

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Compagnie Générale des Etablissements Michelin v.
Senard Jean-Dominique, Compagnie Gnrale des
tablissements Michelin
Case No. D2025-2786

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Compagnie Générale des Etablissements Michelin, France, represented by Tmark Conseils, France.

The Respondent is Senard Jean-Dominique, Compagnie Gnrale des tablissements Michelin, France.

2. The Domain Names and Registrar

The disputed domain names <michelinfoodiemap.com>, <michelinfoodmap.com>, <michelin-gastronomy.com>, <michelinguide-food.com>, <michelinguidefood.com>, <michelinguidefoodie.com>, <michelinguidefoodlist.com>, <michelinguidefoodmap.com>, <michelinguidefoodmenu.com>, <michelinguidefoods.com> are registered with Gname.com Pte. Ltd. (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on July 8, 2025. On July 16, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain names. On July 17, 2025, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response confirming that the Respondent is listed as the registrant and providing the contact details.

The Center verified that 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 July 18, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was August 7, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on August 8, 2025.

The Center appointed Marie-Emmanuelle Haas as the sole panelist in this matter on August 20, 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 French company that was created in 1889 enjoys a strong worldwide reputation in the field of tire manufacturing for cars, trucks, motorcycles and planes. The Complainant started publishing the travel/gastronomy MICHELIN guide in Europe in 1900 to encourage new drivers to take road trips to local attractions. This guide ranks since 1926 fine dining establishments by awarding “Michelin Stars”.

The MICHELIN guide now rates over 30,000 establishments in over 30 territories across the world and more than 30 million MICHELIN Guides have been sold worldwide since.

The Complainant relies on the following trademarks:

- International Trademark Registration MICHELIN No.1254506 registered on December 10, 2014 in classes 9, 35, 38, 39, 41, 42, duly renewed;
- European Union Trademark Registration MICHELIN No.013558366 filed on December 12, 2014, registered on April 17, 2015, protected in classes 9, 35, 38, 39, 41, 42, duly renewed.

These trademarks are protected for products and services relating to tourism, hospitality, restaurant and gastronomy and in particular “multimedia publications in electronic form available online from databases in the field of travel, tourism and gastronomy or for services of editing and publication of guides”.

The Complainant explains that it registered and uses various domain names incorporating the famous MICHELIN mark. It registered the <michelin.com> domain name on December 1, 1993, on the basis of which the sub-domain <guide.michelin.com> was created.

The ten disputed domain names all include the MICHELIN trademark: <michelinfoodmap.com>, <michelinguide-food.com>, <michelinguidefood.com>, <michelinguidefoodie.com>, <michelinguidefoodlist.com>, <michelinguidefoodmenu.com>, <michelinguidefoods.com>, <michelin-gastronomy.com>, <michelinfoodiemap.com>, and <michelinguidefoodmap.com>.

They were all registered on May 30, 2025 at 11:45, in the name of the same registrant.

The registrant is presented as “Senard Jean-Dominique”, a name corresponding to the ex-former Chairman of the Complainant, well-known to the public and intrinsically linked to the MICHELIN Group, whereas the Respondent claims the company name “Compagnie Gnrale des tablissements Michelin” and uses the Complainant’s official address , with several typographical errors, such as “Dchaux” instead of “Déchaux” and “Puy-de-Dme” instead of “Puy-de-Dôme”.

Nine of the disputed domain names redirect to a webpage “MICHELIN ® We offer a top-rated experience that helps retailers promote their brands” including a logo imitating the MICHELIN logo.

Only one of them, <michelin-gastronomy.com>, does not resolve to any webpage, and resolves to a page mentioning “This site can’t be reached”.

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 the following.

Confusing similarity

The MICHELIN trademark is such a famous mark for tires, and for its star-rating system for restaurants and fine dining, that it would be inconceivable that the Respondent might have registered the disputed domain names without knowing it.

The disputed domain names incorporate entirely the Complainant's well-known MICHELIN mark, which is indisputably the prominent and essential element of these domain names.

The MICHELIN mark is recognizable in the disputed domain names. The inclusion of the term "menu", "food" "gastronomy", "map", in combination with the well-known and valuable MICHELIN trademark, reinforces the risk of confusion insofar as the MICHELIN guide is a book dedicated to the world of catering and rewards the talent of head chefs.

Lack of rights or legitimate interests

The Complainant is the sole legitimate owner of the trademarks, corporate name and domain names incorporating the name MICHELIN.

It is without right or legitimate interest that the Respondent registered the disputed domain names. By registering these disputed domain names, the Respondent only seeks to take commercial advantage of the Complainant's registered prior rights.

The disputed domain names resolve to a page distinctively displaying the MICHELIN mark in connection with culinary activities of the MICHELIN Guide and the reproduction of the Michelin Bibendum.

The Michelin Man is recognized as a brand ambassador, and an emblematic brand icon.

The Internet users are likely to believe that they reach a website of an authorized entity.

The use of the disputed domain names in relation to Complainant's MICHELIN trademarks takes advantage of the MICHELIN trademark and of its reputation.

Bad faith registration and use

Taking into consideration the worldwide protection and constant use by the Complainant of the well-known trademark MICHELIN, there is no chance of it having been registered by the Respondent by simple coincidence.

