ selection criteria. Right: overall p -value distribution for the 85 $D^+ \rightarrow K^- \pi^+ \pi^+$ subsets using the scheme of 21 adaptive bins.

	$D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$	$D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$
$\sum_i N^i(D_{(s)}^+)$	$(487.8 \pm 1.1) \times 10^3$	$(638.8 \pm 1.1) \times 10^3$
$\sum_i N^i(D_{(s)}^-)$	$(484.4 \pm 1.1) \times 10^3$	$(631.4 \pm 1.0) \times 10^3$
α	1.007 ± 0.003	1.012 ± 0.002

Table 1. Dalitz-integrated $D_{(s)}^+$ and $D_{(s)}^-$ signal yields and resulting values of α .

α for the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ and $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ channels are displayed in table 1. The distributions of \mathcal{S}_{CP} for both decays are shown in figure 8. The resulting p -values are 13.3% for the decay $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ and 31.6% for the decay $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$. The results are consistent with the hypothesis of no localised CP violation in either channel.

Potential systematic effects are probed through variations on the signal and background descriptions as well as on the binning scheme, and obtaining the resulting p -values. The signal shape is changed to two Gaussians plus two CB functions, the background is changed to a third-order Chebyshev polynomial, and combinations of these changes are also tried. Additionally, instead of independent fits, simultaneous fits where the background shape parameters are shared among $D_{(s)}^+$ and $D_{(s)}^-$ samples are also tested. Under these variations, the p -values for the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ decay range from 1.7% to 20.2%, while for $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ they range from 3.2% to 48.5%.

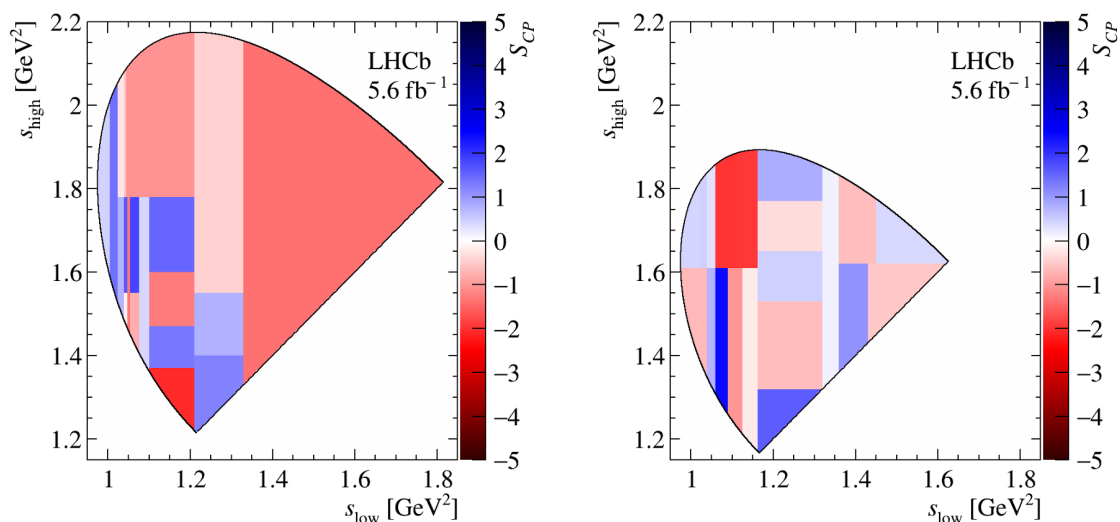


Figure 8. \mathcal{S}_{CP} values across the Dalitz plot for (left) $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ and (right) $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ signal candidates using 21 bins.

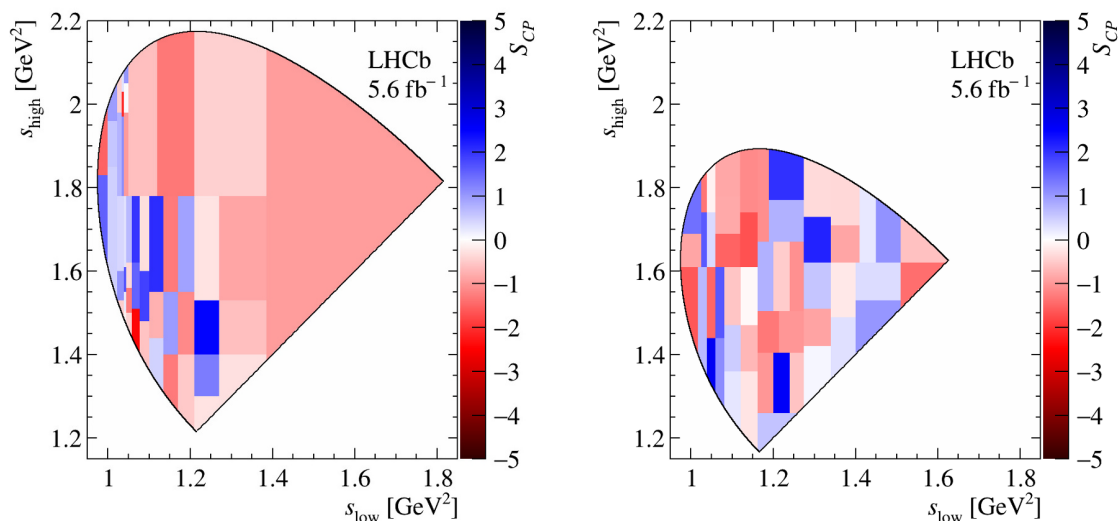


Figure 9. \mathcal{S}_{CP} values across the Dalitz plot for (left) $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ and (right) $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ signal candidates for the alternative binning scheme with 50 bins.

An alternative binning scheme is tested, with 50 bins, using the baseline models for signal and background. A finer binning may allow a higher sensitivity in localised regions, though it could lead to an overall loss of statistical sensitivity. The \mathcal{S}_{CP} distributions for this alternative binning are shown in figure 9. The resulting p -values are 10.1% and 8.2% for the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ and $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ channels, respectively.

Altogether the results consistently indicate no evidence for CP violation in the current samples for $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ and $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ decays.

7 Conclusions

This paper presents a search for CP violation in the Cabibbo-suppressed decay $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ and in the doubly Cabibbo-suppressed decay $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ using pp collision data at $\sqrt{s} = 13 \text{ TeV}$ and corresponding to an integrated luminosity of 5.6 fb^{-1} . The study is performed with samples containing about 0.97 (1.27) million $D_s^+(D^+) \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ decays. A novel technique is used: the fit-per-bin method, which is a variation of the original Miranda technique, where the value of \mathcal{S}_{CP} is calculated in each Dalitz plot bin using the $D_{(s)}^+$ and $D_{(s)}^-$ signal yields estimated from $K^- K^+ K^+$ mass-invariant fits. The fit-per-bin method is found to be robust for cases with very large signal samples and significant background.

The results are given as p -values with respect to the null-hypothesis of CP conservation and are found to be 13.3% for the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ channel and 31.6% for the $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ channel. No evidence for CP violation is found. Cross-checks by varying the invariant-mass fit models and binning schemes give consistent results.

This is the first search for CP violation in the Cabibbo-suppressed channel $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$ and in the doubly Cabibbo-suppressed channel $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ K^+$. The work presented here contributes to a wider effort of comprehensive studies of CP violation in charm decays.

