Measurement of the charge ratio of atmospheric muons with the CMS detector

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Measurement of the charge ratio of atmospheric muons with the CMS detector

CMS Collaboration

1. Introduction

The muon charge ratio \( R \) is defined as the ratio of the number of positive- to negative-charge atmospheric muons arriving at the Earth’s surface. These muons arise from showers produced in interactions of high-energy cosmic ray particles with air nuclei in the upper layers of the atmosphere. The magnitude and the momentum dependence of \( R \) are determined by the production and interaction cross sections of mesons (mainly pions and kaons), and by their decay lengths. As most cosmic rays and the nuclei with which they interact are positively charged, positive meson production is favoured, hence more positive muons are expected. Previous measurements from various experiments [1–8] showed the muon charge ratio to be constant up to a momentum of about 200 GeV/c, and then to increase at higher momenta, in agreement with the predicted rise in the fraction of muons from kaon decays. Measurements of the charge ratio can be used to constrain hadronic interaction models and to predict better the atmospheric neutrino flux.

The Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS) [9] is one of the detectors installed at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) [10] at CERN. The main goal of the CMS experiment is to search for signals of new physics in proton–proton collisions at centre-of-mass energies from 7 to 14 TeV [11].

Cosmic rays were used extensively to commission the CMS detector [12,13]. These data can also be used to perform measurements of physical quantities related to cosmic ray muons. This Letter presents a measurement of the muon charge ratio using CMS data collected in two cosmic ray runs in the years 2006 and 2008. More details of the analyses can be found in [14,15].

2. Experimental setup, data samples, and event simulation

The central feature of the CMS apparatus is a superconducting solenoid, of 6 m internal diameter, providing a field of 3.8 T. Within the field volume are the silicon pixel and strip tracker [16], the crystal electromagnetic calorimeter and the brass-scintillator hadron calorimeter. Muons are measured in gas-ionization detectors embedded in the steel return yokes [17]. In the barrel there is a Drift Tube (DT) system interspersed with Resistive Plate Chambers (RPCs), and in the endcaps there is a Cathode Strip Chamber (CSC) system, also interspersed with RPCs. In addition to the barrel and endcap detectors, CMS has extensive forward calorimetry. A detailed description of CMS can be found in [9].

The CMS detector is installed in an underground cavern, with the center of the detector 89 m below Earth’s surface, and 420 m above sea level. The location is 46° 18’.57” north latitude and 6° 4.62’ east longitude. The upper 50 m of the material above CMS consists of moraines, followed by 20 m of molasse rock. A large access shaft with a diameter of 20.5 m rises vertically to the surface, and is offset from the center of CMS by 14 m along the beam direction. It is covered by a movable concrete plate of 2.25 m
thickness. Thus, depending on the point of impact on CMS, the total material traversed by close-to-vertical muons changes from approximately 6 to 175 meters of water equivalent.

The CMS experiment uses a right-handed coordinate system, with the origin at the nominal proton–proton collision point, the $x$ axis pointing towards the center of the LHC ring, the $y$ axis pointing upwards (perpendicular to the LHC plane), and the $z$ axis pointing along the anticlockwise beam-direction, at geographic azimuth 280.8° (approximately west). The angle between the CMS $y$ axis and the zenith direction is 0.8°. This small difference is neglected in the analysis, and the angle of the muons relative to the $y$ axis is used to represent the zenith angle $\theta_z$.

At the center of the detector, the magnetic field is parallel to the central axis of the solenoid, which is aligned with the $z$ axis. Muon momenta are reconstructed by measuring the curvature of the muon trajectory projected on the $xy$ plane, which yields the component of muon momentum transverse to the $z$ axis, $p_T = p \sin \theta$, where $\theta$ is the polar angle with respect to the $z$ axis. This configuration is favourable for the reconstruction of atmospheric muons, providing a strong magnetic bending for muons traversing the detector, at any incident azimuthal angle $\phi$ around the $z$ axis. Full tracking of muons is available in the polar angle range $10^\circ < \theta < 170^\circ$.

