Dear Igor,

Dear Moskov,

Dear Mickael,

Hello JM, ~~Michael (MK) replying on behalf of the authors~~. That is a group response, **IS**

I just have had a look at the draft that is submitted to the CLAS collaboration review.

It looks in pretty good shape, and I believe that it meets the standards of PRL.

We thank you for this gracious comment.

I have three concerns:

We hope to address them to your satisfaction.

**I-** I am confused with Figure 4. The blue dot-dashed curves resemble very closely to those that I provided to you, but are referred as the Mathieu's calculation (ref.[6]). The magenta curves are referred as Laget's calculation (ref.[9]) but stop at t around -1 GeV2, while I provided you with the entire t distributions.

On the contrary, in Figure 3 the blue dot-dashed curves are correctly associated with my model (ref.[9]).

We thank you for pointing this out. We have corrected the caption.

**II**- The calculations are based on the model described in Phys. Lett. B695 (2011) 199. So, replace PR C72 by PL B695 in ref. [9].

In fact PR C72 uses the same Regge amplitudes as NP B627 (the seminal GLV model), adds the Primakoff amplitude and extends the model the eta production sector.

PL B695 uses non degenerated Regge trajectories and unitarity cuts. The interference between Regge amplitude and elastic unitarity cut (pi\_zero rescattering) leads to nodes at the same location as if a non degenerated Regge amplitude were used in the omega exchange amplitude (as in GLV). Inelastic unitarity cuts (Charge Exchange pion rescattering, omega rescattering, charged rho rescattering) provide strength at large -t and large -u (around 90 deg.) While nucleon and Delta exchange in the u-channel provide the strength at backward angle (large -t, small -u).

We have amended the citation as per request.

**III**- I suggest to replace lines 77-83 by:

"The model of Laget and collaborators [9] included u-channel baryon exchanges, which dominate at backward angles, and elastic and inelastic unitarity cuts, which dominate around 90^{/circ}. That model is expected to describe the full angular range (/theta= 0 to /pi), while the other models are good for more limited ranges of t [4, 6, 8]".

Many thank. Lines edited as:

The model of Laget and collaborators [9] includes u-channel baryon exchanges, which dominate at backward angles, along with elastic and inelastic unitarity cuts and a mechanism called ``saturating”, to fill the intermediate $t$ range. ``Saturating” has all trajectories $\alpha(t) \rightarrow -1$ as a minimum. With these ingredients, the model is expected to describe the full angular range (/theta= 0 to /pi), while the other models are good for more limited ranges of t [4, 6, 8]

All the best

JM

Best Regards

Team π paper