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The LHCb collaboration

R. Aaij [ID](#)³², A.S.W. Abdelmotteleb [ID](#)⁵⁰, C. Abellan Beteta⁴⁴, F. Abudinén [ID](#)⁵⁰, T. Ackernley [ID](#)⁵⁴, B. Adeva [ID](#)⁴⁰, M. Adinolfi [ID](#)⁴⁸, P. Adlarson [ID](#)⁷⁷, H. Afsharnia⁹, C. Agapopoulou [ID](#)¹³, C.A. Aidala [ID](#)⁷⁸, Z. Ajaltouni⁹, S. Akar [ID](#)⁵⁹, K. Akiba [ID](#)³², P. Albicocco [ID](#)²³, J. Albrecht [ID](#)¹⁵, F. Alessio [ID](#)⁴², M. Alexander [ID](#)⁵³, A. Alfonso Albero [ID](#)³⁹, Z. Aliouche [ID](#)⁵⁶, P. Alvarez Cartelle [ID](#)⁴⁹, R. Amalric [ID](#)¹³, S. Amato [ID](#)², J.L. Amey [ID](#)⁴⁸, Y. Amhis [ID](#)^{11,42}, L. An [ID](#)⁴², L. Anderlini [ID](#)²², M. Andersson [ID](#)⁴⁴, A. Andreianov [ID](#)³⁸, M. Andreotti [ID](#)²¹, D. Andreou [ID](#)⁶², D. Ao [ID](#)⁶, F. Archilli [ID](#)^{31,s}, A. Artamonov [ID](#)³⁸, M. Artuso [ID](#)⁶², E. Aslanides [ID](#)¹⁰, M. Atzeni [ID](#)⁴⁴, B. Audurier [ID](#)¹², I.B. Bachiller Perea [ID](#)⁸, S. Bachmann [ID](#)¹⁷, M. Bachmayer [ID](#)⁴³, J.J. Back [ID](#)⁵⁰, A. Bailly-reyre¹³, P. Baladron Rodriguez [ID](#)⁴⁰, V. Balagura [ID](#)¹², W. Baldini [ID](#)^{21,42}, J. Baptista de Souza Leite [ID](#)¹, M. Barbetti [ID](#)^{22,j}, R.J. Barlow [ID](#)⁵⁶, S. Barsuk [ID](#)¹¹, W. Barter [ID](#)⁵², M. Bartolini [ID](#)⁴⁹, F. Baryshnikov [ID](#)³⁸, J.M. Basels [ID](#)¹⁴, G. Bassi [ID](#)^{29,p}, B. Batsukh [ID](#)⁴, A. Battig [ID](#)¹⁵, A. Bay [ID](#)⁴³, A. Beck [ID](#)⁵⁰, M. Becker [ID](#)¹⁵, F. Bedeschi [ID](#)²⁹, I.B. Bediaga [ID](#)¹, A. Beiter⁶², S. Belin [ID](#)⁴⁰, V. Bellee [ID](#)⁴⁴, K. Belous [ID](#)³⁸, I. Belov [ID](#)³⁸, I. Belyaev [ID](#)³⁸, G. Benane [ID](#)¹⁰, G. Bencivenni [ID](#)²³, E. Ben-Haim [ID](#)¹³, A. Berezhnoy [ID](#)³⁸, R. Bernet [ID](#)⁴⁴, S. Bernet Andres [ID](#)⁷⁶, D. Berninghoff¹⁷, H.C. Bernstein⁶², C. Bertella [ID](#)⁵⁶, A. Bertolin [ID](#)²⁸, C. Betancourt [ID](#)⁴⁴, F. Betti [ID](#)⁴², Ia. Bezshyiko [ID](#)⁴⁴, J. Bhom [ID](#)³⁵, L. Bian [ID](#)⁶⁸, M.S. Bieker [ID](#)¹⁵, N.V. Biesuz [ID](#)²¹, P. Billoir [ID](#)¹³, A. Biolchini [ID](#)³², M. Birch [ID](#)⁵⁵, F.C.R. Bishop [ID](#)⁴⁹, A. Bitadze [ID](#)⁵⁶, A. Bizzeti [ID](#), M.P. Blago [ID](#)⁴⁹, T. Blake [ID](#)⁵⁰, F. Blanc [ID](#)⁴³, J.E. Blank [ID](#)¹⁵, S. Blusk [ID](#)⁶², D. Bobulska [ID](#)⁵³, J.A. Boelhaave [ID](#)¹⁵, O. Boente Garcia [ID](#)¹², T. Boettcher [ID](#)⁵⁹, A. Boldyrev [ID](#)³⁸, C.S. Bolognani [ID](#)⁷⁴, R. Bolzonella [ID](#)^{21,i}, N. Bondar [ID](#)^{38,42}, F. Borgato [ID](#)²⁸, S. Borghi [ID](#)⁵⁶, M. Borsato [ID](#)¹⁷, J.T. Borsuk [ID](#)³⁵, S.A. Bouchiba [ID](#)⁴³, T.J.V. Bowcock [ID](#)⁵⁴, A. Boyer [ID](#)⁴², C. Bozzi [ID](#)²¹, M.J. Bradley⁵⁵, S. Braun [ID](#)⁶⁰, A. Brea Rodriguez [ID](#)⁴⁰, J. Brodzicka [ID](#)³⁵, A. Brossa Gonzalo [ID](#)⁴⁰, J. Brown [ID](#)⁵⁴, D. Brundu [ID](#)²⁷, A. Buonauro [ID](#)⁴⁴, L. Buonincontri [ID](#)²⁸, A.T. Burke [ID](#)⁵⁶, C. Burr [ID](#)⁴², A. Bursche⁶⁶, A. Butkevich [ID](#)³⁸, J.S. Butter [ID](#)³², J. Buytaert [ID](#)⁴², W. Byczynski [ID](#)⁴², S. Cadeddu [ID](#)²⁷, H. Cai⁶⁸, R. Calabrese [ID](#)^{21,i}, L. Calefice [ID](#)¹⁵, S. Cali [ID](#)²³, M. Calvi [ID](#)^{26,m}, M. Calvo Gomez [ID](#)⁷⁶, P. Campana [ID](#)²³, D.H. Campora Perez [ID](#)⁷⁴, A.F. Campoverde Quezada [ID](#)⁶, S. Capelli [ID](#)^{26,m}, L. Capriotti [ID](#)²⁰, A. Carbone [ID](#)^{20,g}, R. Cardinale [ID](#)^{24,k}, A. Cardini [ID](#)²⁷, P. Carniti [ID](#)^{26,m}, L. Carus¹⁴, A. Casais Vidal [ID](#)⁴⁰, R. Caspary [ID](#)¹⁷, G. Casse [ID](#)⁵⁴, M. Cattaneo [ID](#)⁴², G. Cavallero [ID](#)^{55,42}, V. Cavallini [ID](#)^{21,i}, S. Celani [ID](#)⁴³, J. Cerasoli [ID](#)¹⁰, D. Cervenkov [ID](#)⁵⁷, A.J. Chadwick [ID](#)⁵⁴, I. Chahrouh [ID](#)⁷⁸, M.G. Chapman⁴⁸, M. Charles [ID](#)¹³, Ph. Charpentier [ID](#)⁴², C.A. Chavez Barajas [ID](#)⁵⁴, M. Chefdeville [ID](#)⁸, C. Chen [ID](#)¹⁰, S. Chen [ID](#)⁴, A. Chernov [ID](#)³⁵, S. Chernyshenko [ID](#)⁴⁶, V. Chobanova [ID](#)⁴⁰, S. Cholak [ID](#)⁴³, M. Chrzaszcz [ID](#)³⁵, A. Chubykin [ID](#)³⁸, V. Chulikov [ID](#)³⁸, P. Ciambrone [ID](#)²³, M.F. Cicala [ID](#)⁵⁰, X. Cid Vidal [ID](#)⁴⁰, G. Ciezarek [ID](#)⁴², P. Cifra [ID](#)⁴², G. Ciullo [ID](#)^{i,21}, P.E.L. Clarke [ID](#)⁵², M. Clemencic [ID](#)⁴², H.V. Cliff [ID](#)⁴⁹, J. Closier [ID](#)⁴², J.L. Cobbedick [ID](#)⁵⁶, V. Coco [ID](#)⁴², J. Cogan [ID](#)¹⁰, E. Cogneras [ID](#)⁹, L. Cojocariu [ID](#)³⁷, P. Collins [ID](#)⁴², T. Colombo [ID](#)⁴², L. Congedo [ID](#)¹⁹, A. Contu [ID](#)²⁷, N. Cooke [ID](#)⁴⁷, I. Corredoira [ID](#)⁴⁰, G. Corti [ID](#)⁴², B. Couturier [ID](#)⁴², D.C. Craik [ID](#)⁴⁴, M. Cruz Torres [ID](#)^{1,e}, R. Currie [ID](#)⁵², C.L. Da Silva [ID](#)⁶¹, S. Dadabaev [ID](#)³⁸, L. Dai [ID](#)⁶⁵, X. Dai [ID](#)⁵, E. Dall’Occo [ID](#)¹⁵, J. Dalseno [ID](#)⁴⁰, C. D’Ambrosio [ID](#)⁴², J. Daniel [ID](#)⁹, A. Danilina [ID](#)³⁸, P. d’Argent [ID](#)¹⁹, J.E. Davies [ID](#)⁵⁶, A. Davis [ID](#)⁵⁶, O. De Aguiar Francisco [ID](#)⁵⁶, J. de Boer [ID](#)⁴², K. De Bruyn [ID](#)⁷³, S. De Capua [ID](#)⁵⁶, M. De Cian [ID](#)⁴³,