CMS collected cosmic ray data in several runs during the final years of detector construction and commissioning. Data from the Magnet Test and Cosmic Challenge in 2006 (MTCC) [12] and the Cosmic Run At Four Tesla in 2008 (CRAFT08) [13] are used in the analysis reported here.

In August 2006 the CMS detector was pre-assembled on the surface before being lowered into the cavern. In this configuration no material above the detector was present, apart from the thin metal roof of the assembly hall. A small fraction of each of the subdetectors was instrumented and operating at the time. The details of the MTCC setup are described in [12,14]. About 25 million cosmic-muon events were recorded during the first phase of the MTCC with the magnet at a number of field values ranging from 3.67 to 4.00 T.

The CRAFT08 campaign was a sustained data-taking exercise in October and November 2008 with the CMS detector fully assembled in its final underground position. The full detector, ready for collecting data from LHC, participated in the run, with the magnet at the nominal field of 3.8 T. Approximately 270 million cosmic-muon events were recorded.

Single cosmic muons are simulated using the Monte Carlo event generator CMSCGEN [18,19], which makes use of parameterizations of the distributions of the muon energy and incidence angle based on the air shower program CORSIKA [20]. The CMS detector response is simulated using the GEANT4 program [21], which takes into account the effects of energy loss, multiple scattering, and showering in the detector. A map [19] describing the various materials between the Earth’s surface and the CMS detector is used to obtain the average expected energy loss of simulated muons as a function of their energy, impact point, and incidence direction at the surface.

3. Cosmic-muon reconstruction

Muon tracking in CMS can be performed with the all-silicon tracker at the heart of the detector, and with either three or four stations of muon chambers installed outside the solenoid, sandwiched between steel layers serving both as hadron absorbers and as a return yoke for the magnetic field.

Three types of muon-track reconstruction were designed for cosmic muons not originating from an LHC proton–proton colli-
4. Event selection and analysis

4.1. Analysis of surface data

The cosmic-muon charge ratio was measured by CMS for the first time using MTCC data [14]. For this analysis, only the bottom sector in two (out of five) wheels of the barrel muon system (DT) is used. Selection accepts only muons triggered and reconstructed in a perfectly left–right symmetric fiducial volume with

$$p_T^\text{top}$$ for the global (closed circles) and standalone-muon analyses (open circles), at the PCA. Differences in the distributions are expected, as the global and standalone-track fits have different momentum resolutions and acceptances. (b) Comparison of the $$q/p_T$$ resolution estimate $$dC_T$$ (closed circles) with the true $$C_T$$ resolution (hatched histogram), obtained from simulated global muons.
respect to the vertical axis, emphasized in Fig. 1(bottom), ensuring a charge-symmetric acceptance. About 330,000 events pass the fiducial-volume and track-quality selections. The measured muon charge ratio and its statistical uncertainty are displayed in Fig. 3(a), as a function of the measured muon momentum, before any correction due to detector effects is applied.

The probability of charge misassignment is small for low-momentum muons. At high momenta, resolution effects increase the chance of charge misassignment thus lowering the measured value of the charge ratio. Only muons with a measured momentum below $p_{\text{mdm}} = 200 \text{ GeV}/c$ are included in the analysis.

4.2. Underground global-muon analysis

The 2008 data were recorded using a single-muon trigger requiring the coincidence of muon hits in at least two muon detector layers. Triggers from the DT or RPC systems in the top or the bottom halves of the detector were accepted. The trigger efficiency is high for muons with sufficient momentum (a few GeV/c) to penetrate several layers of the steel return yoke [23]. The subsequent event selection is designed to ensure good track quality and high efficiency.

