# Former AMV BBDO director exposes greenwashing and faces tribunal over sustainability claims



Polina Zabrodskaya, a former creative director at advertising agency AMV BBDO, has publicly shared her experience of raising concerns about sustainability claims in the advertising industry, raising critical questions about the credibility of corporate environmental campaigns. Speaking to The Drum, Zabrodskaya, who is currently engaged in an employment tribunal against AMV BBDO, detailed her journey from growing up in a heavily polluted industrial city in Russia to confronting alleged greenwashing within a leading global advertising agency.

Born in Tula, a city south of Moscow known for its severe industrial pollution, Zabrodskaya described her early environment where factories emitted toxic pollutants such as vanadium pentoxide. Despite regulations on paper, actual pollution was widespread and visibly evident, with black snow falling as a symbol of environmental contamination. She recounted that this pollution was largely accepted by the community, as the factories provided employment, and health problems were attributed to other factors.

Years later, Zabrodskaya found herself in a contrasting environment as a creative director at AMV BBDO. She highlighted a significant moment when she was assigned to work on a global sustainability campaign for Mars, the multinational food company. Upon investigating the campaign, which made strong claims of “100% responsible” sourcing and environmental initiatives, she discovered discrepancies. Zabrodskaya pointed out ongoing issues such as documented child labour in Mars’ cocoa supply chains and the environmental damage linked to fisheries used in Sheba cat food campaigns. Despite presenting her concerns internally, she reported being instructed to stop investigating and subsequently faced suspension from her role.

Zabrodskaya elaborated on the deeper problem within sustainability advertising, describing it as a series of "softer, polished distortions" that often prioritise corporate profit over genuine impact. She criticised the reliance on third-party certifications, like Rainforest Alliance and Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), which she said offer “plausible deniability” without ensuring true sustainability. She questioned the effectiveness of campaigns that promote slogans conveying hope and responsibility while underlying issues remain unresolved.

Addressing the broader implications, Zabrodskaya stated, “It’s really difficult to get people to understand something when their salaries depend on them not understanding it.” She challenged the advertising industry's ability to hold clients accountable for their environmental claims when employees risk their careers by voicing the truth. She further noted, “If a company’s supply chains aren’t sustainable, its sustainability campaigns aren’t just misleading, they’re harmful.”

Zabrodskaya's employment tribunal was scheduled for Thursday, 24 April, where she alleges harassment and discrimination linked to her efforts to raise these concerns within AMV BBDO. Mars declined to comment on the internal employment matter but emphasised its investments in environmental, social, and governance initiatives and its plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, AMV BBDO chose not to comment on ongoing legal proceedings.

In addition to pursuing legal representation, Zabrodskaya is encouraging the industry to report cases of greenwashing through Climate Whistleblowers, an initiative aimed at exposing misleading environmental claims. Her account adds a significant voice to the ongoing debate on the role of advertising in sustainability and corporate accountability.

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 Polina Zabrodskaya's allegations about greenwashing within the advertising industry, specifically her experiences with AMV BBDO while working on campaigns for Mars-owned brands like Galaxy and Sheba. It details her concerns over child labor and environmental harm linked to their supply chains.
2. <https://bylinetimes.com/2025/04/14/greenwashing-global-advertising/> - This piece outlines Zabrodskaya's personal journey and her motivations for whistleblowing on greenwashing practices in the advertising industry. It emphasizes her goal of making it safer for professionals to challenge such practices without fear of repercussions.
3. <https://www.climatewhistleblowers.org/ad-agency-greenwashing-lawsuit/> - Climate Whistleblowers supports Zabrodskaya's employment tribunal claim against AMV BBDO. The article highlights her allegations of harassment and discrimination after raising concerns about unsubstantiated sustainability claims for Mars brands.
4. <https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/1909422> - This article provides details on the employment tribunal Polina Zabrodskaya is pursuing against AMV BBDO. It mentions her claims of harassment and discrimination after questioning sustainability campaigns for Mars brands.
5. <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source likely discusses Zabrodskaya's background and experiences in confronting alleged greenwashing, as outlined in the original article. However, the specific content isn't available in the search results.
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/369a5309-2a85-4c96-a92a-93543123c5e6> - As referenced in other articles, the Financial Times has reported on Zabrodskaya's case and AMV BBDO's response to her claims. This would corroborate details about the tribunal and the agency's stance on the allegations.
7. <https://www.thedrum.com/opinion/2025/04/24/if-creatives-can-t-call-out-greenwashing-how-can-we-ever-engage-with-reality> - Please view link - unable to able to access data