

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

io-consulting GmbH & Co. KG v. hamza ali
Case No. D2026-1305

1. The Parties

The Complainant is io-consulting GmbH & Co. KG, Germany, represented by beyond Rechtsanwaltsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG, Germany.

The Respondent is hamza ali, Palestine.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <io-group.site> is registered with GoDaddy.com, LLC (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on March 26, 2026. On March 26, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On March 27, 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 (Registration Private, Domains By Proxy, LLC) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on March 30, 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 amendment to Complaint on April 2, 2026.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amendment to the 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 April 2, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was April 22, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on April 23, 2026.

The Center appointed John Swinson as the sole panelist in this matter on April 28, 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 consulting and engineering company that has used “io” and “io-group” for many years throughout the European Union, the United States of America, and internationally. The Complainant delivers cross-sector and cross-industry projects in the fields of construction, digital transformation, and industrial development. The Complainant is headquartered in Germany and has international branch offices including in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, United States of America.

The Complainant owns a European Union registered trademark for IO-GROUP with registration number 018187625, that was registered as of May 22, 2020.

The Complainant owns and uses the domain name <io-group.com>. The Complainant registered this domain name on April 18, 2012 and has used it since that date.

The Respondent did not file a Response, so little information is known about the Respondent.

The disputed domain name was registered on December 1, 2025.

The disputed domain name redirects to a website at <searchhounds.com> which displays Pay-Per-Click (“PPC”) advertisements and AI generated content.

According to the Complainant, the Respondent is currently using the disputed domain name to initiate business contacts using the Complainant’s name to create the false impression that it is a representative of the Complainant.

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.

In summary, the Complainant contends that through the Complainant’s longstanding and extensive use, the sign IO-GROUP has acquired significant distinctiveness and functions as a clear indicator of origin for the relevant public. Consumers consistently associate the signs IO and IO-GROUP with the Complainant and its goods and services.

The mere use of the disputed domain name for advertising, parking pages, or click-through revenue generation does not establish rights or legitimate interests under the UDRP. Panels consistently hold that such uses, particularly where they capitalize on the goodwill of a complainant’s mark, do not constitute legitimate activity.

The Respondent must have been aware of the Complainant’s rights. Given the distinctiveness and commercial use of the IO-GROUP mark, it is not credible that the Respondent was unaware of the Complainant’s trademark.

The disputed domain name resolves to fraudulent content. The unknown registrant is currently using the disputed domain name to initiate business contacts under the Complainant's protected name and to create the false impression that the website constitutes an official online presence of the Complainant's company. This conduct is entirely unauthorized and undertaken with the clear intent to mislead third parties and obtain commercial advantages. Third parties have already suffered financial harm as a result.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

To succeed, the Complainant must demonstrate that all of the elements enumerated in paragraph 4(a) of the Policy have been satisfied, namely:

- (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.

The onus of proving these elements is on the Complainant.

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 entirety of the mark is reproduced within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is identical to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.7.

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.

Applying UDRP paragraph 4(c), panels have found that the use of a domain name to host a parked page comprising PPC links does not represent a bona fide offering where such links compete with or capitalize on the reputation and goodwill of the complainant's mark or otherwise mislead Internet users.

[WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.9. When the Panel visited the website at the disputed domain name, some of the links related to online 3D rendering technology for housing, which is related to the Complainant's architectural services.

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

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

Generally speaking, a finding that a domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith requires an inference to be drawn that the respondent in question has registered and is using the disputed domain name to take advantage of its significance as a trademark owned by (usually) the complainant.

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 disputed domain name was registered after the Complainant registered its trademark for IO-GROUP.

The disputed domain name is used for PPC links that, in part, relate to the Complainant's services.

In the present case, based on the record before it, the Panel finds on the balance of probabilities that the Respondent registered the disputed domain name with knowledge of the Complainant's IO-GROUP trademark and with intent to target it. The Complainant's evidence supports the notion that its mark is known internationally. Furthermore, the disputed domain name matches the Complainant's mark exactly, including the hyphen in the Complainant's trademark, as well as the Complainant's domain name except for the Top-Level Domain.

The Respondent has not filed a Response and hence has not availed itself of the opportunity to present any case of good faith that it might have. The Panel infers that none exists.

The Panel finds that the Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract for commercial gain Internet users to its website by creating likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's trademark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the website under paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy. This also could disrupt the business of the Complainant.

Additionally, the Complainant provided correspondence, in German, to demonstrate that the Respondent was using the disputed domain name for emails as part of a fraudulent scheme.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity, (here, claimed fraud) 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.

The disputed domain name is listed for sale. The Panel does not need to discuss this issue to reach the conclusion herein.

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 <io-group.site> be transferred to the Complainant.

/John Swinson/

John Swinson

Sole Panelist

Date: May 12, 2026