

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Groupe Canal + v. johon, Host Master, Njalla Okta LLC, and WALID MSR
Case No. D2025-1465

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Groupe Canal +, France, represented by Nameshield, France.

The Respondents are johon, United States of America, Host Master, Njalla Okta LLC, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and WALID MSR, France.

2. The Domain Names and Registrars

The disputed domain names <connect-canalplus.com>, <renouvellement-canalplus.com>, and <espace-canalplus.com> are registered with OwnRegistrar, Inc.

The disputed domain name <infos-canalplus.com> is registered with Tucows Domains Inc.

The disputed domain name <pass-canalplus.com> is registered with Nicenic International Group Co. Limited (the "Registrars").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on April 10, 2025. On April 10, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrars a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain names. On April 10, 2025, April 11, 2025, and April 17, 2025, the Registrars transmitted by email to the Center its verification responses disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain names 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 April 17, 2025 with the registrant and contact information of nominally multiple underlying registrants revealed by the Registrars, requesting the Complainant to either file separate complaints for the disputed domain names associated with different underlying registrants or alternatively, demonstrate that the underlying registrants are in fact the same entity and/or that all domain names are under common control. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on April 22, 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 Respondents of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on May 2, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was May 22, 2025. The Respondents did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondents’ default on June 2, 2025.

The Center appointed Elise Dufour as the sole panelist in this matter on June 10, 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 a France-based audio-visual media group with 26.9 million subscribers globally and a revenue of EUR 6.4 billion. The company provides various channels that are accessible through all distribution networks and connected screens.

The Complainant owns a large portfolio of trademarks including the wording “canal plus”, such as:

- the International trademark CANAL PLUS No. 509729, registered since March 16, 1987 and duly renewed;
- the International trademark CANAL PLUS No. 619540, registered since May 30, 1994 and duly renewed.

Furthermore, the Complainant owns multiple domain names consisting in the wording “canal plus”, such as <canalplus.com> registered since 2006.

The disputed domain names are:

- <pass-canalplus.com> and <infos-canalplus.com> registered on March 31, 2025;
- <connect-canalplus.com> registered on April 3, 2025, and <renouvellement-canalplus.com> and <espace-canalplus.com> registered on April 6, 2025.

The disputed domain names <pass-canalplus.com>, <espace-canalplus.com>, and <renouvellement-canalplus.com> resolve to a French content that provides users with a replica of the Complainant’s access page on mobile devices.

The disputed domain names <infos-canalplus.com> and <connect-canalplus.com> are no longer in use but previously resolved to a French content that provided users with a replica of the Complainant’s access page.

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 names.

Notably, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain names are confusingly similar to its earlier trademarks, that the Respondents have no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain names, and that the disputed domain names have been registered and are being used in bad faith.

The Complainant requests the transfer of the disputed domain names.

B. Respondents

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

6. Discussion and Findings

6.1. Preliminary Issue – Consolidation: Multiple Respondents

The amended Complaint was filed in relation to nominally different domain name registrants. The Complainant alleges that the disputed domain name registrants are the same entity or mere alter egos of each other, or under common control. The Complainant requests the consolidation of the Complaint against the multiple disputed domain name registrants pursuant to paragraph 10(e) of the Rules.

The disputed domain name registrants did not comment on the Complainant's request.

Paragraph 3(c) of the Rules states that a complaint may relate to more than one domain name, provided that the domain names are registered by the same domain name holder.

In addressing the Complainant's request, the Panel will consider whether (i) the disputed domain names or corresponding websites are subject to common control; and (ii) the consolidation would be fair and equitable to all Parties. See WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 4.11.2.

As regards common control, the Panel notes that the disputed domain names:

- a) were registered in a very short time frame, less than a week;
- b) point to the same hosting provider (amazon technologies inc.);
- c) are formed by the same wording: French term followed by the CANAL PLUS trademark;
- d) <pass-canalplus.com>, <espace-canalplus.com>, and <renouvellement-canalplus.com> resolve to a replica of the Complainant's access page;
- e) <connect-canalplus.com> and <infos-canalplus.com> used to resolve to a similar French content, replicating the Complainant's access page; and
- f) <connect-canalplus.com>, <renouvellement-canalplus.com>, and <espace-canalplus.com> were registered by the same person.

As regards fairness and equity, the Panel sees no reason why consolidation of the disputes would be unfair or inequitable to any Party.

Accordingly, the Panel decides to consolidate the disputes regarding the nominally different disputed domain name registrants (referred to below as "the Respondent") in a single proceeding.

6.2. Substantive Issues

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 names. [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 CANAL PLUS mark is recognizable within the disputed domain names. Accordingly, the disputed domain names are confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview](#)

[3.0](#), section 1.7. The inclusion of the generic Top-Level Domain (“gTLD”) “.com” is typically disregarded in the context of the confusing similarity assessment, being a technical requirement of registration. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.11.1.

Although the addition of other terms (here “connect”, “renouvellement”, “espace”, “infos”, and “pass”) may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such terms does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain names and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8.

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 names. 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 names such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise.

The Panel notes that all the disputed domain names have been used in connection with a website, which is a replica of the access page of the Complainant’s website. Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity (here, impersonation/passing off, or other types of fraud) can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.13.1.

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.

The disputed domain names have been used in connection with a website, which is a replica of the access page of the Complainant’s website. Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity (here, impersonation/passing off, or other types of fraud) constitutes bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.4. Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds the Respondent’s registration and use of the disputed domain names constitutes bad faith under the Policy.

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 names <connect-canalplus.com>, <espace-canalplus.com>, <infos-canalplus.com>, <pass-canalplus.com>, and <renouvellement-canalplus.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Elise Dufour/

Elise Dufour

Sole Panelist

Date: June 24, 2025