U. De Freitas Carneiro Da Graca [ID](#)¹, E. De Lucia [ID](#)²³, J.M. De Miranda [ID](#)¹, L. De Paula [ID](#)², M. De Serio [ID](#)^{19,f}, D. De Simone [ID](#)⁴⁴, P. De Simone [ID](#)²³, F. De Vellis [ID](#)¹⁵, J.A. de Vries [ID](#)⁷⁴, C.T. Dean [ID](#)⁶¹, F. Debernardis [ID](#)^{19,f}, D. Decamp [ID](#)⁸, V. Dedu [ID](#)¹⁰, L. Del Buono [ID](#)¹³, B. Delaney [ID](#)⁵⁸, H.-P. Dembinski [ID](#)¹⁵, V. Denysenko [ID](#)⁴⁴, O. Deschamps [ID](#)⁹, F. Dettori [ID](#)^{27,h}, B. Dey [ID](#)⁷¹, P. Di Nezza [ID](#)²³, I. Diachkov [ID](#)³⁸, S. Didenko [ID](#)³⁸, L. Dieste Maronas⁴⁰, S. Ding [ID](#)⁶², V. Dobishuk [ID](#)⁴⁶, A. Dolmatov³⁸, C. Dong [ID](#)³, A.M. Donohoe [ID](#)¹⁸, F. Dordei [ID](#)²⁷, A.C. dos Reis [ID](#)¹, L. Douglas⁵³, A.G. Downes [ID](#)⁸, P. Duda [ID](#)⁷⁵, M.W. Dudek [ID](#)³⁵, L. Dufour [ID](#)⁴², V. Duk [ID](#)⁷², P. Durante [ID](#)⁴², M.M. Duras [ID](#)⁷⁵, J.M. Durham [ID](#)⁶¹, D. Dutta [ID](#)⁵⁶, A. Dziurda [ID](#)³⁵, A. Dzyuba [ID](#)³⁸, S. Easo [ID](#)⁵¹, U. Egede [ID](#)⁶³, V. Egorychev [ID](#)³⁸, C. Eirea Orro⁴⁰, S. Eisenhardt [ID](#)⁵², E. Ejopu [ID](#)⁵⁶, S. Ek-In [ID](#)⁴³, L. Eklund [ID](#)⁷⁷, M.E. Elashri [ID](#)⁵⁹, J. Ellbracht [ID](#)¹⁵, S. Ely [ID](#)⁵⁵, A. Ene [ID](#)³⁷, E. Eppele [ID](#)⁵⁹, S. Escher [ID](#)¹⁴, J. Eschle [ID](#)⁴⁴, S. Esen [ID](#)⁴⁴, T. Evans [ID](#)⁵⁶, F. Fabiano [ID](#)^{27,h}, L.N. Falcao [ID](#)¹, Y. Fan [ID](#)⁶, B. Fang [ID](#)^{11,68}, L. Fantini [ID](#)^{72,o}, M. Faria [ID](#)⁴³, S. Farry [ID](#)⁵⁴, D. Fazzini [ID](#)^{26,m}, L.F. Felkowski [ID](#)⁷⁵, M. Feo [ID](#)⁴², M. Fernandez Gomez [ID](#)⁴⁰, A.D. Fernez [ID](#)⁶⁰, F. Ferrari [ID](#)²⁰, L. Ferreira Lopes [ID](#)⁴³, F. Ferreira Rodrigues [ID](#)², S. Ferreres Sole [ID](#)³², M. Ferrillo [ID](#)⁴⁴, M. Ferro-Luzzi [ID](#)⁴², S. Filippov [ID](#)³⁸, R.A. Fini [ID](#)¹⁹, M. Fiorini [ID](#)^{21,i}, M. Firlej [ID](#)³⁴, K.M. Fischer [ID](#)⁵⁷, D.S. Fitzgerald [ID](#)⁷⁸, C. Fitzpatrick [ID](#)⁵⁶, T. Fiutowski [ID](#)³⁴, F. Fleuret [ID](#)¹², M. Fontana [ID](#)¹³, F. Fontanelli [ID](#)^{24,k}, R. Forty [ID](#)⁴², D. Foulds-Holt [ID](#)⁴⁹, V. Franco Lima [ID](#)⁵⁴, M. Franco Sevilla [ID](#)⁶⁰, M. Frank [ID](#)⁴², E. Franzoso [ID](#)^{21,i}, G. Frau [ID](#)¹⁷, C. Frei [ID](#)⁴², D.A. Friday [ID](#)⁵⁶, L. Frontini [ID](#)^{25,l}, J. Fu [ID](#)⁶, Q. Fuehring [ID](#)¹⁵, T. Fulghesu [ID](#)¹³, E. Gabriel [ID](#)³², G. Galati [ID](#)^{19,f}, M.D. Galati [ID](#)³², A. Gallas Torreira [ID](#)⁴⁰, D. Galli [ID](#)^{20,g}, S. Gambetta [ID](#)^{52,42}, M. Gandelman [ID](#)², P. Gandini [ID](#)²⁵, H.G. Gao [ID](#)⁶, Y. Gao [ID](#)⁷, Y. Gao [ID](#)⁵, M. Garau [ID](#)^{27,h}, L.M. Garcia Martin [ID](#)⁵⁰, P. Garcia Moreno [ID](#)³⁹, J. García Pardiñas [ID](#)⁴², B. Garcia Plana⁴⁰, F.A. Garcia Rosales [ID](#)¹², L. Garrido [ID](#)³⁹, C. Gaspar [ID](#)⁴², R.E. Geertsema [ID](#)³², D. Gerick¹⁷, L.L. Gerken [ID](#)¹⁵, E. Gersabeck [ID](#)⁵⁶, M. Gersabeck [ID](#)⁵⁶, T. Gershon [ID](#)⁵⁰, L. Giambastiani [ID](#)²⁸, V. Gibson [ID](#)⁴⁹, H.K. Gienza [ID](#)³⁶, A.L. Gilman [ID](#)⁵⁷, M. Giovannetti [ID](#)^{23,s}, A. Gioventù [ID](#)⁴⁰, P. Gironella Gironell [ID](#)³⁹, C. Giugliano [ID](#)^{21,i}, M.A. Giza [ID](#)³⁵, K. Gizdov [ID](#)⁵², E.L. Gkougkousis [ID](#)⁴², V.V. Gligorov [ID](#)^{13,42}, C. Göbel [ID](#)⁶⁴, E. Golobardes [ID](#)⁷⁶, D. Golubkov [ID](#)³⁸, A. Golutvin [ID](#)^{55,38}, A. Gomes [ID](#)^{1,a}, S. Gomez Fernandez [ID](#)³⁹, F. Goncalves Abrantes [ID](#)⁵⁷, M. Goncerz [ID](#)³⁵, G. Gong [ID](#)³, I.V. Gorelov [ID](#)³⁸, C. Gotti [ID](#)²⁶, J.P. Grabowski [ID](#)⁷⁰, T. Grammatico [ID](#)¹³, L.A. Granado Cardoso [ID](#)⁴², E. Graugés [ID](#)³⁹, E. Graverini [ID](#)⁴³, G. Graziani [ID](#), A.T. Grecu [ID](#)³⁷, L.M. Greeven [ID](#)³², N.A. Grieser [ID](#)⁵⁹, L. Grillo [ID](#)⁵³, S. Gromov [ID](#)³⁸, B.R. Gruber Cazon [ID](#)⁵⁷, C. Gu [ID](#)³, M. Guarise [ID](#)^{21,i}, M. Guittiere [ID](#)¹¹, P.A. Günther [ID](#)¹⁷, E. Gushchin [ID](#)³⁸, A. Guth¹⁴, Y. Guz [ID](#)^{5,38}, T. Gys [ID](#)⁴², T. Hadavizadeh [ID](#)⁶³, C. Hadjivasiliou [ID](#)⁶⁰, G. Haefeli [ID](#)⁴³, C. Haen [ID](#)⁴², J. Haimberger [ID](#)⁴², S.C. Haines [ID](#)⁴⁹, T. Halewood-leagas [ID](#)⁵⁴, M.M. Halvorsen [ID](#)⁴², P.M. Hamilton [ID](#)⁶⁰, J. Hammerich [ID](#)⁵⁴, Q. Han [ID](#)⁷, X. Han [ID](#)¹⁷, S. Hansmann-Menzemer [ID](#)¹⁷, L. Hao [ID](#)⁶, N. Harnew [ID](#)⁵⁷, T. Harrison [ID](#)⁵⁴, C. Hasse [ID](#)⁴², M. Hatch [ID](#)⁴², J. He [ID](#)^{6,c}, K. Heijhoff [ID](#)³², F.H. Hemmer [ID](#)⁴², C. Henderson [ID](#)⁵⁹, R.D.L. Henderson [ID](#)^{63,50}, A.M. Hennequin [ID](#)⁵⁸, K. Hennessy [ID](#)⁵⁴, L. Henry [ID](#)⁴², J. Herd [ID](#)⁵⁵, J. Heuel [ID](#)¹⁴, A. Hicheur [ID](#)², D. Hill [ID](#)⁴³, M. Hilton [ID](#)⁵⁶, S.E. Hollitt [ID](#)¹⁵, J. Horswill [ID](#)⁵⁶, R. Hou [ID](#)⁷, Y. Hou [ID](#)⁸, J. Hu¹⁷, J. Hu [ID](#)⁶⁶, W. Hu [ID](#)⁵, X. Hu [ID](#)³, W. Huang [ID](#)⁶, X. Huang⁶⁸, W. Hulsbergen [ID](#)³², R.J. Hunter [ID](#)⁵⁰, M. Hushchyn [ID](#)³⁸, D. Hutchcroft [ID](#)⁵⁴, P. Ibis [ID](#)¹⁵, M. Idzik [ID](#)³⁴, D. Ilin [ID](#)³⁸, P. Ilten [ID](#)⁵⁹, A. Inglessi [ID](#)³⁸, A. Iniukhin [ID](#)³⁸, A. Ishteev [ID](#)³⁸, K. Ivshin [ID](#)³⁸, R. Jacobsson [ID](#)⁴², H. Jage [ID](#)¹⁴,

