Measurement of the time-integrated $CP$ asymmetry in $D^0 \to K^0_S K^0_S$ decays
Measurement of the time-integrated $CP$ asymmetry in $D^0 \rightarrow K_S^0 K_S^0$ decays

The LHCb collaboration

E-mail: markward@mpi-hd.mpg.de

Abstract: The time-integrated $CP$ asymmetry in the decay $D^0 \rightarrow K_S^0 K_S^0$ is measured using 3 fb$^{-1}$ of proton-proton collision data collected by the LHCb experiment at centre-of-mass energies of 7 and 8 TeV. The flavour of the $D^0$ meson is determined by use of the decay $D^{*+} \rightarrow D^0 \pi^+$ and its charge conjugate mode. The result is

$$A_{CP} = -0.029 \pm 0.052 \pm 0.022,$$

where the first uncertainty is statistical and the second systematic. The result is consistent with Standard Model expectations and improves the uncertainty with respect to the only previous measurement of this quantity by more than a factor of three.

Keywords: CP violation, Charm physics, Flavor physics, Hadron-Hadron Scattering

ArXiv ePrint: 1508.06087
1 Introduction

In the Standard Model, CP violation in charm decays is expected to be small and hence potentially sensitive to contributions from New Physics. Although measurements of the time-integrated CP asymmetry in $D^0$ decays to pairs of charged mesons showed hints of CP asymmetry at the level of 0.7%, the combined results are not yet conclusive \cite{1-5}. Of particular interest, both for the search of New Physics and for the understanding of penguin contributions, are decays of $D^0$ mesons into a pair of neutral mesons, such as the decay $D^0 \rightarrow K^0_S K^0_S$ \cite{6, 7}.\footnote{The inclusion of charge-conjugate processes is implied throughout this article.} If the CP asymmetry in $D^0$ decays to charged mesons is confirmed and assuming moderate breaking of the SU(3) flavour symmetry, the CP asymmetry of this mode could be of $\mathcal{O}(1\%)$ or even larger \cite{6}. From a more recent Standard Model based analysis of the contributing amplitudes, a 95\% confidence level upper limit of 1.1\% for direct CP violation in the decay $D^0 \rightarrow K^0_S K^0_S$ has been derived \cite{7}. The single previous measurement gave $A_{CP} = (23 \pm 19)\%$ \cite{8}.

Here, we present the first result from the LHCb collaboration on CP violation in the decay $D^0 \rightarrow K^0_S K^0_S$. The measurement is based on $D^0$ mesons originating from $D^{*+} \rightarrow D^0 \pi^+$ decays, where the flavour of the $D^0$ meson can be inferred from the charge of the “slow” pion from the $D^{*+}$ decay. Throughout this document, $D^{*+}$ stands for $D^*(2010)^+$. As a control channel, the decay $D^0 \rightarrow K^- \pi^+$ is used to estimate production and detection asymmetries. The analysis uses 3 fb$^{-1}$ of proton-proton collision data collected with the LHCb detector in 2011 and in 2012, at centre-of-mass energies of 7 TeV and 8 TeV, respectively.
2 Detector and simulation

The LHCb detector [9, 10] is a single-arm forward spectrometer covering the pseudorapidity range 2 < η < 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 tracking system provides a measurement of momentum, p, of charged particles with a relative uncertainty that varies from 0.5% at low momentum to 1.0% at 200 GeV.\(^2\) The minimum distance of a track to a primary vertex (PV), the impact parameter, is measured with a resolution of \((15 + 29/p_T) \mu\text{m}\), where \(p_T\) is the component of the momentum transverse to the beam, in GeV. The polarity of the dipole magnet is reversed regularly throughout the data-taking period, which allows to determine and correct for charge asymmetries due to the detector geometry.

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, an electromagnetic calorimeter 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, based on information from the calorimeter and muon systems, followed by a software stage, which applies a full event reconstruction.

In the simulation, pp collisions are generated using PYTHIA [11, 12] with a specific LHCb configuration [13]. Decays of hadronic particles are described by EvtGen [14], in which final state radiation is generated using PHOTOS [15]. The interaction of the generated particles with the detector, and its response, are implemented using the GEANT4 toolkit [16, 17] as described in ref. [18].