The muon trajectory in each half of the detector is required to contain at least 20 (out of 44 possible) hits in the DT system. Of these 20 hits, at least 3 hits are required to measure the longitudinal coordinate ($z$), ensuring a good measurement of the polar angle. The muon trajectory is required to contain no hits in the muon or tracker endcaps. The two halves, top and bottom, of each cosmic-muon trajectory are required to be reconstructed as two separate track segments in the silicon tracker, each containing at least 5 hits (out of 12 possible) in the tracker outer barrel system. A loose cut is applied to the normalized $\chi^2$ of each of the two global-muon fits and the polar angles are required to match within $|\Delta \cot \theta| < 0.2$, in order to suppress the small background from multi-muon cosmic shower events. The average transverse momentum of each muon, measured at the PCA, is required to be greater than 10 GeV/c in order to ensure that the muon is able to traverse the entire CMS detector. All selection requirements are applied to the top and bottom muon trajectories.

While the main shaft of the CMS underground area is symmetric with respect to the $yz$ plane, the two auxiliary access shafts are located at asymmetric positions with respect to this plane (cf. Section 2). This causes the geometrical acceptance of the detector to be asymmetric for muons of different charges, since the CMS magnetic field is aligned with the $z$ axis. To remove this effect, muon tracks that cross these auxiliary shafts are not considered in the analysis, nor are muons that cross the mirror images of those regions with respect to the $x = 0$ plane. We refer to this requirement as "symmetric selection". About 245,000 muons are selected. The muon $p_T$ distribution reported in Fig. 2(a) for the selected muons. Fig. 3(b) depicts the measured uncorrected charge ratio as a function of $p_{T\text{PCA}}$.

4.3. Underground standalone-muon analysis

In this analysis the particle trajectory is reconstructed using only the hits in the barrel muon system (DT and RPC). To select muon tracks that are fully contained in the barrel region, events with hits in the endcap CSCs are rejected. A single track is reconstructed using the information from both halves of the detector. Only one standalone muon per event is allowed.

Muon tracks are required to have a transverse momentum, measured at the PCA, larger than 10 GeV/c. At least 45 muon hits (out of 88 possible) are required to be associated with the track. The muon trajectory in the event is also reconstructed as two standalone-muon tracks, one in the upper and one in the lower half of the detector, with more than 20 hits (out of 44 possible) each.

In order to ensure a good track-quality, further selection criteria are applied to the tracks: the normalized $\chi^2$ of each reconstructed muon track must be less than 5, the impact parameter in the $xy$ plane must be less than 100 cm, the track direction at PCA must be vertical within $42^\circ$ in $\theta$ and $60^\circ$ in $\phi$, and the track PCA must lie within the range $|z| < 600$ cm. A "symmetric selection" is also applied as in the global-muon analysis. The number of muons selected is 1.6 million.

The analysis relies on the simulation to correct for charge misassignment and momentum resolution effects, using the data with both a standalone and a tracker track in the event to perform further corrections and estimate systematic uncertainties. From the comparison of tracks reconstructed both in the tracker and in the muon system, the probability of charge misassignment is known to be well below 1% for $p_{T\text{PCA}} < 0.5$ TeV/c, increasing up to about 1.5% in the highest momentum bin. The difference observed between
data and simulation in the subsample of events that include a tracker track is taken into account to correct the charge misassignment and to assign the related systematic uncertainty, as explained in Section 6.

The muon momentum scale and resolution are determined by comparing the transverse momentum of the standalone-muon track to that of the associated tracker track, and are accurately modeled by the simulation. Therefore the momentum unfolding, which provides an estimate of the true momentum of the muon tracks from the measured momentum, can be based on the simulation. An uncertainty on the momentum resolution for all events, including those without a tracker track, is taken into account as a systematic uncertainty. The momentum scale in the tracker volume is set by the magnetic field, which is known to a precision better than 0.1% [24], as confirmed by additional checks performed with early LHC data [25]. The uncorrected muon charge ratio is shown in Fig. 3(b) as a function of $p_{t_{\text{PCA}}}$.