S.J. Jaimes Elles [ID](#)⁴¹, S. Jakobsen [ID](#)⁴², E. Jans [ID](#)³², B.K. Jashal [ID](#)⁴¹, A. Jawahery [ID](#)⁶⁰, V. Jevtic [ID](#)¹⁵, E. Jiang [ID](#)⁶⁰, X. Jiang [ID](#)^{4,6}, Y. Jiang [ID](#)⁶, M. John [ID](#)⁵⁷, D. Johnson [ID](#)⁵⁸, C.R. Jones [ID](#)⁴⁹, T.P. Jones [ID](#)⁵⁰, S.J. Joshi [ID](#)³⁶, B. Jost [ID](#)⁴², N. Jurik [ID](#)⁴², I. Juszcak [ID](#)³⁵, S. Kandybei [ID](#)⁴⁵, Y. Kang [ID](#)³, M. Karacson [ID](#)⁴², D. Karpenkov [ID](#)³⁸, M. Karpov [ID](#)³⁸, J.W. Kautz [ID](#)⁵⁹, F. Keizer [ID](#)⁴², D.M. Keller [ID](#)⁶², M. Kenzie [ID](#)⁵⁰, T. Ketel [ID](#)³², B. Khanji [ID](#)¹⁵, A. Kharisova [ID](#)³⁸, S. Kholodenko [ID](#)³⁸, G. Khreich [ID](#)¹¹, T. Kirn [ID](#)¹⁴, V.S. Kirsebom [ID](#)⁴³, O. Kitouni [ID](#)⁵⁸, S. Klaver [ID](#)³³, N. Kleijne [ID](#)^{29,p}, K. Klimaszewski [ID](#)³⁶, M.R. Kmiec [ID](#)³⁶, S. Koliiev [ID](#)⁴⁶, L. Kolk [ID](#)¹⁵, A. Kondybayeva [ID](#)³⁸, A. Konoplyannikov [ID](#)³⁸, P. Kopciwicz [ID](#)³⁴, R. Kopečna¹⁷, P. Koppenburg [ID](#)³², M. Korolev [ID](#)³⁸, I. Kostiuik [ID](#)³², O. Kot⁴⁶, S. Kotriakhova [ID](#), A. Kozachuk [ID](#)³⁸, P. Kravchenko [ID](#)³⁸, L. Kravchuk [ID](#)³⁸, R.D. Krawczyk [ID](#)⁴², M. Kreps [ID](#)⁵⁰, S. Kretzschmar [ID](#)¹⁴, P. Krokovny [ID](#)³⁸, W. Krupa [ID](#)³⁴, W. Krzemien [ID](#)³⁶, J. Kubat¹⁷, S. Kubis [ID](#)⁷⁵, W. Kucewicz [ID](#)³⁵, M. Kucharczyk [ID](#)³⁵, V. Kudryavtsev [ID](#)³⁸, E.K. Kulikova [ID](#)³⁸, A. Kupsc [ID](#)⁷⁷, D. Lacarrere [ID](#)⁴², G. Lafferty [ID](#)⁵⁶, A. Lai [ID](#)²⁷, A. Lampis [ID](#)^{27,h}, D. Lancierini [ID](#)⁴⁴, C. Landesa Gomez [ID](#)⁴⁰, J.J. Lane [ID](#)⁵⁶, R. Lane [ID](#)⁴⁸, C. Langenbruch [ID](#)¹⁴, J. Langer [ID](#)¹⁵, O. Lantwin [ID](#)³⁸, T. Latham [ID](#)⁵⁰, F. Lazzari [ID](#)^{29,q}, M. Lazzaroni [ID](#)^{25,l}, C. Lazzeroni [ID](#)⁴⁷, R. Le Gac [ID](#)¹⁰, S.H. Lee [ID](#)⁷⁸, R. Lefèvre [ID](#)⁹, A. Leflat [ID](#)³⁸, S. Legotin [ID](#)³⁸, P. Lenisa [ID](#)^{i,21}, O. Leroy [ID](#)¹⁰, T. Lesiak [ID](#)³⁵, B. Leverington [ID](#)¹⁷, A. Li [ID](#)³, H. Li [ID](#)⁶⁶, K. Li [ID](#)⁷, P. Li [ID](#)⁴², P.-R. Li [ID](#)⁶⁷, S. Li [ID](#)⁷, T. Li [ID](#)⁴, T. Li [ID](#)⁶⁶, Y. Li [ID](#)⁴, Z. Li [ID](#)⁶², X. Liang [ID](#)⁶², C. Lin [ID](#)⁶, T. Lin [ID](#)⁵¹, R. Lindner [ID](#)⁴², V. Lisovskyi [ID](#)¹⁵, R. Litvinov [ID](#)^{27,h}, G. Liu [ID](#)⁶⁶, H. Liu [ID](#)⁶, K. Liu [ID](#)⁶⁷, Q. Liu [ID](#)⁶, S. Liu [ID](#)^{4,6}, A. Lobo Salvia [ID](#)³⁹, A. Loi [ID](#)²⁷, R. Lollini [ID](#)⁷², J. Lomba Castro [ID](#)⁴⁰, I. Longstaff⁵³, J.H. Lopes [ID](#)², A. Lopez Huertas [ID](#)³⁹, S. López Soliño [ID](#)⁴⁰, G.H. Lovell [ID](#)⁴⁹, Y. Lu [ID](#)^{4,b}, C. Lucarelli [ID](#)^{22,j}, D. Lucchesi [ID](#)^{28,n}, S. Luchuk [ID](#)³⁸, M. Lucio Martinez [ID](#)⁷⁴, V. Lukashenko [ID](#)^{32,46}, Y. Luo [ID](#)³, A. Lupato [ID](#)⁵⁶, E. Luppi [ID](#)^{21,i}, A. Lusiani [ID](#)^{29,p}, K. Lynch [ID](#)¹⁸, X.