



In an appraisal of the local firefighting crew's work over the previous year made public today by the Formentera Council president's office, department head Bartomeu Escandell saluted workers on a job well done and highlighted "twelve months without big wildfires". In 2016 firefighters put out 47 fires, a figure that represented a year-on-year increase of twelve and reflected blazes that, on the whole, occurred in forested areas. In total, the fire crew was called into duty 136 times –nine more than in 2015– to fight back flames or oversee other interventions, including preventive work.

### **Espalmador fire**

Councillor Escandell recalled a blaze that broke out last summer on the island of Espalmador as one of the year's most dangerous. He said that wildfire's quick taming was "thanks to the rapid response of local firefighters, regional forest crews (Ibanat) and other volunteers". Formentera's fire brigade, a six-person team, has got two pick-up trucks and two water pumps on hand. Escandell also pointed out the administration's recent acquisition of an additional rapid response vehicle aimed at promoting even swifter action and more efficient wildfire prevention.

Escandell underscored the importance of help from Ibanat, Formentera's civil protection force, Guardia Civil and the local police in addition to assistance from volunteers and water delivery firms that made use of their equipment available to firefighters as necessary. The Formentera Council sponsors wildfire risk awareness outreach in an effort to show, in Escandell's words, "that even little steps –not tossing cigarette ends out windows, for example– can be effective in preventing tragedies in the Balearics".