3 Selection

Signal decays are reconstructed in the decay mode \(D^{*+} \rightarrow D^0 \pi^+\) with \(D^0 \rightarrow K_S^0 K_S^0\) and \(K_S^0 \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^-\) [19]. To collect as many \(D^0 \rightarrow K_S^0 K_S^0\) decays as possible, events from all available physics triggers are considered. Candidate events are accepted if the four pions assigned to the \(K_S^0\) decays are sufficient to trigger the event or if the rest of the event, without the slow pion from the \(D^*\) decay, satisfies a trigger condition. Excluding the slow pion from the trigger decision minimises any bias on the \(CP\) asymmetry due to the trigger.

The \(K_S^0 \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^-\) decays are reconstructed in two different categories: the first involves \(K_S^0\) mesons that decay early enough for the daughter pions to be reconstructed in the vertex detector; the second contains \(K_S^0\) mesons that decay later such that daughter track segments are only reconstructed in the tracking detectors downstream of the vertex detector. These categories are referred to as long (L) and downstream (D), respectively. The less abundant long category has better momentum and vertex resolution than the downstream category.

\(^2\)We use natural units where \(c = 1\).
Categories Description
LL both $K_S^0$ are of category long and not selected by the dedicated trigger
LD one $K_S^0$ is long, the other one is downstream
DD both $K_S^0$ are downstream
LLtrig both $K_S^0$ are of category long and selected by the dedicated trigger

Table 1. Definition of candidate categories.

As the final state contains two $K_S^0$ mesons, there are three possible combinations labeled LL, LD, and DD. A dedicated software trigger selection for the $D^0 \rightarrow K_S^0 K_S^0$ decay was implemented in 2012. As this trigger only accepts signal candidates composed of two long $K_S^0$, a fourth $D^0$ category, LLtrig, is defined where the dedicated trigger accepted the signal candidate. The four categories are listed in table 1.

The decay vertex of the $D^0$ candidate is reconstructed from the pion trajectories, constraining the $K_S^0$ mass to its known value [20] and the $D^0$ flight direction to point to a PV [19]. To reduce the contamination from the decay $D^0 \rightarrow K_S^0 \pi^+ \pi^-$, only candidates with significant decay times for both $K_S^0$ decays are accepted. This requirement has a signal efficiency of over 99%. The $D^0$ candidate is combined with a pion to produce a $D^*$ candidate. Fiducial cuts are applied on the kinematic properties of this slow pion to remove regions where the detection charge asymmetry is large. A cut on the invariant mass of the $K_S^0 K_S^0$ system of $\pm 20$ MeV around the known value of the $D^0$ mass is applied. The efficiency of this cut is 98% in all categories, except for DD, where it is 94%. Candidates are further selected by requiring the difference between the $D^*$ and $D^0$ candidate masses, $\Delta m \equiv m_{D^*} - m_{D^0}$, to be less than 155 MeV.

To further reduce combinatorial background a multivariate analysis (MVA) method [21, 22] is used. It is based on a rule-based learner applying the methods of bagging [23] and instance weighting (see, e.g., refs. [24, 25]). Separate samples have been used for training and testing, where simulated events have been used as signal proxy, while the background sample was a mixture of data from $D^0$ sidebands (the mass ranges 1764.84 – 1844.84 MeV and 1884.84 – 1964.84 MeV) and simulation. Kinematic quantities, decay time variables, geometric quantities, and fit quality variables are used as input to the MVA. The selection of variables and the training have been done separately for the different categories. For the MVA optimisation, the figure of merit $S/\sqrt{S+B}$ is used, where $S$ is the expected number of signal candidates in the signal region defined by a $\pm 1.5$ MeV window around the known $\Delta m$ value [20], while $B$ is the number of background candidates in the signal region. The optimal points have signal efficiencies of 95%, 51%, 47%, and 37%, and background retentions of 50%, 0.33%, 0.40%, and 0.73% for LLtrig, LL, LD, and DD, respectively. The large background retention for the LLtrig category is due to the fact that the dedicated trigger intrinsically has a much lower background level. The control channel $D^0 \rightarrow K^- \pi^+$ is selected by cuts on kinematic quantities, vertex quality variables, geometric quantities, and decay time variables. In addition, the same mass requirements and fiducial cuts on the slow pion are applied as in case of the signal channel. Due to the large number of control
Table 2. Number of signal candidates and CP asymmetry obtained from the fits in the four categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>$N^+$</th>
<th>$N^-$</th>
<th>$A_{CP}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LL</td>
<td>86 ± 11</td>
<td>86 ± 12</td>
<td>0.00 ± 0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD</td>
<td>82 ± 14</td>
<td>83 ± 13</td>
<td>−0.00 ± 0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DD</td>
<td>29 ± 14</td>
<td>66 ± 14</td>
<td>−0.39 ± 0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLtrig</td>
<td>96 ± 11</td>
<td>99 ± 11</td>
<td>−0.02 ± 0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>combined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>−0.029 ± 0.052</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

channel candidates, which is much larger than needed for this analysis, 1% of candidates are accepted at random.