-R. Lyu [ID](#)⁶, R. Ma [ID](#)⁶, S. Maccolini [ID](#)¹⁵, F. Machefert [ID](#)¹¹, F. Maciuc [ID](#)³⁷, I. Mackay [ID](#)⁵⁷, V. Macko [ID](#)⁴³, L.R. Madhan Mohan [ID](#)⁴⁹, A. Maevskiy [ID](#)³⁸, D. Maisuzenko [ID](#)³⁸, M.W. Majewski³⁴, J.J. Malczewski [ID](#)³⁵, S. Malde [ID](#)⁵⁷, B. Malecki [ID](#)^{35,42}, A. Malinin [ID](#)³⁸, T. Maltsev [ID](#)³⁸, G. Manca [ID](#)^{27,h}, G. Mancinelli [ID](#)¹⁰, C. Mancuso [ID](#)^{11,25,l}, R. Manera Escalero³⁹, D. Manuzzi [ID](#)²⁰, C.A. Manzari [ID](#)⁴⁴, D. Marangotto [ID](#)^{25,l}, J.F. Marchand [ID](#)⁸, U. Marconi [ID](#)²⁰, S. Mariani [ID](#)^{22,j}, C. Marin Benito [ID](#)³⁹, J. Marks [ID](#)¹⁷, A.M. Marshall [ID](#)⁴⁸, P.J. Marshall⁵⁴, G. Martelli [ID](#)^{72,o}, G. Martellotti [ID](#)³⁰, L. Martinazzoli [ID](#)^{42,m}, M. Martinelli [ID](#)^{26,m}, D. Martinez Santos [ID](#)⁴⁰, F. Martinez Vidal [ID](#)⁴¹, A. Massafferri [ID](#)¹, M. Materok [ID](#)¹⁴, R. Matev [ID](#)⁴², A. Mathad [ID](#)⁴⁴, V. Matiunin [ID](#)³⁸, C. Matteuzzi [ID](#)²⁶, K.R. Mattioli [ID](#)¹², A. Mauri [ID](#)⁵⁵, E. Maurice [ID](#)¹², J. Mauricio [ID](#)³⁹, M. Mazurek [ID](#)⁴², M. McCann [ID](#)⁵⁵, L. Mcconnell [ID](#)¹⁸, T.H. McGrath [ID](#)⁵⁶, N.T. McHugh [ID](#)⁵³, A. McNab [ID](#)⁵⁶, R. McNulty [ID](#)¹⁸, B. Meadows [ID](#)⁵⁹, G. Meier [ID](#)¹⁵, D. Melnychuk [ID](#)³⁶, S. Meloni [ID](#)^{26,m}, M. Merk [ID](#)^{32,74}, A. Merli [ID](#)^{25,l}, L. Meyer Garcia [ID](#)², D. Miao [ID](#)^{4,6}, M. Mikhasenko [ID](#)^{70,d}, D.A. Milanés [ID](#)⁶⁹, E. Millard⁵⁰, M. Milovanovic [ID](#)⁴², M.-N. Minard^{8,†}, A. Minotti [ID](#)^{26,m}, T. Miralles [ID](#)⁹, S.E. Mitchell [ID](#)⁵², B. Mitreska [ID](#)¹⁵, D.S. Mitzel [ID](#)¹⁵, A. Modak [ID](#)⁵¹, A. Mödden [ID](#)¹⁵, R.A. Mohammed [ID](#)⁵⁷, R.D. Moise [ID](#)¹⁴, S. Mokhnenko [ID](#)³⁸, T. Mombächer [ID](#)⁴⁰, M. Monk [ID](#)^{50,63}, I.A. Monroy [ID](#)⁶⁹, S. Monteil [ID](#)⁹, G. Morello [ID](#)²³, M.J. Morello [ID](#)^{29,p}, M.P. Morgenthaler [ID](#)¹⁷, J. Moron [ID](#)³⁴, A.B. Morris [ID](#)⁴², A.G. Morris [ID](#)⁵⁰, R. Mountain [ID](#)⁶², H. Mu [ID](#)³, E. Muhammad [ID](#)⁵⁰, F. Muheim [ID](#)⁵², M. Mulder [ID](#)⁷³, K. Müller [ID](#)⁴⁴, C.H. Murphy [ID](#)⁵⁷, D. Murray [ID](#)⁵⁶, R. Murta [ID](#)⁵⁵, P. Muzzetto [ID](#)^{27,h}, P. Naik [ID](#)⁴⁸, T. Nakada [ID](#)⁴³, R. Nandakumar [ID](#)⁵¹, T. Nanut [ID](#)⁴², I. Nasteva [ID](#)²,

