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Press Notice

Five senior UK judges depart for discussions in Germany

Three Supreme Court Justices, the Master of the Rolls and the Head of International Judicial Relations for England and Wales travel to Germany today for the start of a three-day study visit where they will discuss a range of legal issues with the sixteen members of the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe.

Lord Hope, Deputy President of the Supreme Court, Lord Neuberger, the Master of the Rolls, Lord Mance, Lord Reed and Lady Justice Arden will be greeted later today by Prof Dr Andreas Voßkuhle, Chairperson of the Second Senate, and Prof Dr Ferdinand Kirchhof, Chairperson of the First Senate. Court of Appeal judge Lady Justice Arden joins the delegation in her capacity as the Head of International Judicial Relations for England and Wales.

Over the course of the visit, the UK delegation will discuss a range of topics with their counterparts, including the role of courts in the process of European integration and the handling of cases which involve issues of national security.

Unlike the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, the role of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany is to act as the supreme guardian of the state's Constitution. It can 'strike down' legislation that it decides violates the Basic Law, which binds all state authority in Germany. It does not have any appellate jurisdiction. The Court consists of two Senates, each of which has eight members headed by a Chair. The Court sits as a 'chamber' of three members. It holds a small number of oral hearings each year, but many hundreds of its decisions are based on written materials.

The visit is part of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom's wider commitment to developing professional relationships with courts in Europe and beyond, and to deepen and broaden a shared understanding of common law jurisprudence and the role of the judiciary within a safe and stable society.

Ends

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Notes to editors

The Supreme Court and the Judicial Office for England and Wales will bear the cost of air travel to and from Germany for its delegates, with all other costs covered by the hosts.

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