

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Akzo Nobel N.V. v. Name Redacted

Case No. D2025-2796

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Akzo Nobel N.V., Netherlands (Kingdom of the), represented internally.

The Respondent is Name Redacted¹.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <akzosnobel.net> is registered with Squarespace Domains LLC (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on July 16, 2025. On July 16, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On July 16, 2025, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain name which partly differed from the named Respondent (Name Redacted, Redacted for privacy) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on July 21, 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 July 25, 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

¹ The Respondent appears to have used the name and/or contact details of a third party when registering the disputed domain name. In light of the potential identity theft, the Panel has redacted the Respondent’s name from this Decision. However, the Panel has attached as Annex 1 to this Decision an instruction to the Registrar regarding transfer of the disputed domain name, which includes the name of the Respondent. The Panel has authorized the Center to transmit Annex 1 to the Registrar as part of the order in these proceedings, and has indicated Annex 1 to this Decision shall not be published due to the exceptional circumstances of this case. See *Banco Bradesco S.A. v. FAST 12785241 Attn. Bradescourgente.net / Name Redacted*, WIPO Case No. [D2009-1788](#).

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 28, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was August 17, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on August 19, 2025.

The Center appointed Christelle Vaval as the sole panelist in this matter on August 29, 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 Akzo Nobel N.V., a company incorporated in the Netherlands. The Complainant is a global paints and coatings company that has operated under the name “AkzoNobel” since May 1911. The Complainant owns the trademark AKZONOBEL in multiple jurisdictions, including Benelux Trademark Reg. No. 849141, registered on August 20, 2008, United Kingdom Trademark Reg. No. UK00801064677, registered on December 13, 2010, and International Trademark Reg. No. 1064677, registered on June 25, 2010 (the “Trademark”). The Complainant also owns the domain name <akzonobel.net> since September 4, 1995.

The Respondent registered the disputed domain name on October 28, 2024, well after the Complainant registered its Trademark. The disputed domain name resolves to a webpage under construction. The Complainant has provided evidence that the Respondent has used the disputed domain name to send fraudulent emails that impersonate an employee of the Complainant.

The Respondent's name has been redacted because it appears that the disputed domain name was likely registered by a third party, without the participation of the individual whose identity was disclosed by the Registrar.

5. Parties’ Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under paragraph 4(a) of the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name.

Notably, the Complainant contends that the disputed trademark is:

Identical or Confusingly Similar

The Complainant asserts registered rights in the AKZONOBEL mark, and notes longstanding use of the <akzonobel.com> domain name (operational since September 4, 1995). The disputed domain name <akzosnobel.net>, registered on October 28, 2024, differs from the Complainant’s mark by the insertion of a single letter “s” (“akzosnobel”), which the Complainant characterizes as a typographical variant (typosquatting) that Internet users are likely to overlook, rendering the domain confusingly similar to AKZONOBEL.

No Rights or Legitimate Interests

The Complainant submits that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name and that the Complainant is the registered proprietor of the AKZONOBEL trademark. The Respondent's use of the disputed domain name is fraudulent and misleading, with no evidence of legitimate use or authorization.

Registered and Used in Bad Faith

The Complainant contends that the Respondent is deliberately misleading the Complainant's affiliates and clients into believing the disputed domain name is associated with the Complainant.

The Respondent registered a domain name that is almost identical to the Complainant's trademark and company name, differing only by the addition of the letter "s" (typosquatting). The Respondent used the disputed domain name to send fraudulent emails impersonating the Complainant's employees, leading to financial fraud.

The Respondent's actions demonstrate knowledge of the Complainant's trademark and an intent to exploit it for financial gain.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

Procedural issues

The case record shows the Center verified the Complaint's formal compliance and formally commenced the proceeding on July 28, 2025 (with a 20-day Response deadline that fell on August 17, 2025). The Center then notified the Respondent of default on August 19, 2025.

The record reflects service consistent with the Rules and WIPO Supplemental Rules. In the absence of a Response, the Panel may draw appropriate inferences from the Respondent's default (Rules, paragraph 14), as the Center's default notice also notes.

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.

The Complainant has demonstrated registered rights in the AKZONOBEL mark in multiple jurisdictions. The disputed domain name <akzosnobel.net> differs from the mark only by the insertion of an extra "s" and the addition of the ".net" Top-Level Domain.

Under the Policy, the first element involves determining whether the domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a mark in which the complainant holds rights (Policy, paragraph 4(a)(i)). It is well established that the TLD is disregarded in this comparison ([WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.11.1). Additionally, a domain name that is a common misspelling of a mark (i.e., “typosquatting”) is considered confusingly similar. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.9.

Here, <akzosnobel.net> is a straightforward misspelling of AKZONOBEL, resulting from the insertion of a single letter “s”, which the record itself describes as typosquatting. The Panel therefore finds the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant’s Trademark.

Although the addition of other terms here, the addition of the letter “s”, may bear on the assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds that the addition of such a 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.

The Complainant has made a prima facie showing that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, shifting the burden of production to the Respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.1. The record contains no indication that the Respondent is commonly known by the disputed domain name, nor any evidence of bona fide offering or legitimate noncommercial/fair use (Policy, paragraph 4(c)).

Instead, the evidence indicates the domain was used for impersonating an employee of the Complainant.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity here, claimed impersonation/passing off, 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.

In the present case, the Panel notes that the Respondent's actions were intentional and aimed at defrauding the Complainant's clients.

The disputed domain name was created on October 28, 2024, long after Complainant's Trademark had become distinctive and widely used. The typosquatting nature of the disputed domain name supports an inference that Respondent knew of the Complainant and targeted its Trademark at the time of registration. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.2.1.

The Respondent used the domain to impersonate the Complainant's personnel via email and solicit payments, a practice prior UDRP panels have deemed clear evidence of bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), sections 3.1.4 and 3.4. This behavior aligns with Policy paragraph 4(b)(iv) as it intentionally creates confusion for commercial gain. A "coming soon" web page does not refute bad faith use if the disputed domain name is employed in fraudulent emails, and even passive holding may indicate bad faith depending on circumstances. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.3.

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. Still, 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 held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity here, claimed impersonation, 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 name 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 name <akzosnobel.net> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Christelle Vaval/

Christelle Vaval

Sole Panelist

Date: September 11, 2025