The reward at the end of a long road, Formentera has at last received the recognition of UNICEF's Child-friend City programme (CFC), an initiative whose objective it is to promote local application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and at the same time support the joint efforts of the different municipalities that boast the distinction.

The decision to bestow the island with the UNICEF programme's quality seal came after a round of assessment -which takes place only once every two years- determined Formentera to be eligible. An evaluation committee traveled to the island in September in order to establish whether the projects overseen by the Council met with the programme's criteria.

Among other factors, the committee took into account the active inclusion of children in the political process, the routine creation of local youth plans, and the promotion of policies that benefit children. The UNICEF seal will be awarded 7 November in a ceremony to take place in Guadalajara, Mexico.

The distinction is a nod for all of the work that the Formentera Council has conducted in support of children and adolescents. In 2012, the Comité Balear of UNICEF provided the Formentera Office of Youth Services with an acknowledgement of good practises as part of the fourth annual call to recognise promotion of rights of the child and effective local policy. The evaluation applauded local efforts to promote equality, the work of Formentera's youth council, and the efforts of the “Es Molí” Social Centre.

The decision to grant this most-recent accolade was announced 17 October, when the Formentera Council learned it would join the councils of Eivissa, Maó and Santanyí on the list of Balearic municipalities to receive the honour in 2014. A total of 119 municipalities in Spain have been awarded the 'Child-friendly City' distinction.

The jury that grants the title is formed by the Spanish chapter of UNICEF, the Spanish Department of Health, Social Services and Equality, the Federation of Spanish Municipalities and Provinces and the University Institute of Needs and Rights of Children and Adolescents.

“A source of great motivation to continue in the struggle for youth rights”

Formentera's councillor of social welfare and youth services, Dolores Fernández Tamargo, hailed the distinction as “a source of great motivation to continue in the struggle for youth rights, not to mention proof of the work done by the adult population of Formentera to support its children and adolescents, the future of this island.”

According to Councillor Fernández, “not only does the UNICEF jury's ruling applaud the creation of the local youth council, it also acknowledges a host of other projects presented as part of the Formentera Council's bid, including both past efforts and projects that are envisioned for the 2014-2018 period.”

Councillor Fernández thanked the workers of local social services and educational institutions, and in particular acknowledged the important work being done by Formentera's primary schools and secondary school, before also recognising “the task of my colleagues in the public administration who have been so invested in the project.”