

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Global Counsel Limited v. Kyrill Abiabi, swissmedia.group
Case No. D2025-2135

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Global Counsel Limited, United Kingdom, represented by Stobbs IP Limited, United Kingdom.

The Respondent is Kyrill Abiabi, swissmedia.group, Switzerland.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <globalcounselhk.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 May 30, 2025. On May 30, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On June 2, 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 (Redacted for Privacy, Privacy service provided by Withheld for Privacy ehf) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on June 2, 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 June 4, 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 June 12, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was July 2, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on July 7, 2025.

The Center appointed Jeremy Speres as the sole panelist in this matter on July 8, 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, incorporated in 2016, provides business consultancy services under its GLOBAL COUNSEL mark, having offices in the United States of America, United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Germany (specifically Berlin, the relevance of which will be discussed below), Singapore, and Qatar. The Complainant's primary website is hosted at its domain name <global-counsel.com>. The Complainant's LinkedIn page has over 15,000 followers, and the Complainant was the winner of the Political Due Diligence category in the 2022 Private Equity Awards, hosted by industry publication Real Deals. The Complainant's clients include Morgan Stanley, Santander, and the European Food Banks Federation.

The Complainant's GLOBAL COUNSEL mark is registered in various jurisdictions, including United Kingdom Trademark Registration No. UK00002637538 GLOBAL COUNSEL in class 35, having a registration date of January 18, 2013.

The disputed domain name was registered on January 2, 2025, and resolves to a website entitled "Global Counsel Group", ostensibly for a provider of international professional services based in Berlin, Germany, offering commercial and corporate law, risk and compliance management, immigration law and global mobility, and strategy consulting services.

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 was registered and has been used in bad faith in order to take advantage of confusion with the Complainant's well-known mark for the commercial benefit of the Respondent's competing service offering.

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 entirety of the mark is reproduced 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 “hk”, 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 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.

For the reasons discussed in relation to bad faith below, it is likely that the Respondent registered the disputed domain name to take advantage of confusion with the Complainant’s mark. The Respondent’s registration and use of the disputed domain name in these circumstances cannot represent a bona fide offering of goods or services under paragraph 4(c)(i) of the Policy and cannot confer rights or legitimate interests. *Sistema de Ensino Poliedro Vestibulares Ltda., Editora Poliedro Ltda. v. Anonymize, Inc. / STANLEY PACE*, WIPO Case No. [D2022-1981](#).

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.

For the following reasons, the Panel finds that it is more likely than not that the Respondent registered and has used the disputed domain name to take advantage of confusion with the Complainant’s mark for the Respondent’s commercial gain, falling squarely within paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

The Panel accepts that the Complainant’s mark is well known within its industry of international business consulting services. Panels have consistently found that the mere registration of a domain name that is confusingly similar to a widely known trademark, as in this case, by an unaffiliated entity can by itself create a presumption of bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.1.4.

Internet searches for the Complainant’s GLOBAL COUNSEL mark, as well as for the second-level portion of the disputed domain name, return results overwhelmingly relating to the Complainant.

The Complainant has an office in Berlin, and, according to the disputed domain name's website, the Respondent's offering is also based in Berlin. Thus, the Respondent could well have encountered the Complainant in its own city, and the fact that the Respondent offers competing services in the same city under a mark that is virtually identical to the Complainant's well-known mark suggests targeting.

Given that the disputed domain name is used to offer business consulting services, the Respondent is taken to be familiar with that industry, and, in light of the circumstances discussed above, the repute of the Complainant's mark, and the fact that the disputed domain name is used for competing services, it is quite likely that the Respondent knew and sought to take advantage of the repute of the Complainant's mark. This constitutes bad faith targeting. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.1.4.

The Panel draws an adverse inference from the Respondent's failure to take part in the present proceeding where an explanation is certainly called for. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 4.3.

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 <globalcounselhk.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Jeremy Speres/

Jeremy Speres

Sole Panelist

Date: July 11, 2025