4 Asymmetry measurement

The CP asymmetry is obtained as

$$A_{CP} = \frac{N^+ - N^-}{N^+ + N^-}$$

for each category, where $N^+$ ($N^-$) is the yield determined from a fit to the data for a positive (negative) charge of the slow pion.

The yields are determined from an extended unbinned maximum likelihood fit to the \(\Delta m\) distribution. In the fit model, the signal is described by a sum of three Gaussian functions, where the two narrower ones are required to have the same mean value. The parameters of the narrowest Gaussian function and the mean value of the widest one are allowed to float, while the ratios between widths, as well as those between normalisations, of all three are constrained to the values found in the simulation. The background is parametrised by the product of an exponential function and a power law for the phase-space threshold at the pion mass

$$f_{bg} = C_{bg} (\Delta m - m_{\pi^+})^p e^{-(\Delta m - m_{\pi^+})^\alpha}. \quad (4.2)$$

Here $C_{bg}$, $p$ and $\alpha$ are determined by the fit. Independent fits are performed for the four categories. In each category, the background parameters and the shape parameters of the signal component are shared between the two charges of the slow pion.

The \(\Delta m\) distribution for the control channel, summed over both charges of the slow pion with the fit function overlaid is shown in figure 1. Figures 2 and 3 show the \(\Delta m\) distributions and the fit for each of the four categories and the two slow-pion charges. Table 2 lists the yields from the nominal fits and the resulting asymmetries. To obtain the final result, the asymmetries of the four signal categories are combined by taking the weighted mean.

5 Systematic uncertainties

The main sources of systematic effects are due to production and detection asymmetries and possible biases in the signal extraction method. The systematic uncertainty related
Figure 1. Distribution of $\Delta m$ for the control channel $D^0 \to K^- \pi^+$ in (left) linear and in (right) logarithmic scale. The solid (black) line corresponds to the total fit, the dashed (blue) line corresponds to the background, and the dash-dotted (red) line represents the signal contribution.

Figure 2. Distributions of $\Delta m$ split into (left) $D^{*+}$, (right) $D^{*-}$ and (top) LL, (bottom) LLtrig, including the fit function. The solid (black) line corresponds to the total fit, the dashed (blue) line corresponds to the background, and the dash-dotted (red) line represents the signal contribution.
Figure 3. Distributions of $\Delta m$ split into (left) $D^+$, (right) $D^-$ and (top) LD, (bottom) DD, including the fit function. The solid (black) line corresponds to the total fit, the dashed (blue) line corresponds to the background, while the dash-dotted (red) line represents the signal contribution.

to the signal extraction is estimated by comparing the nominal fit with an alternative one, where outside of the signal region of $\pm 1.5$ MeV around the known $\Delta m$-value, only the background component is fitted. The signal yield is obtained by subtracting the background extrapolated into the signal region from the total observed yield. For the combined $CP$ asymmetry a difference of 0.019 is found, which is assigned as a systematic uncertainty.

The systematic effects that arise due to the slow pion charge asymmetry in the detector and a possible charge asymmetry of $D^*$ production in $pp$ collisions in the LHCb acceptance are determined using the control channel. However, the control channel contains charged kaons which introduce an additional detection asymmetry, as the interaction cross-sections of $K^+$ and $K^-$ with the detector material are different. In ref. [26], the charged kaon detection asymmetry has been measured to be in the range 0.008 to 0.012. Assuming the pion detection asymmetry to be negligible, and including possible trigger effects, a correction of $-0.010 \pm 0.005$ is applied to the observed asymmetry in the control channel, resulting in a corrected value of $-0.009 \pm 0.005$. The absolute value of this number and its uncertainty are added in quadrature and assigned as a conservative estimate of the systematic uncertainty due to production and detection asymmetries.
Other checks have been performed but found to have statistically insignificant effects. These tests include the split into different trigger types, different run periods, and different magnet polarities. Also the effect of a possible difference in contamination by charm from beauty decays between signal and the control channel has been checked and found to be negligible. The total systematic uncertainty is calculated from the quadratic sum of the two dominant contributions, which come from the signal extraction (0.019) and the detection and production asymmetry (0.011), giving 0.022 for the total.