M. Needham [ID](#)⁵², N. Neri [ID](#)^{25,l}, S. Neubert [ID](#)⁷⁰, N. Neufeld [ID](#)⁴², P. Neustroev³⁸, R. Newcombe⁵⁵,
 J. Nicolini [ID](#)^{15,11}, D. Nicotra [ID](#)⁷⁴, E.M. Niel [ID](#)⁴³, S. Nieswand¹⁴, N. Nikitin [ID](#)³⁸, N.S. Nolte [ID](#)⁵⁸,
 C. Normand [ID](#)^{8,h,27}, J. Novoa Fernandez [ID](#)⁴⁰, G.N Nowak [ID](#)⁵⁹, C. Nunez [ID](#)⁷⁸,
 A. Oblakowska-Mucha [ID](#)³⁴, V. Obraztsov [ID](#)³⁸, T. Oeser [ID](#)¹⁴, S. Okamura [ID](#)^{21,i}, R. Oldeman [ID](#)^{27,h},
 F. Oliva [ID](#)⁵², C.J.G. Onderwater [ID](#)⁷³, R.H. O’Neil [ID](#)⁵², J.M. Otalora Goicochea [ID](#)²,
 T. Ovsianikova [ID](#)³⁸, P. Owen [ID](#)⁴⁴, A. Oyanguren [ID](#)⁴¹, O. Ozcelik [ID](#)⁵², K.O. Padeken [ID](#)⁷⁰,
 B. Pagare [ID](#)⁵⁰, P.R. Pais [ID](#)⁴², T. Pajero [ID](#)⁵⁷, A. Palano [ID](#)¹⁹, M. Palutan [ID](#)²³, G. Panshin [ID](#)³⁸,
 L. Paolucci [ID](#)⁵⁰, A. Papanestis [ID](#)⁵¹, M. Pappagallo [ID](#)^{19,f}, L.L. Pappalardo [ID](#)^{21,i},
 C. Pappenheimer [ID](#)⁵⁹, W. Parker [ID](#)⁶⁰, C. Parkes [ID](#)⁵⁶, B. Passalacqua [ID](#)^{21,i}, G. Passaleva [ID](#)²²,
 A. Pastore [ID](#)¹⁹, M. Patel [ID](#)⁵⁵, C. Patrignani [ID](#)^{20,g}, C.J. Pawley [ID](#)⁷⁴, A. Pellegrino [ID](#)³²,
 M. Pepe Altarelli [ID](#)⁴², S. Perazzini [ID](#)²⁰, D. Pereima [ID](#)³⁸, A. Pereiro Castro [ID](#)⁴⁰, P. Perret [ID](#)⁹,
 K. Petridis [ID](#)⁴⁸, A. Petrolini [ID](#)^{24,k}, S. Petrucci [ID](#)⁵², M. Petruzzo [ID](#)²⁵, H. Pham [ID](#)⁶²,
 A. Philippov [ID](#)³⁸, R. Piandani [ID](#)⁶, L. Pica [ID](#)^{29,p}, M. Piccini [ID](#)⁷², B. Pietrzyk [ID](#)⁸, G. Pietrzyk [ID](#)¹¹,
 M. Pili [ID](#)⁵⁷, D. Pinci [ID](#)³⁰, F. Pisani [ID](#)⁴², M. Pizzichemi [ID](#)^{26,m,42}, V. Placinta [ID](#)³⁷, J. Plews [ID](#)⁴⁷,
 M. Plo Casasus [ID](#)⁴⁰, F. Polci [ID](#)^{13,42}, M. Poli Lener [ID](#)²³, A. Poluektov [ID](#)¹⁰, N. Polukhina [ID](#)³⁸,
 I. Polyakov [ID](#)⁴², E. Polycarpo [ID](#)², S. Ponce [ID](#)⁴², D. Popov [ID](#)^{6,42}, S. Poslavskii [ID](#)³⁸,
 K. Prasanth [ID](#)³⁵, L. Promberger [ID](#)¹⁷, C. Prouve [ID](#)⁴⁰, V. Pugatch [ID](#)⁴⁶, V. Puill [ID](#)¹¹, G. Punzi [ID](#)^{29,q},
 H.R. Qi [ID](#)³, W. Qian [ID](#)⁶, N. Qin [ID](#)³, S. Qu [ID](#)³, R. Quagliani [ID](#)⁴³, N.V. Raab [ID](#)¹⁸, B. Rachwal [ID](#)³⁴,
 J.H. Rademacker [ID](#)⁴⁸, R. Rajagopalan⁶², M. Rama [ID](#)²⁹, M. Ramos Pernas [ID](#)⁵⁰, M.S. Rangel [ID](#)²,
 F. Ratnikov [ID](#)³⁸, G. Raven [ID](#)³³, M. Rebollo De Miguel [ID](#)⁴¹, F. Redi [ID](#)⁴², J. Reich [ID](#)⁴⁸,
 F. Reiss [ID](#)⁵⁶, C. Remon Alepuz⁴¹, Z. Ren [ID](#)³, P.K. Resmi [ID](#)⁵⁷, R. Ribatti [ID](#)^{29,p}, A.M. Ricci [ID](#)²⁷,
 S. Ricciardi [ID](#)⁵¹, K. Richardson [ID](#)⁵⁸, M. Richardson-Slipper [ID](#)⁵², K. Rinnert [ID](#)⁵⁴, P. Robbe [ID](#)¹¹,
 G. Robertson [ID](#)⁵², E. Rodrigues [ID](#)^{54,42}, E. Rodriguez Fernandez [ID](#)⁴⁰, J.A. Rodriguez Lopez [ID](#)⁶⁹,
 E. Rodriguez Rodriguez [ID](#)⁴⁰, D.L. Rolf [ID](#)⁴², A. Rollings [ID](#)⁵⁷, P. Roloff [ID](#)⁴², V. Romanovskiy [ID](#)³⁸,
 M. Romero Lamas [ID](#)⁴⁰, A. Romero Vidal [ID](#)⁴⁰, J.D. Roth^{78,†}, M. Rotondo [ID](#)²³, M.S. Rudolph [ID](#)⁶²,
 T. Ruf [ID](#)⁴², R.A. Ruiz Fernandez [ID](#)⁴⁰, J. Ruiz Vidal [ID](#)⁴¹, A. Ryzhikov [ID](#)³⁸, J. Ryzka [ID](#)³⁴,
 J.J. Saborido Silva [ID](#)⁴⁰, N. Sagidova [ID](#)³⁸, N. Sahoo [ID](#)⁴⁷, B. Saitta [ID](#)^{27,h}, M. Salomoni [ID](#)⁴²,
 C. Sanchez Gras [ID](#)³², I. Sanderswood [ID](#)⁴¹, R. Santacesaria [ID](#)³⁰, C. Santamarina Rios [ID](#)⁴⁰,
 M. Santimaria [ID](#)²³, E. Santovetti [ID](#)^{31,s}, D. Saranin [ID](#)³⁸, G. Sarpis [ID](#)¹⁴, M. Sarpis [ID](#)⁷⁰, A. Sarti [ID](#)³⁰,
 C. Satriano [ID](#)^{30,r}, A. Satta [ID](#)³¹, M. Saur [ID](#)¹⁵, D. Savrina [ID](#)³⁸, H. Sazak [ID](#)⁹,
 L.G. Scantlebury Smead [ID](#)⁵⁷, A. Scarabotto [ID](#)¹³, S. Schael [ID](#)¹⁴, S. Scherl [ID](#)⁵⁴, M. Schiller [ID](#)⁵³,
 H. Schindler [ID](#)⁴², M. Schmelling [ID](#)¹⁶, B. Schmidt [ID](#)⁴², S. Schmitt [ID](#)¹⁴, O. Schneider [ID](#)⁴³,
 A. Schopper [ID](#)⁴², M. Schubiger [ID](#)³², S. Schulte [ID](#)⁴³, M.H. Schune [ID](#)¹¹, R. Schwemmer [ID](#)⁴²,
 B. Sciascia [ID](#)²³, A. Sciuccati [ID](#)⁴², S. Sellam [ID](#)⁴⁰, A. Semennikov [ID](#)³⁸, M. Senghi Soares [ID](#)³³,
 A. Sergi [ID](#)^{24,k}, N. Serra [ID](#)⁴⁴, L. Sestini [ID](#)²⁸, A. Seuthe [ID](#)¹⁵, Y. Shang [ID](#)⁵, D.M. Shangase [ID](#)⁷⁸,
 M. Shapkin [ID](#)³⁸, I. Shchemerov [ID](#)³⁸, L. Shchutska [ID](#)⁴³, T. Shears [ID](#)⁵⁴, L. Shekhtman [ID](#)³⁸,
 Z. Shen [ID](#)⁵, S. Sheng [ID](#)^{4,6}, V. Shevchenko [ID](#)³⁸, B. Shi [ID](#)⁶, E.B. Shields [ID](#)^{26,m}, Y. Shimizu [ID](#)¹¹,
 E. Shmanin [ID](#)³⁸, R. Shorkin [ID](#)³⁸, J.D. Shupperd [ID](#)⁶², B.G. Siddi [ID](#)^{21,i}, R. Silva Coutinho [ID](#)⁶²,
 G. Simi [ID](#)²⁸, S. Simone [ID](#)^{19,f}, M. Singla [ID](#)⁶³, N. Skidmore [ID](#)⁵⁶, R. Skuza [ID](#)¹⁷, T. Skwarnicki [ID](#)⁶²,
 M.W. Slater [ID](#)⁴⁷, J.C. Smallwood [ID](#)⁵⁷, J.G. Smeaton [ID](#)⁴⁹, E. Smith [ID](#)⁴⁴, K. Smith [ID](#)⁶¹,
 M. Smith [ID](#)⁵⁵, A. Snoch [ID](#)³², L. Soares Lavra [ID](#)⁹, M.D. Sokoloff [ID](#)⁵⁹, F.J.P. Soler [ID](#)⁵³,
 A. Solomin [ID](#)^{38,48}, A. Solovev [ID](#)³⁸, I. Solovyev [ID](#)³⁸, R. Song [ID](#)⁶³, F.L. Souza De Almeida [ID](#)²,
 B. Souza De Paula [ID](#)², B. Spaan^{15,†}, E. Spadaro Norella [ID](#)^{25,l}, E. Spedicato [ID](#)²⁰, E. Spiridenkov³⁸,

