

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Compagnie Generale Des Etablissements Michelin v. Name Redacted Case No. D2026-0009

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Compagnie Generale Des Etablissements Michelin, France, represented by Tmark Conseils, France.

The Respondent is Name Redacted¹.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <michelincuisinetaste.com> is registered with Gname.com Pte. Ltd. (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on January 2, 2026. On January 5, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On January 6, 2026, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain name which differed from the named Respondent (Redacted for privacy) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on January 7, 2026, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on January 14, 2026.

¹ The Respondent appears to have used the name of third parties when registering the disputed domain name. In light of the potential identity theft, the Panel has redacted the Respondent's name from this decision. However, the Panel has attached as Annex 1 to this decision an instruction to the Registrar regarding transfer of the disputed domain name, which includes the name of the Respondent. The Panel has authorized the Center to transmit Annex 1 to the Registrar as part of the order in this proceeding, and has indicated Annex 1 to this decision shall not be published due to the exceptional circumstances of this case. See *Banco Bradesco S.A. v. FAST12785241 Attn. Bradescourgente.net / Name Redacted*, WIPO Case No. [D2009-1788](#).

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Policy" or "UDRP"), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Rules"), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Supplemental Rules").

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on January 20, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was February 9, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on February 10, 2026.

The Center appointed Peter Burgstaller as the sole panelist in this matter on February 13, 2026. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

4. Factual Background

The Complainant is a French based company that operates a business with a presence in many countries selling tires, and the authoritative Guide Michelin that ranks fine dining establishments by awarding "Michelin Stars" (Annexes 5 - 7 to the Complaint). It owns numerous trademark registrations consisting of the mark MICHELIN, inter alia:

- International Trademark Registration MICHELIN (word), Registration No.1254506, registered December 10, 2014, designating several jurisdictions around the world;
- US Trademark Registration MICHELIN (word), Registration No. 5775734, registered June 11, 2019; and
- European Union Trademark Registrations MICHELIN (word), Registration No. 013558366, registered April 17, 2015 and Registration No. 009914731, registered September 27, 2011 (Annex 3 to the Complaint).

The Complainant moreover owns and uses several domain name registrations containing the mark MICHELIN, e.g. <michelin.com> registered on December 1, 1993 (Annex 4 to the Complaint).

The disputed domain name was registered on December 10, 2025 (Annex 1 to the Complaint). At the time of filing the Complaint, the disputed domain name resolved to a website displaying the MICHELIN mark in connection with culinary activities and a "Log in/Sign up" area for Internet users (Annex 8 to the Complaint).

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name.

Notably, the Complainant contends that it is the rightful owner of the trademark MICHELIN, a highly distinctive, well-known and famous mark around the world; it notes that the disputed domain name contains the MICHELIN trademark in its entirety and simply adding the descriptive terms "cuisine" (French word for "kitchen") and "taste" which cannot eliminate the confusing similarity between the Complainant's trademark and the disputed domain name.

Moreover, the Complainant's trademark registrations as well as domain name registrations which contain the MICHELIN mark are prior to the registration of the disputed domain name.

The Complainant submits that, especially because of the fame of the Complainant and its trademark, it is inconceivable that the Respondent would not have been aware of the Complainant's trademark when registering the disputed domain name, or that there would be any legitimate use for the disputed domain name. Further, the Complainant has never assigned, granted, licensed, sold, transferred or in any way authorized the Respondent to use the MICHELIN trademark in any manner.

Finally, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name is used in bad faith: the disputed domain name resolves to a website displaying the MICHELIN mark and providing a Log in area for Internet users purporting it is a Log in area of the Complainant or it is approved or sponsored by the Complainant.

Furthermore, the Respondent has provided inaccurate contact details when registering the disputed domain name which is clearly an indication of bad faith. In addition, the Respondent is also a recidivist cybersquatter insofar as he has been subject of several convictions through UDRP proceedings, namely *Compagnie Générale des Établissements Michelin v. Name Redacted*, WIPO Case No. [D2025-5069](#) and *Compagnie Générale des Établissements Michelin v. Name Redacted*, WIPO Case >No. [D2025-5099](#).

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not reply to the Complainant's contentions.