6 Result

The time-integrated \( CP \) asymmetry in the decay \( D^0 \to K^0_S K^0_S \) is determined to be

\[
A_{CP} = -0.029 \pm 0.052 \pm 0.022,
\]

where the first uncertainty is statistical and the second systematic. The result is consistent with no \( CP \) violation and with Standard Model expectations [7]. This is the single best measurement of this quantity to date, with an uncertainty more than three times smaller than the previous determination [8].

Acknowledgments

We express our gratitude to our colleagues in the CERN accelerator departments for the excellent performance of the LHC. We thank the technical and administrative staff at the LHCb institutes. We acknowledge support from CERN and from the national agencies: CAPES, CNPq, FAPERJ and FINEP (Brazil); NSFC (China); CNRS/IN2P3 (France); BMBF, DFG, HGF and MPG (Germany); INFN (Italy); FOM and NWO (The Netherlands); MNiSW and NCN (Poland); MEN/IFA (Romania); MinES and FANO (Russia); MinECo (Spain); SNSF and SER (Switzerland); NASU (Ukraine); STFC (United Kingdom); NSF (U.S.A.). The Tier1 computing centres are supported by IN2P3 (France), KIT and BMBF (Germany), INFN (Italy), NWO and SURF (The Netherlands), PIC (Spain), GridPP (United Kingdom). We are indebted to the communities behind the multiple open source software packages on which we depend. We are also thankful for the computing resources and the access to software R&D tools provided by Yandex LLC (Russia). Individual groups or members have received support from EPLANET, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and ERC (European Union), Conseil général de Haute-Savoie, Labex ENIGMASS and OCEVU, Région Auvergne (France), RFBR (Russia), XuntaGal and GENCAT (Spain), Royal Society and Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 (United Kingdom).