5. Corrections for energy loss and resolution

In order to express the charge ratio measurement as a function of the true momentum at the surface of the Earth, the measured momentum inside the CMS detector has to be corrected for energy lost between the surface of the Earth and the point of measurement. Furthermore, corrections need to be applied for migration of entries from bin to bin due to momentum resolution and for possible misassignment of the muon charge.

5.1. Energy-loss correction

In the MTCC analysis the measured muons are propagated back to the top of CMS, correcting for expected momentum loss and bending in the magnetic field. In addition, the effect of charge misassignment is estimated using simulated events, and a bin-by-bin correction is applied to the measured charge ratio.

For the muons selected in the global and standalone-muon analyses of the 2008 underground data, the average expected energy loss depends strongly on the path followed through the Earth. The underground measurements are corrected for this effect by propagating the trajectory of individual muons back to the Earth’s surface, using the same material model as in the simulation (cf. Section 2). Energy loss in matter is about 0.15% higher for $\mu^+$ than for $\mu^-$ due to slightly larger ionization losses [7]. This difference is taken into account in the energy-loss correction, but affects the measured charge ratio by less than 0.3% over the entire momentum range.

5.2. Unfolding the momentum spectrum

In the underground data analyses, momentum resolution effects in the detector are corrected using an unfolding technique, applied to the charge-signed inverse momentum $C = q/p$. In this procedure represents the measured momentum extrapolated to the Earth’s surface, where the correlation with the true muon momentum is highest.

The measured momentum at the PCA is propagated first to the top of CMS, accounting for the magnetic field and the amount of material traversed, and then from the top of CMS to the surface of the Earth, following a straight line. The angular resolution of the detector is better than 5 mrad. Only muons with an estimated momentum above 30 GeV/c after this correction are kept in the analyses.

Given a vector of true muon counts $N_{i-1}^{\text{true}}$ matrix inversion is used to compute the best estimator $\tilde{N}_{i-1}^{\text{true}}$ from the vector of observed muon counts $N_{i-1}^{\text{measured}}$.

The migration matrix element $M_{ij}$ is the probability that a muon with true $C (C^{\text{true}})$ in bin $j$ is observed with a measured $C (C^{\text{measured}})$ in bin $i$. $\tilde{M}_{ij}$ is an approximation of the exact migration matrix, and is constructed differently for the global and standalone-muon analyses.

In the global-muon analysis the approximate migration matrix estimator is extracted by comparing the true momentum to the reconstructed momentum in simulated events.

In the global-muon analysis the approximate migration matrix is derived directly from the data. For each muon, the $C$ values measured in the top and the bottom half of the detector are propagated individually to the Earth’s surface. The estimated true $C$ is then defined as $C^{\text{true}} = (C_{\text{top}} + C_{\text{bottom}})/2$, and the measured values $C_{\text{top}}$ and $C_{\text{bottom}}$ are used to represent $C^{\text{measured}}$. They both have the desired property $C^{\text{measured}} = C^{\text{true}} \pm d_{C}$, where $d_{C}$ is the $C$ resolution estimator, defined as $d_{C} = (C_{\text{top}} - C_{\text{bottom}})/2$. The matrix $\tilde{M}_{ij}$ is then populated using these estimated values, for all muons in the selected event sample. As the resolution estimator $d_{C}$ gives a good representation of the actual resolution of $C^{\text{true}}$ (Fig. 2(b)), this procedure yields a good approximation of the true migration matrix $M_{ij}$.

In both analyses, variations of the energy loss around the expected value are taken into account in the unfolding procedure by applying an additional 10% Gaussian smearing of the energy-loss correction to the measured momentum when forming the migration matrix. This approximation is based on simulation studies using GEANT4.

The muon counts $N_{i}$ correspond to the bins of the histograms in which the corrected charge ratio results are presented. The bin boundaries were chosen such that the migration between bins is small. The values of the off-diagonal elements of the migration matrix are below 0.1 in the global-muon analysis and less than 0.2 in the standalone-muon analysis.

