

On newspapers in Denmark

Among the seven most read daily newspapers in the Kingdom of Denmark, only one is led by a woman as editor-in-chief—and she shares the position with a man.

This is the case of Ms. **Mette Østergaard**, who took over the conservative daily *Berlingske* as co-editor-in-chief on 1 January 2018. Previously, Mr. **Tom Jensen** was the editor-in-chief of the newspaper, as he still is today, alongside Ms. **Østergaard**.

It is not the first time that *Berlingske*, Denmark's oldest newspaper, is led by a woman. Ms. **Lisbeth Knudsen** ran the newspaper from November 2007 to October 2015 and was at the same time CEO of the newspaper's publishing group, Berlingske Media. And, even before that, Ms. **Anne E. Jensen** was editor-in-chief of the newspaper from 1996 to 1998.

Regarding the rest of Danish newspapers, the influence of women seems to have been more limited, at least at the top position. Reference can be made to the case of Ms. **Dorthe Carsen**, who has lead, as editor-in-chief, the Midtjyske Medier group, which published around 20 titles in Denmark, or Ms. **Ida Ebbensgaard**, recently appointed as editor-in-chief of the media company Zetland, succeeding another woman, Ms. **Lea Korsgaard**. But these designations of a corporate nature have not been translated into greater representation of women as editors-in-chief at the country's largest daily newspapers.

The genders of the chief editors among the main Danish daily newspapers¹ are shown in Table 1 below²:

TABLE 1

Newspaper	Number of weekly readers (2019) (Statista) (in 1,000s)	Political alignment	Publishing group	Gender editor-in-chief (name)
B.T.	625	Conservatism ³	Berlingske Media	Male (<i>Michael Dyrby</i>)
Politiken	556	Social liberalism	JP/Politikens Hus	Male (<i>Christian Jensen</i>)
Jyllands-Posten	412	Liberal conservatism	JP/Politikens Hus	Male (<i>Jacob Nybroe</i>)
Berlingske	334	Conservatism	Berlingske Media	Female and Male (<i>Mette Østergaard and Tom Jensen</i>)

¹ The data comes from the market and consumer data company Statista and is based on the number of weekly readers corresponding to 2019. Further information on the survey can be found on Statista's website: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/595926/ranking-of-national-daily-newspapers-in-denmark-by-number-of-readers/> [Date Consulted: 16 December 2020].

² No distinction has been made between the traditional "tabloid" (*B.T.*, *Jyllands-Posten* and *Ekstra Bladet*), and "broadsheet" or "quality" (the rest) newspaper categories, and they are therefore included interchangeably. Business journals (*Børsen*) have not been excluded either.

³ The newspaper's conservative stance seems to have softened over the last decades, according to website "euro|topics": <https://www.eurotopics.net/en/148632/bt#> [Date Consulted: 16 December 2020].

Ekstra Bladet	287	Traditionally centre-left, no current alignment ⁴	JP/Politikens Hus	Male (<i>Poul Madsen</i>)
Børsen	246	Economic liberalism ⁵	JP/Politikens Hus and Bonnier Group	Male (<i>Bjarne Corydon</i>)
Kristeligt Dagblad	216	Christianism	Kristeligt Dagblad A / S and Chr. Augustinus Fabrikker	Male (<i>Erik Bjerager</i>)

In the light of the data contained in Table 1 above, some facts can be inferred:

- (1) Only one Danish newspaper among the country's seven main journals is run by a woman: Ms. **Østergaard** at *Berlingske*. This conservative newspaper has a certain tradition of electing women as editors-in-chief, at least since 1996 with the appointment of Ms. **Jensen**.
- (2) The other newspaper published by the Berlingske Media group, *B.T.*, which is also the largest newspaper in the country, is run by a man: Mr. **Dyrby**.
- (3) All other newspapers are still headed by men —particularly noteworthy is the case of the media company JP/Politikens Hus, which publishes 4 newspapers out of a total of 7 among the most read in Denmark, all of which are edited by male editors-in-chief.
- (4) The only business newspaper in the table, *Børsen*, is also edited by a man, Mr. **Corydon**. So is the Christian-oriented newspaper *Kristeligt Dagblad* with Mr. **Bjerager** as editor-in-chief.
- (5) This situation of imbalance does not appear to be unknown to some of the actors involved. Ms. **Østergaard** has been denouncing the barriers to entry for women in Danish journalism since she was appointed editor-in-chief at *Berlingske*.

According to Statista (see note 1), the written press is declining in popularity among the Danish population: if in 2010 half of the Danes read the written press, by 2017 this had fallen to 38%. This figure is compensated by the digital press, read by 84% of the survey respondents. In any case, one thing is clear: according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2020 published by the World Economic Forum, Denmark is the 14th most equal country in the world when it comes to men and women. If they want to move up the rankings, perhaps they should do better also in this field.

⁴ According to Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ekstra_Bladet [Date Consulted: 16 December 2020].

⁵ *Børsen* is a business newspaper.