Choosing to provide the name of the former Complainant's Chairman and the Complainant's contact details, in the Whois data, together with the email contact address "[...].com" proves that the registrant is not connected either to the ex-former Chairman or to the Complainant.

The Respondent is clearly impersonating the Complainant, what demonstrates bad faith and intent to abuse the goodwill associated with the Complainant's brand.

Therefore, the registration of the disputed domain names was not only done with full knowledge of the Complainant's rights, but with a deliberate and fraudulent attempt to create an appearance of legitimacy by falsely impersonating a former executive and using misleading information. This conduct supports a finding of bad faith under paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy.

The identity theft reinforces the finding of bad faith registration and use, as defined under this paragraph.

The Complainant's MICHELIN trademarks are mentioned several times on the website, so the registrant of these disputed domain names is deliberately taking advantage of MICHELIN's reputation by making Internet users think that the Complainant is the source of the website or that Complainant has sponsored, is affiliated with or has endorsed the website constitutes bad faith under paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

The Respondent's use of the name of a former executive of the Complainant, combined with the Complainant's official address and company name (with many typing errors), cannot be seen as coincidental. It reveals a deliberate attempt to impersonate the Complainant, deceive users, and exploit the reputation and trust associated with the MICHELIN brand. This conduct reinforces the conclusion that the domain names were registered and are being used in bad faith, in direct violation of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy.

The Respondent's pattern of conduct, reproducing the Complainant's trademark in its entirety across multiple domain names, using them to impersonate MICHELIN websites or holding passively the disputed domain name <michelin-gastronomy.com>, constitute a deliberate and systematic attempt to exploit the reputation and goodwill of the MICHELIN brand.

This conduct reinforces the conclusion that the disputed domain names were registered and are being used in bad faith, in direct violation of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

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, what is the case here.

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 addition of the terms (here, "foodiemap", "foodmap", "gastronomy", "guide-food", "guidefood", "guidefoodie", "guidefoodlist", "guidefoodmap", "guidefoodmenu", "guidefoods") to the MICHELIN trademark 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 MICHELIN 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 Panel finds the first element of the Policy has been established.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Pursuant to paragraph 4(c) of the Policy, the Respondent may establish rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name by demonstrating any of the following:

- (i) before any notice to it of the dispute, the Respondent's use of, or demonstrable preparations to use, the disputed domain name or a name corresponding to the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services; or
- (ii) the Respondent has been commonly known by the disputed domain name, even if it has acquired no trademark or service mark rights; or
- (iii) the Respondent is making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name, without intent for commercial gain, to misleadingly divert consumers, or to tarnish the trademark or service mark at issue.

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.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for an illegitimate activity, here, claimed as applicable to this case: impersonation, can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a Respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.13.1.

The Respondent was not authorized to use or register the disputed domain names, and neither made any bona fide use of the disputed domain names (or demonstrable plans for such use), nor any legitimate noncommercial or fair use. Moreover, it is not commonly known by the disputed domain names.

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

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

For the purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, the following circumstances, in particular but without limitation, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith:

- (i) circumstances indicating that the Respondent has registered, or the Respondent has acquired the domain name primarily for the purpose of selling, renting, or otherwise transferring the disputed domain name registration to the Complainant who is the owner of the trademark or service mark or to a competitor of that complainant, for valuable consideration in excess of the respondent's documented out-of-pocket costs directly related to the domain name; or

(ii) the Respondent has registered the disputed domain name in order to prevent the owner of the trademark or service mark from reflecting the mark in a corresponding domain name, provided that the Respondent has engaged in a pattern of such conduct; or

(iii) the Respondent has registered the domain name primarily for the purpose of disrupting the business of a competitor; or

(iv) by using the domain name, the Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to your website or other online location, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the complainant's mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the respondent's website or location or of a product or service on the respondent's website or location.

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 present case, the Panel notes that the Respondent, who claims to be the Complainant, could not ignore the Complainant's well-known MICHELIN trademark, when it decided to register the disputed domain names.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for an illegal activity, here, impersonation and infringing the MICHELIN trademark, 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, in the meaning of Paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy: "by using the domain name, the Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to your website or other online location, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the complainant's mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the respondent's website or location or of a product or service on the respondent's website or location."

Moreover, the Respondent has clearly engaged in a pattern of conduct that consists of:

- falsely claiming to be the Complainant by mentioning its data in the Whois contact details;
- using this false identity to register the disputed domain names incorporating the well-known MICHELIN trademark, with the addition of terms like "food", "guide" or "gastronomy" that directly relate to the MICHELIN trademark and to the famous fine dining MICHELIN guide and use them to resolve to a website offering a "top-rated experience" in relation with fine dining.

The disputed domain name <michelin-gastronomy.com> does not resolve to any website and is passively hold.

Panels have found that the non-use of a domain name 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 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 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 <michelinfoodiemap.com>, <michelinfoodmap.com>, <michelin-gastronomy.com>, <michelinguide-food.com>, <michelinguidefood.com>, <michelinguidefoodie.com>, <michelinguidefoodlist.com>, <michelinguidefoodmap.com>, <michelinguidefoodmenu.com>, <michelinguidefoods.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Marie-Emmanuelle Haas/

Marie-Emmanuelle Haas

Sole Panelist

Date: September 3, 2025