

International Wire Story

Radio New Zealand

Five women have taken Britain to Europe's top court over laws that prevent female heirs from standing for election to the House of Lords.

Most of the about 800 members of Britain's House of Lords are appointed, but the chamber includes 90 hereditary peers, elected from a small pool of people with aristocratic titles.

The women, part of campaign group Daughters' Rights, are challenging the ancient law of primogeniture, which dictates that such titles pass down through the male line.

They've urged the British government to change the law so all hereditary titles can be passed on to heirs, regardless of their gender.

The Commonwealth has already agreed to change the rules of succession for the British Monarchy so that males would no longer have precedence as heir to the throne.