

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Sanofi v. sunxianyu
Case No. D2025-1159

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Sanofi, France, represented by Selarl Marchais & Associés, France.

The Respondent is sunxianyu, China.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <china-sanofi.com> is registered with PDR Ltd. d/b/a PublicDomainRegistry.com (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on March 20, 2025. On March 20, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On March 21, 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 (Domain Admin, Privacy Protect, LLC) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on March 24, 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 amendment to the Complaint on April 1, 2025.

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 3, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was April 23, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on April 24, 2025.

The Center appointed Yuri Chumak as the sole panelist in this matter on May 1, 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 is Sanofi, a French pharmaceutical company with global operations. According to the Complaint, Sanofi engages in the research and development, manufacturing, and marketing of pharmaceutical products, primarily in the prescription market, but also offers over-the-counter medications. The Complainant was formed in 2004 through the merger of Aventis and Sanofi-Synthélabo and changed its name to Sanofi in May 2011.

As outlined in the Complaint, Sanofi is headquartered in Paris, France, and operates in over 100 countries across all five continents, employing approximately 100,000 individuals. The Complainant has reported consolidated annual net sales in the tens of billions of euros over the past decade, including EUR 43 billion in 2023 and 2022.

The Complainant owns numerous trademark registrations for the Sanofi mark, including but not limited to:

- French Trademark Registration No. 1482708, registered on August 11, 1988;
- European Union Trademark Registration No. 004182325, registered on February 9, 2006;
- International Trademark Registration No. 591490, registered on September 25, 1992, designating various countries including China.

The Complainant also owns numerous domain names incorporating the SANOFI mark, such as <sanofi.com>, <sanofi.fr>, and <sanofi.us>, used in connection with its activities.

The disputed domain name <china-sanofi.com> was registered on March 10, 2025. The registrant is identified in the public WHOIS records as "Privacy Protect, LLC (PrivacyProtect.org)," which is a privacy protection service rather than the underlying registrant. The disputed domain name resolves to an inactive, blank webpage, displaying a statement "The content of the page cannot be displayed."

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

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

The Complainant asserts that the disputed domain name <china-sanofi.com> is confusingly similar to its SANOFI trademark. It argues that SANOFI mark is inherently distinctive, has no dictionary meaning, and has been widely registered and recognized in numerous jurisdictions. The Complainant submits that the addition of the geographic term "China" does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity and may instead increase the risk of user confusion by implying an official regional affiliation.

The Complainant states that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Complainant has not licensed or otherwise permitted the Respondent to use its SANOFI mark, and the Respondent is not commonly known by the disputed domain name. The disputed domain name resolves to an inactive page, and there is no evidence of bona fide use.

The Complainant further contends that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. It submits that the Respondent must have been aware of the Complainant's rights given the well-known status of the SANOFI mark. The Complainant relies on the passive holding of the disputed domain name, combined with the use of a privacy protection service and the lack of any legitimate purpose, as indicative of bad faith registration and use.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

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 mark is recognizable within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7

Although the addition of other terms here, "china", 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 3.0](#), section 1.8.

The Panel notes that the Complainant's SANOFI mark is incorporated in its entirety within the disputed domain name. The addition of the geographic term "China" does not dispel confusion and may suggest an affiliation with the Complainant's operations in that region.

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.

The Panel notes that there is no evidence the Respondent is commonly known by the disputed domain name, or that it has made any demonstrable preparations to use the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services. Nor is there any indication of legitimate noncommercial or fair use. The disputed domain name is not actively used, and the use of a privacy service further supports the absence of a legitimate interest in the circumstances of this case.

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 notes that the Respondent has registered a domain name incorporating the Complainant's distinctive SANOFI trademark in its entirety, together with a geographic descriptor. The Complainant has presented evidence of the longstanding and widespread use and registration of the SANOFI mark well in advance of the registration of the disputed domain name. There is no evidence of any rights or legitimate use by the Respondent, nor any plausible explanation for selecting this domain name other than to target the Complainant's mark.

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.

Panels have found that the non-use of a domain name (including a blank page) would not prevent a finding of bad faith under the doctrine of passive holding. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.3. Having reviewed the available record, the Panel notes the distinctiveness and reputation of the Complainant's trademark, and the composition of the disputed domain name, and 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.

The Respondent's use of a privacy protection service and failure to submit any response further support the inference of bad faith in the circumstances of this case.

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 <china-sanofi.com> be cancelled.

/Yuri Chumak/

Yuri Chumak

Sole Panelist

Date: May 15, 2025