

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Les Sherpas, SAS v. Candido Veum
Case No. D2026-0698

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Les Sherpas, SAS, France, represented by SQUAIR AARPI, France.

The Respondent is Candido Veum, United States of America.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <sherpas-fr.com> is registered with NameCheap, Inc. (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on February 18, 2026. On February 19, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On February 19, 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 (Privacy service provided by Withheld for Privacy ehf) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on February 20, 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 February 24, 2026.

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 February 27, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was March 19, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on March 20, 2026.

The Center appointed Benoit Van Asbroeck as the sole panelist in this matter on March 26, 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 Les Sherpas, SAS, a French simplified joint-stock company registered with the Paris Trade and Companies Register on February 23, 2017, under number 827 917 923, with its registered office located in France. The Complainant's principal activity covers teaching, training, specialised tutoring, and the provision of related educational content, tools, and consultancy services.

The Complainant is the owner of the following French registered trademarks, among others:

- French semi-figurative mark LES SHERPAS, registered on January 5, 2017 under registration no. 4327063, in class 41 (education and training services);
- French word mark LES SHERPAS, registered on November 13, 2017 under registration no. 4404022, in classes 16 and 41 (printed matter, education, and training services); and
- French semi-figurative mark LES SHERPAS .CO, registered on November 13, 2017 under registration no. 4404018, in classes 16 and 41 (printed matter, education, and training services).

The Complainant operates its official website via the domain name <sherpas.com>.

The disputed domain name <sherpas-fr.com> was registered on October 1, 2025.

According to the evidence submitted by the Complainant, the disputed domain name resolved to a website displaying the LES SHERPAS branding and presenting French-language content promoting tutoring-related activity.

Subsequently, at the time of the commencement of proceedings on February 27, 2026, the disputed domain name resolved to an inactive website displaying the words "this site can't be reached", indicating that the website had been taken down or disabled.

On February 18, 2026, the Complainant's counsel sent a cease-and-desist letter to the Registrar, alleging cybersquatting and trademark infringement, and requesting the immediate deletion of the disputed domain name, with notice that UDRP proceedings would be initiated if deletion was not confirmed within seven days. No response was received.

No other legal proceedings have been initiated by the Complainant in relation to the disputed domain name.

The Respondent is identified as Candido Veum, located in the United States of America.

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 the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to its French registered trademarks for LES SHERPAS, as the disputed domain name reproduces the distinctive word "SHERPAS" in its entirety, combined with the geographic abbreviation "fr" and a hyphen, which does not suffice to differentiate the disputed domain name from the Complainant's marks.

The Complainant further contends that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name, asserting that the Respondent used the disputed domain name to redirect Internet users to its own website and to market infringing products and services, thereby creating confusion and causing harm to the Complainant's business and reputation. The Complainant submits that it has not licensed or otherwise authorised the Respondent to use its trademarks or to register any domain name incorporating those marks, and that the Respondent is not commonly known by the disputed domain name.

The Complainant contends that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith, and that the Respondent's conduct, reproducing the Complainant's trademark in the disputed domain name combined with the geographic reference "fr" and directing Internet users to a website presenting itself as related to the Complainant, constitutes an intentional attempt to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's marks as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the Respondent's website.

The Complainant requests that the Panel order the cancellation of the disputed domain name.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy requires the Complainant to prove each of the following three elements in order to obtain a remedy in respect of the disputed domain name:

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

Dealing with the Respondent's failure to file a response to the Complaint, paragraph 14(b) of the Rules provides that if a party, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, does not comply with a provision of, or requirement under, these Rules, the Panel shall be entitled to draw such inferences from this omission as it considers appropriate.

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.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.2.1. The Complainant notably owns French Trademark Registration No. 4327063 for LES SHERPAS (semi-figurative), registered on January 5, 2017 and French Trademark Registration No. 4404022 for LES SHERPAS (word), registered on November 13, 2017. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.4.

