

## Italy's fire departments honoured as "International Firefighting Team of the Year 2016"

*Earthquake helpers distinguished for extraordinary performance and teamwork / Formal awards ceremony with more than 700 guests in Ulm / National Award goes to Lehrte Volunteer Fire Department*

Ulm, 27 January 2017

All Fire Department teams that helped during the series of earthquakes in central Italy in summer 2016 have now received a special award for their performance. On Friday evening, 27 January 2017, in front of an audience of more than 700 fire fighters and guests from all over the world at the Congress Centrum Ulm, Germany, they won the coveted Conrad Dietrich Magirus Award together with the title "International Firefighting Team of the Year 2016". Likewise, the jury as well as online voters awarded prizes to two particularly demanding firefighting operations. The fire department from the huge São Paulo metropolis in Brazil was also among the top three teams as was the fire department of Altenmarkt, Austria (near St. Gallen) with only 840 inhabitants. The São Paulo fire department fought a dangerous fire in an industrial company; the Altenmarkt fire department was confronted by a major fire in a magnesium foundry with multiple explosions. The award as "National Firefighting Team of the Year" went to the Volunteer Fire Department from Lehrte, Lower Saxony, for a demanding rescue operation on the A2 motorway. The Volunteer Fire Department Erkrath in North Rhine-Westphalia earned the Special Prize for Social Commitment.

"Fire departments make an enormous contribution to our society," said Marc Dienes, CEO of Magirus, in his welcome address. "The winners of the Conrad Dietrich Magirus Award 2016 represent the many hundreds of thousands of personnel worldwide who risk their lives daily." London Fire Commissioner Danielle Cotton QFSM, guest of honour, also paid tribute to her colleagues. "The submissions show the great physical and mental demands of fire department tasks. I am pleased that the Conrad Dietrich Magirus Award honours this commitment." On 1 January 2017, Cotton was appointed Commissioner of London Fire Brigade – with 103 firehouses and over 6,000 employees, one of the largest fire departments in the world. She is the first woman to head this organisation.

This year, the Conrad Dietrich Magirus Award was presented by two people who will go down in history with the spectacular rescue operation in the Riesending Cave near Berchtesgaden in 2014: Klemens Reindl from the Bavarian Mountain Rescue Service and Marko Budić from the Croatian Mountain Rescue Service. With their teams and 700 additional people, they were part of one of the



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largest mountain rescue operations seen in Germany. After eleven days, they brought the badly injured speleologist Johann Westhauser to safety from a depth of more than 1,000 metres.

The Conrad Dietrich Magirus Award is now in its fifth consecutive year and is considered to be the "Oscar of the firefighting industry". Over one hundred fire departments from numerous cities and municipalities throughout Germany as well as from Europe, South America, Asia, Oceania and the Middle East participated in the competition, often with daring missions. A jury comprised Michel Bour, General Secretary of CTIF (the International Federation of Fire and Rescue Services), Ann Marie Knecht, Editor-in-Chief of the English magazine "Fire and Rescue", Hermann Kollinger from the Austrian fire brigade magazine "Brennpunkt", Piotr Pajor Vicepresident of Firemax Sp. z o.o. in Poland and Tristan Reitz from Magirus chose the best applications. After being put online, they were subject to public online voting. The winners received the most votes both from the jury and online voters. This resulted in the teams from Italy and Lower Saxony being the clear winners. They received the Conrad Dietrich Magirus Statue as well as a trip for ten members from each fire department to the most well-known fire department in the world: The Fire Department City of New York (FDNY).

#### **Perfect teamwork**

During the awards ceremony, the invited guests repeatedly viewed images of the impressive performance of this year's winners and finalists. The pictures illustrated that the actions of the Italian winners are a prime example for exceptional teamwork. On 24 August 2016, an earthquake of magnitude 6.2 destroyed numerous villages in central Italy. People had to be rescued from the rubble and approximately 40,000 people brought to safety. Teams from over twelve regions as well as the large cities of Rome, Arezzo, Bologna, Venice and Pescara sped to the disaster area in central Italy to help with all possible resources. The rescue teams had carried out 26,251 relief operations by 22 September 2016.

The missions of the other top three finalists also left lasting impressions. The Volunteer Fire Department Altenmarkt was confronted by a large fire in a magnesium foundry with several explosions. Two firefighters were injured; in the end, however, the fire was successfully extinguished. The Fire Department São Paulo also had a difficult fire to fight. An industrial enterprise with several containers of highly flammable sodium dichloroisocyanurate – a substance used in detergents and disinfectants – had gone up in flames, releasing large quantities of toxic fumes. For over two days, the Fire Department São Paulo worked side by side with the plant fire department to quell the dangerous fire.

In addition to the so called "Firefighting Oscar", a Special Prize for Social Commitment was given at the national level. It was won by the Volunteer Fire Department Erkrath. Its members collected donations for the Regenbogenland Children's Hospice in Dusseldorf by attracting passers-by in many local towns with a pink fire truck. For this, they did not only receive the coveted Award Statue, but can also look forward to weekend at the Magirus Excellence Center in Ulm – including training in the company's own Fire Fighter Academy.

### **Sponsors support the Conrad Dietrich Magirus Award**

In 2016, the Conrad Dietrich Magirus Award was again supported by renowned companies in the firefighting industry. ENDRESS Elektrogerätebau, DÖNGES alongside LUKAS/VETTER provided support during all phases of the competition – from the announcement and submission process to the awards ceremony in Ulm.

### **About Magirus**

*Passion and precision, high-tech and craftsmanship. Since 1864, Magirus has combined innovation and tradition to assist firefighters throughout the world. With a comprehensive range of state-of-the-art, reliable fire engines, turntable ladders, rescue and equipment vehicles, special solutions, pumps and portable pumps, Magirus is known globally as one of the largest and technologically leading providers of firefighting and disaster control technology.*

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