

Palermo Fire Department Named “Best Firefighting Team in the World 2013”

International Conrad Dietrich Magirus Award 2013 presented in Ulm. The winning team is Italian and won a visit to the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY). Second place goes to Botoșani Fire Department (Romania) while Mooskirchen Fire Department (Austria) takes the third place.

Ulm, November 26nd - Palermo Fire Department was awarded with the title of “Best Firefighting Team in the World 2013”, winning the **Conrad Dietrich Magirus** award 2013, assigned by Iveco Magirus Brandschutztechnik GmbH.

Firefighting teams from different countries in the world competed for the title of “Best Firefighting Team of the Year” and have been voted online. During a ceremony taking place at the Congress Centrum in Ulm, at the presence of the mayor of Ulm, **Ivo Gonner**, and the President of the Bayern Munich Football Club, **Uli Hoeneß**, the trophy was assigned to the Palermo Fire Department, followed by Botoșani Fire Department (Romania) and Mooskirchen Fire Department (Austria) in third place.

“For us, this was a very special event, first of all because we welcomed so many deserving firefighters here today, from Germany and from other countries, then because this was a celebration for people who put their life on the line for us on a daily basis in emergency situations. The Conrad Dietrich Magirus award intends to thank and celebrate what firefighters do for us ” said Antonio Benedetti, Managing Director of Iveco Magirus Brandschutztechnik GmbH.

During the ceremony, over 400 invited guests experienced the full range of tasks that firefighters are confronted with on a day-to-day basis. Some of the candidates of the award 2013, protagonists of the event, told about extraordinary missions, ranging



from a stubborn forest fire to the tricky rescue of a family stranded on high seas, and from severe snow storms to an infernal fire in a highway tunnel.

An international jury of experts put together a shortlist of ten emergency callouts in six different countries before the chosen finalists faced a second hurdle: a public online vote held on www.world-of-firefighters.com was to decide the ultimate winner.

A split-second decision

Palermo Fire Department secured the most votes. There was a callout that the team will never forget, as fire chief Salvatore La Sala explained. One December night, there was a call to attend a four-story building to examine the structure – which in itself is not unusual in a city like Palermo with its historic center. However, the team quickly discovered on-site that the situation was far more serious. Cracks spread across the walls, and the stonework was crumbling. The fire department immediately began to evacuate the building, and just eight minutes later the entire building collapsed.

A courageous callout

La Sala described the dramatic situation at the award ceremony: *“There was a giant cloud of dust and debris. We could hear screams and were very concerned about the residents and our colleagues.”* Thanks to their brave and rapid action, the Palermo Fire Department crew managed to rescue 15 people from the building.

“Such a performance takes many years of experience and a well-established team of individuals who can rely on each other completely,” said Michel Bour, general secretary of the International Association of Fire and Rescue Services (CTIF), praising the crew on behalf of the jury. Antonio Benedetti also congratulated the winners before presenting them with the Conrad Dietrich Magirus statue together with Lars Riedel, Olympic gold medalist and five-time world champion. The fire departments of Botoșani and Mooskirchen were presented with certificates of honor for second and third place.

Trip to New York City Fire Department

In addition to the statue, the outstanding commitment of the winning team was recognized with an exceptional prize: a travel to New York to visit the most well-known firefighting team in the world – the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY). There the Italian team will have the opportunity to learn all about the work of their American colleagues up close and in person. They will visit various fire stations, step aboard the world's most modern fireboat, and experience how the US firefighters prepare for their work by attending a live training session at "The Rock" training academy.

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