



Press release

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**Approximately 400 million lire raised in the first month. Strong boost expected with sales of the Telethon card, beginning 15 October**

## **Autogrill fund-raising for Telethon beats expectations: greater solidarity among Italians since 11 September, confirmed by CIRM research project**

Rome, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2005 - "Autogrill in viaggio con Telethon", the major fund-raising campaign involving millions of Autogrill customers in Italy, is forging ahead. Since the launch of the initiative one month ago, donations from Autogrill customers together with the equivalent amount offered by the company add up to a grand total of 400 million lire.

The one billion lire target set at the project launch therefore looks well within reach, considering that the fund-raising effort will continue until 13 December, prior to the traditional television marathon to be held on 14 and 15 December.

**The campaign.** How are funds raised? All Autogrill customers can donate 100 lire to Telethon simply by ordering one of the products selected for the initiative: the Mattina menu in snack bars, first-course dishes in Ciao restaurants and the Patapizza menu in Spizzico outlets. An extra 100 lire added to the price of these products will be automatically donated to Telethon on behalf of the customer. For every 100 lire donation, Autogrill will add another 100. Customers who do not wish to make a donation will be able to buy the products at the normal sales price, informing the cashier accordingly.

**The Telethon Card.** Beginning mid-October, all Autogrill locations are also offering the Telethon Card, a receipt for 10,000 lire, whose proceeds will be devolved in full to Telethon. Customers purchasing a Telethon Card receive a gadget and a copy of the "Telethon notizie" bimonthly magazine.

**The reasons for the campaign's success.** In addition to its network and the appeal of some of its top-selling products, Autogrill has put all its employees in Italy at the service of Telethon. Its staff are able to answer all customer questions concerning the campaign.

The success of the initiative is therefore related to the size and characteristics of the Autogrill network in Italy (452 outlets: 344 on motorways, 7 in airports, 7 in rail stations, 94 in city centres and shopping malls; approximately 10,000 employees and approximately 300 million customers per year); above all, however, it reflects the sense of solidarity among Italians which, far from fading in response to concern about the current international crisis, has actually strengthened according to a recent CIRM survey.



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**Italians and solidarity.** A survey conducted for Autogrill by the CIRM Institute has found that the tragic events of 11 September and the ensuing international crisis have not changed Italian attitudes as far as solidarity is concerned. In fact, the balance between people who say they have increased donations and those who have reduced them has improved by 4%. The breakdown by age shows that only people of 66 and over have decided to tighten their purse strings, while all other age groups show a greater propensity to donate, most notably in the 25-34 age group.

The ratio is negative only in north east Italy, and highest in the south. The most generous Italians live in the islands, where propensity to donate has risen by 9.7%.

The **Telethon** initiative was set up in Italy in 1990 to raise funds for scientific research into genetic diseases. It has **already supported more than 1200 projects** and enabled the creation of two major laboratories in Naples and Milan, with funds totalling more than **250 billion lire**. The work of more than 1400 scientists has been financed by these resources, raised thanks to the generosity of Italian viewers of the famous television marathon broadcast on the Rai state network. In the ten years since the initiative began, **more than 90 world-scale discoveries** have been made and the first progress achieved in the fight against genetic disease. Thanks to the vital support provided by Telethon, Italian research has made enormous strides in just a few years, with the result that increasing resources are needed to ensure the continuation of this success, which has seen the return to Italy of dozens of scientists.

**Autogrill** today is the world's leading provider of restaurant services for people on the move. Present in 15 countries in 4 continents with **44,000** employees, it runs more than **4,300 outlets in approximately 900 locations**: motorway service areas, airports, rail stations, shopping malls and city centres.

Autogrill has operations in Italy, France, Spain, Austria, Germany, Benelux, Greece and Switzerland and is also a leading player in America, which accounts for approximately half of its revenues. In 2000, it reported revenues in excess of **6,000 billion lire**.