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A. Sciubba\textsuperscript{25}, A. Semennikov\textsuperscript{31}, N. Serra\textsuperscript{40}, J. Serrano\textsuperscript{6}, L. Sestini\textsuperscript{22}, P. Seyfert\textsuperscript{20}, M. Shapkin\textsuperscript{35}, I. Shapoval\textsuperscript{16,43}, Y. Shcheglov\textsuperscript{30}, T. Shears\textsuperscript{52}, L. Shekhtman\textsuperscript{34}, V. Shevchenko\textsuperscript{64}, A. Shires\textsuperscript{9}, B.G. Siddi\textsuperscript{16}, R. Silva Coutinho\textsuperscript{48,40}, L. Silva de Oliveira\textsuperscript{2}, G. Simi\textsuperscript{22}, M. Sirendi\textsuperscript{47}, N. Skidmore\textsuperscript{46}, I. Skillcorn\textsuperscript{51}, T. Skwarnicki\textsuperscript{59}, E. Smith\textsuperscript{55,49}, E. Smith\textsuperscript{53}, I. T. Smith\textsuperscript{50}, J. Smith\textsuperscript{57}, M. Smith\textsuperscript{54}, H. Snoek\textsuperscript{41}, M.D. Sokoloff\textsuperscript{57,38}, F.J.P. Soler\textsuperscript{51}, F. Soomro\textsuperscript{39}, D. Souza\textsuperscript{46}, B. Souza De Paula\textsuperscript{2}, B. Spaan\textsuperscript{51}, P. Spradlin\textsuperscript{51}, S. Sridharan\textsuperscript{58}, F. Stagni\textsuperscript{38}, M. Stahl\textsuperscript{11}, S. Stahl\textsuperscript{38}, S. Steffkova\textsuperscript{53}, O. Steinkamp\textsuperscript{40}, O. Stenyakin\textsuperscript{35}, S. Stevenson\textsuperscript{55}, S. Stoica\textsuperscript{29}, S. Stone\textsuperscript{59}, B. Storaci\textsuperscript{40}, S. Stracke\textsuperscript{23}, M. Straticiuc\textsuperscript{29}, U. Straumann\textsuperscript{40}, L. Sun\textsuperscript{57}, W. Sutcliffe\textsuperscript{53}, K. Swientek\textsuperscript{27}, S. Swientek\textsuperscript{9}, V. Syropoulos\textsuperscript{42}, M. Szczekowski\textsuperscript{28}, P. Szczypta\textsuperscript{39,38}, T. Szumlak\textsuperscript{27}, S. T'Jampens\textsuperscript{4}, A. Tayduganov\textsuperscript{6}, T. Tekampe\textsuperscript{9}, M. Teklishyn\textsuperscript{7}, G. Tellarini\textsuperscript{16,7}, F. Teubert\textsuperscript{38}, C. Thomas\textsuperscript{55}, E. Thomas\textsuperscript{38}, J. van Tilburg\textsuperscript{41}, V. Tisserand\textsuperscript{4}, M. Tobin\textsuperscript{39}, J. Todd\textsuperscript{57}, S. Tolk\textsuperscript{42}, L. Tommasetti\textsuperscript{16,7}, D. Tonelli\textsuperscript{38}, S. Topp-Joergensen\textsuperscript{55}, N. Torr\textsuperscript{55}, E. Tournefier\textsuperscript{4}, S. Tourneur\textsuperscript{39}, K. Trabelsi\textsuperscript{39}, M.T. Tran\textsuperscript{39}, M. Tresh\textsuperscript{40}, A. Trisovic\textsuperscript{38}, A. Tsaregorodtsev\textsuperscript{6}, P. Tsopelas\textsuperscript{41}, N. Tuning\textsuperscript{41,38}, A. Ukleja\textsuperscript{28}, A. Ustyuzhanin\textsuperscript{65,64}, U. Uwer\textsuperscript{11}, C. Vacca\textsuperscript{15,e}, V. Vagnoni\textsuperscript{14}, G. Valenti\textsuperscript{14}, A. Vallier\textsuperscript{7}, R. Vazquez Gomez\textsuperscript{18}, P. Vazquez Regueiro\textsuperscript{37}, C. Vázquez Sierra\textsuperscript{37}, S. Vecchi\textsuperscript{16}, J.J. Velthuis\textsuperscript{46}, M. Veltri\textsuperscript{17,9}, G. Veneziano\textsuperscript{39}, M. Vesterinen\textsuperscript{11}, B. Viard\textsuperscript{7}, D. Vieira\textsuperscript{2}, M. Vieites Diaz\textsuperscript{37}, X. Vilasis-Cardona\textsuperscript{46,6}, V. Volkov\textsuperscript{32}, A. Vollmayr\textsuperscript{40}, D. Volynskyy\textsuperscript{10}, D. Voong\textsuperscript{46}, A. Vorobyev\textsuperscript{30}, V. Vorobyev\textsuperscript{24}, C. Volf\textsuperscript{63}, J.A. de Vries\textsuperscript{41}, R. Walldi\textsuperscript{63}, C. Wallace\textsuperscript{48}, R. Wallace\textsuperscript{12}, J. Walsh\textsuperscript{23}, S. Wandernooth\textsuperscript{11}, J. Wang\textsuperscript{59}, D.R. Ward\textsuperscript{47}, N.K. Watson\textsuperscript{45}, D. Webdale\textsuperscript{53}, A. Weiden\textsuperscript{40}, M. Whitehead\textsuperscript{48}, G. Wilkinson\textsuperscript{55,38}, M. Wilkinson\textsuperscript{39}, M. Williams\textsuperscript{38}, M.P. Williams\textsuperscript{45}, M. Williams\textsuperscript{56}, T. Williams\textsuperscript{45}, F.F. Wilson\textsuperscript{49}, J. Wimberley\textsuperscript{58}, J. Wishahi\textsuperscript{9}, W. Wislicki\textsuperscript{28}, M. Witek\textsuperscript{26}, G. Wormser\textsuperscript{7}, S.A. Wotton\textsuperscript{47}, S. Wright\textsuperscript{38}, Y. Xie\textsuperscript{61}, Z. Xu\textsuperscript{39}, Z. Yang\textsuperscript{3}, J. Yu\textsuperscript{61}, X. Yuan\textsuperscript{34}, O. Yushchenko\textsuperscript{35}, M. Zangoli\textsuperscript{14}, M. Zavertyaev\textsuperscript{10,b}, L. Zhang\textsuperscript{3}, Y. Zhang\textsuperscript{3}, A. Zhelezov\textsuperscript{11}, A. Zhokhov\textsuperscript{31}, L. Zhong\textsuperscript{3} and S. Zucchelli\textsuperscript{14}.