The measurement of the charge ratio using 2006 data, corrected for energy loss in the detector and for charge misassignment, is depicted in Fig. 4 as a function of the muon momentum, together with the statistical and systematic uncertainties.
The measurements of the muon charge ratio in the global and standalone-muon analyses of 2008 data are displayed in Fig. 5, as a function of the muon momentum. The “raw” result is based on the final alignment including the scale correction discussed in Section 6. The “corrected” results are based on the unfolding and, for the standalone-muon analysis, include an additional charge-misassignment correction.

6. Systematic uncertainties

Systematic uncertainties arise from reconstruction and instrumental effects that can affect differently the detection efficiency and momentum measurement of $\mu^+$ and $\mu^-$. They are evaluated as a function of the muon momentum at the Earth’s surface.

The CMS magnetic field is known with high precision in the region inside the superconducting solenoid, and with less precision in the steel return yoke [24]. Systematic effects on the charge ratio due to the uncertainty on the magnetic field are less than 1%.

A possible bias in the positive and negative muon rates detected underground, due to asymmetries in detector acceptance and uncertainties in the material densities used in the material map (known within 5%), yields a non-negligible uncertainty on the charge ratio only in the lowest momentum bin. The additional effect of the selection cuts is generally small, well below 1%.

The effect of muon production in the nearby rock, either by nuclear photoproduction, $\mu^+\mu^-$ production via bremsstrahlung or deep inelastic muon-nucleus scattering, is found to be negligible [26].

The requirement of a muon trigger in the detector leads to a small difference in efficiency for positive and negative muons, below 1%, which is correlated between the two underground analyses. Both analyses estimate a possible systematic bias induced by the trigger by employing a so-called tag-and-probe technique, using information from both halves of the detector and, in the case of the standalone-muon analysis, information from the independent DT or RPC muon triggers.

In the global-muon analysis the effect of charge misassignment is small, ranging from less than 0.01% at 10 GeV/c to about 1% at 500 GeV/c, and it is corrected by the unfolding procedure, using the data-driven resolution estimator defined in Eq. (1).

In the standalone-muon analysis the charge misassignment correction to the charge ratio, included in the unfolding matrix, is based on simulated events and tested in real data using the subsample of standalone muons with an associated tracker track. A higher rate of charge misassignment is observed in data than in simulation, with a maximum absolute discrepancy of 3% in the highest momentum bin. Since this discrepancy could not be attributed unambiguously to the standalone-muon tracks, a correction is applied equal to 50% of the full effect observed in data, with a systematic uncertainty equal to the correction itself.

The precise alignment of all the tracking-detector components is crucial for accurate reconstruction of high-$p_T$ muons, whose trajectories have only a small curvature in the detector. Cosmic muon tracks from the same 2008 data set used for this analysis are employed to perform such an alignment of the silicon tracker and muon system [27,28]. Possible effects from potential residual misalignment that could lead to momentum migrations and incorrect charge assignments are evaluated by studying various realistic misalignment scenarios in data and simulation. Only the two highest momentum bins are potentially affected by misalignment, as expected, yielding a bias in the charge ratio around 1% in the two highest-momentum bins for the global-muon analysis. For the standalone-muon analysis, the effect in the charge ratio is less than 1% up to 400 GeV/c, and around 4% in the highest-momentum bin.

A global deformation of the detector could be missed during the alignment procedures (a so-called “$\chi^2$-invariant” or “weak” mode [29]), and potentially affect the charge ratio. The most problematic deformation would be a mode which caused a constant offset in $q/p_T^{\mu}$, different from zero, affecting the momentum scale for cosmic muons of opposite charge in opposite directions. A two-parameter fit of the simulated $q/p_T^{\mu}$ distribution to the data is performed using muons in the range $p_T > 200$ GeV/c, leaving the unknown charge ratio and the $q/p_T^{\mu}$ offset in the simulation to vary freely in the fit. An offset of $0.043 \pm 0.022$ c/TeV is found. The measured muon momenta are corrected for this offset and its uncertainty is included as an additional systematic uncertainty on $R$, fully correlated between the two underground measurements, of the order of 1% and 4% respectively in the two highest momentum bins.