P. Spradlin ⁵³, V. Sriskaran ⁴², F. Stagni ⁴², M. Stahl ⁴², S. Stahl ⁴², S. Stanislaus ⁵⁷, E.N. Stein ⁴², O. Steinkamp ⁴⁴, O. Stenyakin ³⁸, H. Stevens ¹⁵, D. Strelakina ³⁸, Y.S. Su ⁶, F. Suljik ⁵⁷, J. Sun ²⁷, L. Sun ⁶⁸, Y. Sun ⁶⁰, P.N. Swallow ⁴⁷, K. Swientek ³⁴, A. Szabelski ³⁶, T. Szumlak ³⁴, M. Szymanski ⁴², Y. Tan ³, S. Taneja ⁵⁶, M.D. Tat ⁵⁷, A. Terentev ⁴⁴, F. Teubert ⁴², E. Thomas ⁴², D.J.D. Thompson ⁴⁷, K.A. Thomson ⁵⁴, H. Tilquin ⁵⁵, V. Tisserand ⁹, S. T’Jampens ⁸, M. Tobin ⁴, L. Tomassetti ^{21,i}, G. Tonani ^{25,l}, X. Tong ⁵, D. Torres Machado ¹, D.Y. Tou ³, C. Tripll ⁴³, G. Tuci ⁶, N. Tuning ³², A. Ukleja ³⁶, D.J. Unverzagt ¹⁷, A. Usachov ³³, A. Ustyuzhanin ³⁸, U. Uwer ¹⁷, A. Vagner ³⁸, V. Vagnoni ²⁰, A. Valassi ⁴², G. Valenti ²⁰, N. Valls Canudas ⁷⁶, M. Van Dijk ⁴³, H. Van Hecke ⁶¹, E. van Herwijnen ⁵⁵, C.B. Van Hulse ^{40,u}, M. van Veghel ³², R. Vazquez Gomez ³⁹, P. Vazquez Regueiro ⁴⁰, C. Vázquez Sierra ⁴², S. Vecchi ²¹, J.J. Velthuis ⁴⁸, M. Veltri ^{22,t}, A. Venkateswaran ⁴³, M. Veronesi ³², M. Vesterinen ⁵⁰, D. Vieira ⁵⁹, M. Vieites Diaz ⁴³, X. Vilasis-Cardona ⁷⁶, E. Vilella Figueras ⁵⁴, A. Villa ²⁰, P. Vincent ¹³, F.C. Volle ¹¹, D. vom Bruch ¹⁰, A. Vorobyev ³⁸, V. Vorobyev ³⁸, N. Voropaev ³⁸, K. Vos ⁷⁴, C. Vrahas ⁵², J. Walsh ²⁹, E.J. Walton ⁶³, G. Wan ⁵, C. Wang ¹⁷, G. Wang ⁷, J. Wang ⁵, J. Wang ⁴, J. Wang ³, J. Wang ⁶⁸, M. Wang ²⁵, R. Wang ⁴⁸, X. Wang ⁶⁶, Y. Wang ⁷, Z. Wang ⁴⁴, Z. Wang ³, Z. Wang ⁶, J.A. Ward ^{50,63}, N.K. Watson ⁴⁷, D. Websdale ⁵⁵, Y. Wei ⁵, B.D.C. Westhenry ⁴⁸, D.J. White ⁵⁶, M. Whitehead ⁵³, A.R. Wiederhold ⁵⁰, D. Wiedner ¹⁵, G. Wilkinson ⁵⁷, M.K. Wilkinson ⁵⁹, I. Williams ⁴⁹, M. Williams ⁵⁸, M.R.J. Williams ⁵², R. Williams ⁴⁹, F.F. Wilson ⁵¹, W. Wislicki ³⁶, M. Witek ³⁵, L. Witola ¹⁷, C.P. Wong ⁶¹, G. Wormser ¹¹, S.A. Wotton ⁴⁹, H. Wu ⁶², J. Wu ⁷, K. Wyllie ⁴², Z. Xiang ⁶, Y. Xie ⁷, A. Xu ⁵, J. Xu ⁶, L. Xu ³, L. Xu ³, M. Xu ⁵⁰, Q. Xu ⁶, Z. Xu ⁹, Z. Xu ⁶, D. Yang ³, S. Yang ⁶, X. Yang ⁵, Y. Yang ⁶, Z. Yang ⁵, Z. Yang ⁶⁰, L.E. Yeomans ⁵⁴, V. Yeroshenko ¹¹, H. Yeung ⁵⁶, H. Yin ⁷, J. Yu ⁶⁵, X. Yuan ⁶², E. Zaffaroni ⁴³, M. Zavertyaev ¹⁶, M. Zdybal ³⁵, M. Zeng ³, C. Zhang ⁵, D. Zhang ⁷, L. Zhang ³, S. Zhang ⁶⁵, S. Zhang ⁵, Y. Zhang ⁵, Y. Zhang ⁵⁷, Y. Zhao ¹⁷, A. Zharkova ³⁸, A. Zhelezov ¹⁷, Y. Zheng ⁶, T. Zhou ⁵, X. Zhou ⁷, Y. Zhou ⁶, V. Zhovkovska ¹¹, X. Zhu ³, X. Zhu ⁷, Z. Zhu ⁶, V. Zhukov ^{14,38}, Q. Zou ^{4,6}, S. Zucchelli ^{20,g}, D. Zuliani ²⁸, G. Zunica ⁵⁶

