# Employment tribunal begins hearing over greenwashing claims at AMV BBDO



A UK employment tribunal is set to begin hearing a significant case involving AMV BBDO, one of the country’s leading creative agencies, and Polina Zabrodskaya, a former creative director who alleges she faced discrimination and harassment for raising concerns about greenwashing in advertising campaigns.

The tribunal’s preliminary hearing, scheduled for today, represents the initial stage of Zabrodskaya’s claim, which challenges the agency over its handling of her objections to sustainability claims made in campaigns for Mars brands including Galaxy chocolate and Sheba cat food. This hearing, typically conducted over the telephone, will determine whether the case should proceed to a full tribunal process, which could be protracted unless a settlement is reached.

Lawrence Davies, Zabrodskaya’s solicitor from Equal Justice, has described the claim as potentially “the most significant climate and environmental sustainability whistleblower tribunal claim to date,” highlighting its focus on “critical issues that many global corporations ignore or greenwash.” Zabrodskaya herself has been unusually transparent about her case, sharing details publicly on LinkedIn and in an interview with The Drum, where she framed the dispute as a clash between personal conscience and commercial interests within advertising.

In her public commentary, Zabrodskaya expressed ethical reservations about the verifiability of the sustainability messaging in the campaigns she was involved with back in 2021. She likened the pervasive nature of greenwashing to the smog of her Russian childhood—ubiquitous and overlooked—and characterised industry sustainability claims not as one “big lie” but as a series of softer, polished distortions.

AMV BBDO has stated it intends to “refute the various claims” made in the tribunal and has refrained from commenting while proceedings are ongoing, following standard practice. The agency acknowledged internally addressing the issue and has commissioned two independent human resources reviews, which reportedly found no evidence supporting the allegation of retaliation or discrimination prompted by Zabrodskaya’s concerns. A spokesperson for AMV BBDO reiterated the agency’s commitment to sustainability and ethical communications and pointed out its membership in the industry-wide Ad Net Zero initiative.

Mars has characterised the case as an “internal employment dispute” and reaffirmed its commitment to sustainability, citing significant investments and pledges to maintain a deforestation-free supply chain. The company emphasised that its advertising adheres to all relevant regulatory and internal standards.

Gordon Young, editor of The Drum, contextualised the case within a larger debate affecting the advertising industry: “What protections, if any, should exist for those who act as whistleblowers or conscientious objectors within creative agencies? The ad world thrives on bold ideas – but are there limits to how boldly individuals can push back when those ideas, in their view, edge into greenwashing?”

The case involving Zabrodskaya and AMV BBDO is among the first to bring these complex issues of ethics, environmental claims, and employee protections into the public legal domain, with potential implications for how creative agencies manage sustainability-related disputes in the future.

The tribunal proceedings are ongoing.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.campaignasia.com/article/greenwashing-allegations-against-mars-lead-to-amv-bbdo-facing-employment-tribunal/501237> - This article corroborates the employment tribunal case involving Polina Zabrodskaya and AMV BBDO, focusing on her concerns about greenwashing in advertising campaigns for Mars brands like Galaxy and Sheba.
2. <https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/fight-the-multibillion-greenwashing-machine/> - This CrowdJustice page supports Zabrodskaya's claim against AMV BBDO by outlining her legal fund for challenging the agency over its handling of her objections to greenwashing claims.
3. <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/uk-whistleblower-takes-advertising-agency-amv-bbdo-to-tribunal-over-greenwashing-claims/> - This article highlights Zabrodskaya’s allegations of harassment and discrimination after speaking out against greenwashing practices in advertising campaigns.
4. <https://bylinetimes.com/2025/04/14/greenwashing-global-advertising/> - The article details Zabrodskaya's public efforts to expose greenwashing in advertising, her constructive dismissal claim, and the broader implications for whistleblower protections in the industry.
5. <https://www.climatewhistleblowers.org/ad-agency-greenwashing-lawsuit/> - This article explains Zabrodskaya's tribunal claim as a landmark case against AMV BBDO, emphasizing her role as an environmental whistleblower and the industry's response to her allegations.
6. <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source provides an overview of the case and its implications for future whistleblower protections and sustainability-related disputes within creative agencies.
7. <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2025/04/24/sustainability-whistleblower-s-employment-case-against-amv-bbdo-commences> - Please view link - unable to able to access data