The Panel finds the mark is recognizable within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name <sherpas-fr.com> reproduces the dominant element “SHERPAS” of the Complainant’s LES SHERPAS trademarks, combined with a hyphen and the geographic abbreviation “fr”. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.7.

Although the addition of the term “fr” may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such term does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.8. Similarly, the generic Top-Level Domain (“gTLD”) “.com” is a standard registration requirement and is disregarded for the purposes of the confusing similarity assessment. See *Byung Jun An, Jicheol Lee/TIRTIR Inc. v. Borys Kucher*, WIPO Case No. [D2025-2123](#); [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.11.

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 that 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 available 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 Respondent has not rebutted the Complainant’s prima facie showing and has not come forward with any relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise.

The evidence on record shows that the disputed domain name resolved to a website presenting itself under the LES SHERPAS brand and offering French-language content related to private tutoring services, the very services for which the Complainant is known, thereby suggesting an affiliation with the Complainant that does not exist. While the Respondent’s website is no longer accessible, it appears from Annex 5 to the Complaint, that reproduces the old Respondent’s website that not only was the trademark LES SHERPAS used, but the websites were also similar (use of green colours, similar layout to present the offer, pictures of people studying, etc.).

There is no evidence that the Complainant has licensed or otherwise permitted the Respondent to use the LES SHERPAS trademarks or to register or use any domain name incorporating those marks. There is further no evidence that the Respondent has been commonly known by the disputed domain name, nor any evidence of use or demonstrable preparations to use the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services.

The composition of the disputed domain name, partially reproducing the Complainant’s trademark with the mere addition of a hyphen followed by the geographic abbreviation “fr”, which is the ISO code for France, the country in which the Complainant is incorporated and in which its trademarks are registered, carries a risk of implied affiliation and suggests sponsorship or endorsement by the trademark owner. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.5.1. No legitimate use of the disputed domain name has been demonstrated.

By failing to submit a response, the Respondent has not invoked any circumstance that could demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name under paragraph 4(c) of the Policy.

The Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

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 Panel finds that the Respondent intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's marks as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the Respondent's website, within the meaning of paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

The disputed domain name <sherpas-fr.com> was registered on October 1, 2025, long after the Complainant's earliest trademark registration for LES SHERPAS, which dates back to January 5, 2017. The Respondent's website, at the time it was active, prominently displayed the LES SHERPAS brand and promoted tutoring services in the French language, directly targeting French-speaking consumers who would be familiar with the Complainant's brand. Given the Complainant's established presence as a French EdTech company in France, it is very unlikely that the Respondent was unaware of the Complainant and its marks at the time of registration of the disputed domain name. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.2.2.

Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy sets out a list of non-exhaustive circumstances that may indicate that a domain name was registered and used in bad faith, but other circumstances may be relevant in assessing whether a respondent's registration and use of a domain name is in bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.2.1.

The following further circumstances confirm the Panel's finding of bad faith:

- (i) the nature of the disputed domain name, which wholly incorporates the dominant element "SHERPAS" of the Complainant's registered trademarks together with the geographic abbreviation "fr", being a clear reference to France, the country in which the Complainant is incorporated and in which its trademarks are registered;
- (ii) the subsequent taking down of the website following the filing of the Complaint, which reinforces the inference that there was no good faith intention behind the registration and use of the disputed domain name; and
- (iii) the concealment of the Respondent's identity through a privacy service at the time of the initial filing of the Complaint, which, while not objectionable in itself, contributes to the accumulation of circumstances pointing to bad faith.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity here, claimed as a copycat website and impersonation/passing off, constitutes bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.4. Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds the Respondent's registration and use of the disputed domain name constitutes bad faith under the Policy.

Finally, the Respondent's failure to submit a response or to provide any explanation for the choice of the disputed domain name further supports the finding of bad faith. See *Awesome Kids LLC and/or Awesome Kids L.L.C. v. Selavy Communications*, WIPO Case No. [D2001-0210](#).

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 <sherpas-fr.com> be cancelled.

/Benoit Van Asbroeck/

Benoit Van Asbroeck

Sole Panelist

Date: April 9, 2026