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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

During a Gala Dinner in New York

GILBERTO BENETTON BESTOWED THE GEI AWARD

New York, October 6 - Gilberto Benetton, Chairman of Autogrill, received the prestigious "GEI AWARD" today during a gala held in the Grand Ballroom of the Essex House in Manhattan, in the presence of over three hundred illustrious guests, including Italian and American personalities, representatives of the business, economics, and financial worlds, and the media.

During the award ceremony, Lucio Caputo, President of GEI - Gruppo Esponenti Italiani, stressed that the award was presented to Benetton, one of Italy's most significant and successful entrepreneurs, in recognition and appreciation for all his activities in favor of the Italian industry and for the great contribution given to the improvement of the image and prestige of Italy in the world.

"Gilberto Benetton," continued Caputo, "is responsible for the Benetton family's diversification over the last 20 years in the retail, infrastructure and real estate sectors since he started in 1965, with his brothers Giuliana, Luciano and Carlo, The Benetton Group, a leader in the fashion industry."

Ambassador Armando Varricchio, who came directly from Washington, expressed his most congenial congratulations to Gilberto Benetton for the prestigious award that documented his long participation to the growth, diversification and expansion on a global scale of the Group's activities. The Ambassador emphasized that the Benetton name is added and linked to that of other great Italians, from Gianni Agnelli to Sergio Pininfarina, who have greatly contributed to the image of Italy in the world. The Ambassador also warmly congratulated

the President of GEI, Lucio Caputo, underlining the great work he has done in favor of Italy for all these years.

The award ceremony coincided with the celebrations for the 40th anniversary of the presence of Autogrill - the world's leading global operator in the food and beverage services for travelers - in the United States, and these two events have made President Benetton's presence in New York even more interesting.

For the occasion, warm messages of congratulations arrived from Governor Cuomo, Mayor de Blasio, Minister of Foreign Affairs Alfano, Ambassador Varricchio and Confindustria President Boccia, all of which underlined that the award is a highly-deserved recognition for the Benetton family and all of the activities of Gilberto Benetton.

The dinner, which was preceded by a reception, featured both an Italian menu of the highest gastronomy, including an exceptional Ossobuco, and prestigious wines that were kindly provided by the Bertani, Ferrari and Planeta wineries. For the GEI AWARD, an elegant, printed program was distributed to all of the distinguished guests in attendance, including Italian and American authorities and personalities.

After the presentation of the award (an artistic sculpture created specifically for GEI by Arnaldo Pomodoro), President Benetton delivered a speech in which, after having thanked GEI for the honor he received, he pledged to continue to contribute to the development and international growth of Italy.

“Being in New York at this time,” continued Benetton, “is a great source of pride for me, also because we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of Autogrill – the company of which I am Chairman – by participating in the *New Yorker TechFest*, an iconic event dedicated to innovation and technological transformation. Today, more than ever, the environment in which businesses operate calls for cross-national realities, capable, beginning with the strength of size, to compete as unique integrated players.”

“This, therefore, is a hope that,” concluded Benetton, “the companies we guide will develop and, at the same time, an invitation to the political world to lead with the intelligence and the foresight needed to ensure that the development potential of the businesses in our country is expressed and that companies are provided with what is needed over the long term in order to successfully face the difficulties of today and the growth opportunities of tomorrow.”

The GEI AWARD is one of the most distinguished Italian initiatives that take place in New York and over the years has been presented to some of the most important Italians and Americans, including: Gianni Agnelli, Biagio Agnes, Robert E. Allen, Luciano Benetton, Guido Carli, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, Emilio Colombo, Mario Cuomo, Claudio Del Vecchio,

Amalia Ercoli Finzi, Pier Francesco Guarguaglini, John E. Grettenberger, Edward M. Kennedy, Emma Marcegaglia, Vittorio Merloni, Leonardo Mondadori, Mario Monti, Gian Marco Moratti, Giorgio Napolitano, Umberto Nordio, Corrado Passera, Luciano Pavarotti, Sandro Pertini, Sergio Pininfarina, Leontyne Price, Alessandro Profumo, David Rockefeller, Renato Ruggero, Massimo Sarmi, Paolo Scaroni, Marvin S. Traub, Marco Tronchetti Provera, Roberto Vittori, Bruno Vespa and Ellen Wolff.

Founded in 1974, GEI - Gruppo Esponenti Italiani is a non-profit organization with no politic involvement. The members of GEI are some of the most important Italian representatives in the United States who joined the organization to participate in its many initiatives that serve to improve the image of Italy in the United States.

For more information on GEI and the organization's activities, visit: www.geinewyork.com