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 LAPP, Université Savoie Mont-Blanc, CNRS/IN2P3, Annecy-Le-Vieux, France
5 Clermont Université, Université Blaise Pascal, CNRS/IN2P3, LPC, Clermont-Ferrand, France
6 CPPM, Aix-Marseille Université, CNRS/IN2P3, Marseille, France
7 LAL, Université Paris-Sud, CNRS/IN2P3, Orsay, France
8 LPNHE, Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Université Paris Diderot, CNRS/IN2P3, Paris, France
9 Fakultät Physik, Technische Universität Dortmund, Dortmund, Germany
10 Max-Planck-Institut für Kernphysik (MPIK), Heidelberg, Germany
11 Physikalisches Institut, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
12 School of Physics, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland
13 Sezione INFN di Bari, Bari, Italy
14 Sezione INFN di Bologna, Bologna, Italy
15 Sezione INFN di Catania, Catania, Italy
16 Sezione INFN di Ferrara, Ferrara, Italy
17 Sezione INFN di Firenze, Firenze, Italy
18 Laboratori Nazionali dell’INFN di Frascati, Frascati, Italy
19 Sezione INFN di Genova, Genova, Italy
20 Sezione INFN di Milano Bicocca, Milano, Italy
21 Sezione INFN di Milano, Milano, Italy
22 Sezione INFN di Padova, Padova, Italy
23 Sezione INFN di Pisa, Pisa, Italy
24 Sezione INFN di Roma Tor Vergata, Roma, Italy
25 Sezione INFN di Roma La Sapienza, Roma, Italy
Henryk Niewodniczanski Institute of Nuclear Physics, Kraków, Poland
AGH - University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Physics and Applied Computer Science, Kraków, Poland
National Center for Nuclear Research (NCBJ), Warsaw, Poland
Horia Hulubei National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Bucharest-Magurele, Romania
Petersburg Nuclear Physics Institute (PNPI), Gatchina, Russia
Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Physics (ITEP), Moscow, Russia
Institute of Nuclear Physics, Moscow State University (SINP MSU), Moscow, Russia
Institute for Nuclear Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences (INR RAN), Moscow, Russia
Budker Institute of Nuclear Physics (SB RAS) and Novosibirsk State University, Novosibirsk, Russia
Institute for High Energy Physics (IHEP), Protvino, Russia
Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), Geneva, Switzerland
École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), Lausanne, Switzerland
Physik-Institut, Universität Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland
Nikhef National Institute for Subatomic Physics, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Nikhef National Institute for Subatomic Physics and VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
NSC Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology (NSC KIPT), Kharkiv, Ukraine
Institute for Nuclear Research of the National Academy of Sciences (KINR), Kyiv, Ukraine
University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom
H.H. Wills Physics Laboratory, University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom
Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
Department of Physics, University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom
STFC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom
School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom
School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom
Oliver Lodge Laboratory, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom
Imperial College London, London, United Kingdom
School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom
Department of Physics, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, United States
University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, United States
University of Maryland, College Park, MD, United States
Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, United States
Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, associated to
Institute of Particle Physics, Central China Normal University, Wuhan, Hubei, China, associated to
Departamento de Física, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogota, Colombia, associated to
Institut für Physik, Universität Rostock, Rostock, Germany, associated to
National Research Centre Kurchatov Institute, Moscow, Russia, associated to
Yandex School of Data Analysis, Moscow, Russia, associated to
Instituto de Física Corpuscular (IFIC), Universitat de Valencia-CSIC, Valencia, Spain, associated to
Van Swinderen Institute, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands, associated to
Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro (UFTM), Uberaba-MG, Brazil
P.N. Lebedev Physical Institute, Russian Academy of Science (LPI RAS), Moscow, Russia
Università di Bari, Bari, Italy
Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy
Università di Cagliari, Cagliari, Italy
Università di Ferrara, Ferrara, Italy
Università di Urbino, Urbino, Italy
Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia, Modena, Italy
Università di Genova, Genova, Italy
Università di Milano Bicocca, Milano, Italy
Università di Roma Tor Vergata, Roma, Italy
Università di Roma La Sapienza, Roma, Italy
Università della Basilicata, Potenza, Italy
AGH - University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Computer Science, Electronics and Telecommunications, Kraków, Poland
LIFAELS, La Salle, Universitat Ramon Llull, Barcelona, Spain
Hanoi University of Science, Hanoi, Viet Nam
Università di Padova, Padova, Italy
Università di Pisa, Pisa, Italy
Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, Italy
Università degli Studi di Milano, Milano, Italy
† Deceased