

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION**

Sodexo v. Lijo George  
Case No. D2025-0034

### **1. The Parties**

The Complainant is Sodexo, France, represented by Areopage, France.

The Respondent is Lijo George, United Kingdom ("UK").

### **2. The Domain Name and Registrar**

The disputed domain name <sodexollc.com> is registered with IONOS SE (the "Registrar").

### **3. Procedural History**

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on January 6, 2025. On January 7, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On January 8, 2025, 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 (1&1 Internet Limited GLS) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on January 13, 2025, 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, 2025.

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 15, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was February 4, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on February 5, 2025.

The Center appointed Simone Huser as the sole panelist in this matter on February 12, 2025. 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 (prior called SODEXHO ALLIANCE) was founded in 1966, is headquartered in Issy-Les-Moulineaux (France) and is one of the largest companies in the world specialized in food services and facilities management, with 423,000 employees and active in numerous countries around the world.

The Complainant holds several domain names containing the term SODEXO, among them <sodexo.com> and <uk.sodexo.com>.

The Complainant owns numerous trademark registrations in several jurisdictions, including:

- SODEXO, UK trademark registration n° UK00908346462, filed on June 8, 2009, registered on February 1, 2010, in international classes 9, 16, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45;
- SODEXO, European Union trademark registration n° 008346462, filed on June 8, 2009, registered on February 1, 2010, in international classes 9, 16, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45;
- **sodexo**, International trademark registration n° 964615, filed on January 8, 2008, under priority of the French trademark registration n° 07 3 513 766 of July 16, 2007, in international classes 9, 16, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45 protected inter alia in Australia, Switzerland, China, United States of America.

Because the Respondent did not file a Response, not much is known about the Respondent.

The disputed domain name was registered on January 3, 2025.

According to the evidence submitted with the Complaint, the disputed domain name is currently inactive as it resolves to a page provided by the Registrar.

#### 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 as follows:

The disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the SODEXO trademark in which the Complainant has rights, because it incorporates this trademark in its entirety, and the term "LLC", which is understood as the abbreviation of the American type of legal entity "Limited Liability Company".

The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name. The trademark SODEXO has been extensively used to identify the Complainant and its products / services. The Respondent has not been authorized by the Complainant to use this trademark and is not commonly known by the disputed domain name.

The disputed domain name was registered in bad faith because it is obvious that the Respondent had knowledge of both the Complainant and its well-known trademark SODEXO at the time it registered the disputed domain name.

The Respondent is using the disputed domain name in bad faith, by passively holding the domain name.

## **B. Respondent**

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

## **6. Discussion and Findings**

According to paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, in order to succeed, a complainant must establish each of the following elements:

- (i) the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to the 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.

### **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 Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition, ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.2.1.

The Panel finds the entirety of the SODEXO mark is reproduced within the disputed domain name.

Although the addition of other terms such as here "LLC" may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds that in the present case the addition of such terms does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8.

The addition of the generic Top-Level Domain ("gTLD") ".com" in the disputed domain name is a standard registration requirement and as such may be disregarded under the confusing similarity test under the Policy, paragraph 4(a)(i). [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.11.1.

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 3.0](#), 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.

Based on the available record, 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.

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 3.0](#), section 3.2.1.

In the view of the Panel, noting that that the Complainant's trademark predates the registration of the disputed domain name and considering that the Complainant's trademark enjoys a worldwide presence, including on the Internet, it is inconceivable that the Respondent could have registered the disputed domain name without knowledge of the Complainant's business and well-known trademark. In the circumstances of this case, this is evidence of registration in bad faith.

The disputed domain name is not used and resolves to a page provided by the Registrar.

Panels have found that the non-use of a domain name (including a blank or "coming soon" page) would not prevent a finding of bad faith under the doctrine of passive holding. Having reviewed the available record, the Panel finds the non-use of the disputed domain name does not prevent a finding of bad faith in the circumstances of this proceeding. Although panelists will look at the totality of the circumstances in each case, factors that have been considered relevant in applying the passive holding doctrine include: (i) the degree of distinctiveness or reputation of the complainant's mark, (ii) the failure of the respondent to submit a response or to provide any evidence of actual or contemplated good-faith use, and (iii) the respondent's concealing its identity or use of false contact details (noted to be in breach of its registration agreement). [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.3.

Having reviewed the available record, the Panel notes the distinctiveness and reputation of the Complainant's trademark, the failure of the Respondent to submit a response or to provide any evidence of actual or contemplated good-faith use, and the Respondent's use of false contact details as evidenced by the inability of the courier to deliver the Center's written communication to the address disclosed by the Registrar for the Respondent.

Therefore, the Panel finds that in the circumstances of this case the passive holding of the disputed domain name does not prevent a finding of bad faith under the Policy.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element of the Policy with regard to the disputed domain name.

## **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 <sodexollc.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

*/Simone Huser/*

**Simone Huser**

Sole Panelist

Date: February 26, 2025