6. Discussion and Findings

According to paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, the Complainants must prove that:

- (i) the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainants have rights; and
- (ii) the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests with respect to the disputed domain name; and
- (iii) the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant's trademark and the disputed domain name. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ("[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)"), section 1.7.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds the Complainant has shown rights in respect of the mark MICHELIN for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.2.1.

The disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the MICHELIN mark in which the Complainant has rights since it incorporates the entirety of the mark and only adds the terms "cuisine" and "taste" to the MICHELIN mark.

It has long been established under UDRP decisions that where the relevant trademark is recognizable within the disputed domain name, the mere addition of other terms does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity under the first element of the Policy. This is the case at present, since the MICHELIN mark is clearly recognizable. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.8.

Finally, it has also long been held that generic Top-Level Domains ("gTLDs") (in this case ".com") are generally disregarded when evaluating the confusing similarity of a disputed domain name. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.11.1.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds the first element of the Policy has been established.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances in which the Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name.

Although the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that proving a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the difficult task of “proving a negative”, requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge or control of the respondent. As such, where a complainant makes out a prima facie case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production on this element shifts to the respondent to come forward with relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name (although the burden of proof always remains on the complainant). If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.1.

Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds the Complainant has established a prima facie case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Complainant focuses on the fact that its trademark is highly distinctive and famous and provides suitable evidence of its reputation, adding that it is inconceivable that the Respondent would not have been aware of this when registering the disputed domain name. The Complainant also notes that the disputed domain name is not being used for a bona fide offering of goods or services but rather the Respondent intentionally misleads Internet users into thinking they are visiting the Complainant’s website or at least a website with the Complainant’s authorization.

The nature of the disputed domain name, comprising the Complainant’s distinctive and famous mark together with the additional terms “cuisine” and “taste” cannot be considered fair use as these, in the Panel’s view, signal the Respondent’s intention to confuse users seeking or expecting the Complainant and its company.

The Respondent did not reply to the Complainant’s contentions and hence has not rebutted the Complainant’s prima facie showing.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

As stated in paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, the Complainant must show registration and use of the disputed domain name in bad faith. These are concurrent requirements.

The Panel notes that, for the purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, paragraph 4(b) of the Policy establishes circumstances, in particular but without limitation, that, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith.

In the present case the Complainant has rights and is the owner of the distinctive and globally well-known mark MICHELIN, which is registered and has been used in many jurisdictions around the world long before the registration of the disputed domain name. Moreover, the Complainant registered and is using numerous domain names containing the mark MICHELIN, especially <michelin.com> to host its company website.

It is inconceivable for the Panel that the Respondent registered the disputed domain name without knowledge of the Complainant’s rights, which leads to the necessary inference of bad faith. This finding is supported by the fact that the disputed domain name incorporates the Complainant’s distinctive trademark MICHELIN in its entirety together with the additional terms “cuisine” and “taste” which even strengthens the impression that the Respondent must have been aware of the Complainant, its mark and company when registering the disputed domain name since the terms refer to the Complainant’s business.

Finally, a simple online search for “michelin” would have shown the Complainant and its marks. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.2.3.

Therefore, the Panel is convinced that the disputed domain name was registered in bad faith by the Respondent.

Further, the Complainant has put forward evidence that the disputed domain name was used by the Respondent to resolve to a website featuring the Complainant’s MICHELIN mark and purporting to be the Complainant or at least authorized/sponsored by the Complainant and prompting Internet users to input login information. In doing so, the Respondent gives Internet users the impression that the site is controlled or at least authorized by the Complainant, which is not the case. This clearly disrupts the Complainant’s business and shows that the Respondent intentionally attempts to deceive and attract, for commercial gain, Internet users by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant’s mark, which constitutes bad faith use.

The evidence and documents produced and put forward by the Complainant together with the fact that the Respondent has failed to file a Response and therefore failed to present any evidence of any good faith registration and use with regard to the disputed domain name further prove that the disputed domain name was registered and is used by the Respondent in bad faith under paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element of the Policy.

7. Decision

For the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 4(i) of the Policy and 15 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the disputed domain name <michelincuisinetaste.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Peter Burgstaller/

Peter Burgstaller

Sole Panelist

Date: February 26, 2026