



# BRITs campaign launched at NFE 2007

Repatriation expenses for UK citizens who die overseas can be three times as much as the cost of returning foreign nationals on the same route. Key Air & Sea and SAIF are leading the campaign for fairer charges. Barry Birdsall reports.



Pauline Birdsall got all the national presidents to sign the petition.

BRIT stands for Beat Repatriation Inequality Together - the campaign to reduce inbound repatriation charges for UK citizens who die abroad. It was first mentioned as a vague idea to Mervyn Pilley at a SAIF regional meeting. We discussed how the freight charges for a returning British subject can be three times the amount it would cost to return a foreign national on the same route, and how often these charges are paid by the families. From the start SAIF has given its full backing to make the campaign a success.

It was decided to launch the campaign at NFE 2007. It became immediately apparent that it was a cause close to the hearts of funeral directors: 120 signatures were added to the petition on the first day of the exhibition, taken by two members of Key Air



& Sea's repatriation staff. Chas Nethercott and the rest of the chain gang led the way with a ceremonial signing. With two more members of staff joining us for the Saturday and Sunday we knew the campaign was off to a promising start.

In total the Key Air staff collected 517 signatures from visitors and exhibitors and would have collected many more if we had more time. We were overwhelmed by the support we received, and were concerned by stories of expensive repatriations both inbound and outbound. We were surprised by the number of funeral directors still dealing directly with airlines and not taking advantage of the discounts repatriation agents get. As long as funeral directors go direct the airlines feel that their pricing structure is justified.

Some of the airlines we have contacted have shown an interest and reduced some of the inbound charges. We are hoping that once one airline is persuaded to sign the BRITs campaign agreement it will create a snowball effect with others following shortly.

We are sorry if we missed you at the show and didn't get your signature, but as anyone within a 20 foot radius of our stand will confirm we tried to speak to everyone. You can, however, still register your support and get updates on the campaign website [www.backthebrits.com](http://www.backthebrits.com). Please sign up and show your support, and please tell your friends and colleagues. It is now time for BRITs to get a fair deal.

**We would like to thank Mervyn, Chas and all the staff at SAIF and Golden Charter for their tremendous support. Without them the campaign would still be just a vague idea.**