In the 2006 MTCC analysis, systematic uncertainties arise mainly from the finite precision of the detector alignment parameters, from the correction of the charge misassignment probability...
and from the slightly larger uncertainty (∼5%) in the scale of the magnetic field in the steel return yoke.

The total systematic uncertainties in the three analyses are summarized in Table 1, as a function of p at the Earth’s surface. The systematic uncertainties have also been evaluated as a function of the vertical momentum component, p cos θ, an observable on which the charge ratio is expected to depend in a simple way [7].

### 7. Results

The results of the three analyses are shown in Fig. 6(a), as a function of the muon momentum. In the region where the results overlap, agreement between them is good, so the individual analyses are combined using a standard prescription [30]. Within each analysis, some systematic uncertainties are assumed to be correlated between momentum bins: trigger efficiency, momentum scale, charge misassignment and asymmetries in the muon losses due to the detector acceptance. In the global and standalone-muon analyses, systematic uncertainties from material densities, event selection, alignment, and magnetic field, are mostly uncorrelated between momentum bins, and are treated as fully uncorrelated. On the other hand, they are correlated between the two analyses.

The combined data points are given in Table 2 as a function of p and p cos θ. They are shown in Fig. 6(a) as a function of p, and in Fig. 6(b) as a function of p cos θ.

#### 7.1. Charge ratio below 100 GeV/c

In the region p < 100 GeV/c there are measurements in six p bins. Three bins are covered by all three analyses, with the surface-based MTCC analysis extending the reach to three lower-momentum bins. These twelve data points are combined into a single value of the charge ratio using the same prescription and scenario for correlations as for the overall combination described in the above section. This yields a charge ratio of 1.2766 ± 0.0032 (stat.) ± 0.0032 (syst.), with a χ^2/ndf = 7.3/11, in good agreement with previous measurements [2–5] and representing a significant improvement in precision.

Repeating this fit in the p cos θ region below 100 GeV/c yields a charge ratio of 1.2722 ± 0.0032 (stat.) ± 0.0036 (syst.), with a χ^2/ndf = 15.3/11. The higher χ^2/ndf indicates that the data in this p cos θ region have a lower probability of being consistent with a flat charge ratio. Fitting just the region p cos θ < 70 GeV/c yields a charge ratio of 1.2728 ± 0.0039 (stat.) ± 0.0040 (syst.) with a χ^2/ndf = 4.0/8, consistent with the flat charge ratio hypothesis.

#### 7.2. Charge ratio in the 5 GeV/c to 1 TeV/c momentum range

Considering the full p cos θ range measured, a rise in the charge ratio is seen, as shown in Fig. 6(b). Comparing to previous measurements in the same momentum ranges, the CMS results agree well where there is overlap: with the L3 + C measure-
Table 2
The muon charge ratio \( R \) from the combination of all three CMS analyses, as a function of \( p \) and \( p \cos \theta_z \), in GeV/c, together with the combined statistical and systematic relative uncertainty, in %.

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<th>( R )</th>
<th>Uncertainty</th>
<th>( p \cos \theta_z ) range</th>
<th>( p \cos \theta_z )</th>
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8. Conclusions

We have measured the flux ratio of positive- to negative-charge cosmic ray muons, as a function of the muon momentum and its vertical component, using data collected by the CMS experiment in 2006 and 2008. The result is in agreement with previous measurements by underground experiments. This is the most precise measurement of the charge ratio in the momentum region below 0.5 TeV/c. It is also the first physics measurement using muons with the complete CMS detector.

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