¹ Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Físicas (CBPF), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

² Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

³ Center for High Energy Physics, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China

⁴ Institute Of High Energy Physics (IHEP), Beijing, China

⁵ School of Physics State Key Laboratory of Nuclear Physics and Technology, Peking University, Beijing, China

⁶ University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China

⁷ Institute of Particle Physics, Central China Normal University, Wuhan, Hubei, China

⁸ Université Savoie Mont Blanc, CNRS, IN2P3-LAPP, Annecy, France

⁹ Université Clermont Auvergne, CNRS/IN2P3, LPC, Clermont-Ferrand, France

¹⁰ Aix Marseille Univ, CNRS/IN2P3, CPPM, Marseille, France

¹¹ Université Paris-Saclay, CNRS/IN2P3, IJCLab, Orsay, France

¹² Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, CNRS/IN2P3, Ecole Polytechnique, Institut Polytechnique de Paris, Palaiseau, France

¹³ LPNHE, Sorbonne Université, Paris Diderot Sorbonne Paris Cité, CNRS/IN2P3, Paris, France

- ¹⁴ *I. Physikalisches Institut, RWTH Aachen University, Aachen, Germany*
- ¹⁵ *Fakultät Physik, Technische Universität Dortmund, Dortmund, Germany*
- ¹⁶ *Max-Planck-Institut für Kernphysik (MPIK), Heidelberg, Germany*
- ¹⁷ *Physikalisches Institut, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany*
- ¹⁸ *School of Physics, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland*
- ¹⁹ *INFN Sezione di Bari, Bari, Italy*
- ²⁰ *INFN Sezione di Bologna, Bologna, Italy*
- ²¹ *INFN Sezione di Ferrara, Ferrara, Italy*
- ²² *INFN Sezione di Firenze, Firenze, Italy*
- ²³ *INFN Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, Frascati, Italy*
- ²⁴ *INFN Sezione di Genova, Genova, Italy*
- ²⁵ *INFN Sezione di Milano, Milano, Italy*
- ²⁶ *INFN Sezione di Milano-Bicocca, Milano, Italy*
- ²⁷ *INFN Sezione di Cagliari, Monserrato, Italy*
- ²⁸ *Università degli Studi di Padova, Università e INFN, Padova, Padova, Italy*
- ²⁹ *INFN Sezione di Pisa, Pisa, Italy*
- ³⁰ *INFN Sezione di Roma La Sapienza, Roma, Italy*
- ³¹ *INFN Sezione di Roma Tor Vergata, Roma, Italy*
- ³² *Nikhef National Institute for Subatomic Physics, Amsterdam, Netherlands*
- ³³ *Nikhef National Institute for Subatomic Physics and VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands*
- ³⁴ *AGH — University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Physics and Applied Computer Science, Kraków, Poland*
- ³⁵ *Henryk Niewodniczanski Institute of Nuclear Physics Polish Academy of Sciences, Kraków, Poland*
- ³⁶ *National Center for Nuclear Research (NCBJ), Warsaw, Poland*
- ³⁷ *Horia Hulubei National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Bucharest-Magurele, Romania*
- ³⁸ *Affiliated with an institute covered by a cooperation agreement with CERN*
- ³⁹ *ICCUB, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain*
- ⁴⁰ *Instituto Galego de Física de Altas Enerxías (IGFAE), Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain*
- ⁴¹ *Instituto de Física Corpuscular, Centro Mixto Universidad de Valencia — CSIC, Valencia, Spain*
- ⁴² *European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), Geneva, Switzerland*
- ⁴³ *Institute of Physics, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), Lausanne, Switzerland*
- ⁴⁴ *Physik-Institut, Universität Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland*
- ⁴⁵ *NSC Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology (NSC KIPT), Kharkiv, Ukraine*
- ⁴⁶ *Institute for Nuclear Research of the National Academy of Sciences (KINR), Kyiv, Ukraine*
- ⁴⁷ *University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom*
- ⁴⁸ *H.H. Wills Physics Laboratory, University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom*
- ⁴⁹ *Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom*
- ⁵⁰ *Department of Physics, University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom*
- ⁵¹ *STFC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom*
- ⁵² *School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom*
- ⁵³ *School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*
- ⁵⁴ *Oliver Lodge Laboratory, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom*
- ⁵⁵ *Imperial College London, London, United Kingdom*
- ⁵⁶ *Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom*
- ⁵⁷ *Department of Physics, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom*
- ⁵⁸ *Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, United States*
- ⁵⁹ *University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, United States*
- ⁶⁰ *University of Maryland, College Park, MD, United States*
- ⁶¹ *Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), Los Alamos, NM, United States*
- ⁶² *Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, United States*

- ⁶³ *School of Physics and Astronomy, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, associated to* ⁵⁰
- ⁶⁴ *Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, associated to* ²
- ⁶⁵ *Physics and Micro Electronic College, Hunan University, Changsha City, China, associated to* ⁷
- ⁶⁶ *Guangdong Provincial Key Laboratory of Nuclear Science, Guangdong-Hong Kong Joint Laboratory of Quantum Matter, Institute of Quantum Matter, South China Normal University, Guangzhou, China, associated to* ³
- ⁶⁷ *Lanzhou University, Lanzhou, China, associated to* ⁴
- ⁶⁸ *School of Physics and Technology, Wuhan University, Wuhan, China, associated to* ³
- ⁶⁹ *Departamento de Física, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogota, Colombia, associated to* ¹³
- ⁷⁰ *Universität Bonn — Helmholtz-Institut für Strahlen und Kernphysik, Bonn, Germany, associated to* ¹⁷
- ⁷¹ *Eotvos Lorand University, Budapest, Hungary, associated to* ⁴²
- ⁷² *INFN Sezione di Perugia, Perugia, Italy, associated to* ²¹
- ⁷³ *Van Swinderen Institute, University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands, associated to* ³²
- ⁷⁴ *Universiteit Maastricht, Maastricht, Netherlands, associated to* ³²
- ⁷⁵ *Tadeusz Kosciuszko Cracow University of Technology, Cracow, Poland, associated to* ³⁵
- ⁷⁶ *DS4DS, La Salle, Universitat Ramon Llull, Barcelona, Spain, associated to* ³⁹
- ⁷⁷ *Department of Physics and Astronomy, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden, associated to* ⁵³
- ⁷⁸ *University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, United States, associated to* ⁶²
- ^a *Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, Brazil*
- ^b *Central South U., Changsha, China*
- ^c *Hangzhou Institute for Advanced Study, UCAS, Hangzhou, China*
- ^d *Excellence Cluster ORIGINS, Munich, Germany*
- ^e *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras, Tegucigalpa, Honduras*
- ^f *Università di Bari, Bari, Italy*
- ^g *Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy*
- ^h *Università di Cagliari, Cagliari, Italy*
- ⁱ *Università di Ferrara, Ferrara, Italy*
- ^j *Università di Firenze, Firenze, Italy*
- ^k *Università di Genova, Genova, Italy*
- ^l *Università degli Studi di Milano, Milano, Italy*
- ^m *Università di Milano Bicocca, Milano, Italy*
- ⁿ *Università di Padova, Padova, Italy*
- ^o *Università di Perugia, Perugia, Italy*
- ^p *Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, Italy*
- ^q *Università di Pisa, Pisa, Italy*
- ^r *Università della Basilicata, Potenza, Italy*
- ^s *Università di Roma Tor Vergata, Roma, Italy*
- ^t *Università di Urbino, Urbino, Italy*
- ^u *Universidad de Alcalá, Alcalá de Henares, Spain*

† *Deceased*