

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Equinor ASA v. Deirdre OHalloran
Case No. D2025-3038

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Equinor ASA, Norway, represented by Rouse Legal, Sweden.

The Respondent is Deirdre OHalloran, United States of America ("United States").

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <equinorsas.com> is registered with Hostinger Operations, UAB (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on July 30, 2025. On July 30, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On July 31, 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 (Privacy Protect LLC) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on July 31, 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 August 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 August 6, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was August 26, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on September 2, 2025.

The Center appointed Frank Schoneveld as the sole panelist in this matter on September 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 Equinor ASA is a Norwegian corporation, formerly known as Statoil ASA. Equinor ASA is an international energy company with operations in more than 30 countries around the world, developing oil, gas, wind and solar energy. Statoil was founded as the Norwegian State oil company (named Statoil) in 1972 with the Norwegian State holding 67% of the shares, and has grown with the emergence of the Norwegian oil and gas industry since the 1960s. Statoil changed its name to Equinor in 2018 with the name change being announced on March 15, 2018 and the news of this name change reported in media reports that commented on the name change worldwide on different media platforms. Copies of a number of these media reports are provided in the Complaint.

The Complainant owns the registered trademark “EQUINOR” registered in 2021 in the United States of America (“USA”) where the Respondent has its address. The Complainant has registered trademarks in the word “EQUINOR” in numerous jurisdictions around the world including the following:

Country/Jurisdiction	Mark	Registration Date	Registration Number	Renewal Date
Madrid Protocol	EQUINOR	July 4, 2018	1444675	July 4, 2018
USA	EQUINOR	August 3 3, 2021	6,436,681	August 3, 2027
European Union	EQUINOR	January 18, 2019	17900772	May 15, 2028

The Complaint includes a full listing of the Complainant’s “EQUINOR” trademark registrations in many jurisdictions worldwide.

The Complainant also provides a list of more than one hundred domain name registrations that contain its “EQUINOR” mark, distributed among generic Top-Level Domains (“gTLD”) and country code Top-Level Domains (“ccTLDs”).

The disputed domain name <equinorsas.com> was registered on July 25, 2025, more than four years after the Complainant’s “EQUINOR” mark was registered in the USA where the Respondent has its registered address.

The disputed domain name does not revert to any website. The MX records have been activated for the disputed domain name, and within four days after registration of the disputed domain name an email using the disputed domain name has been sent to a client of the Complainant seeking to have an invoice, for an amount over four million US Dollars, paid into a bank account that is not a bank account known to the Complainant. The Complainant was informed of this email sent to one of its clients, the email being from someone claiming to work for Equinor and called “[Ms.] Walmsley” using the email <[...].@equinorsas.com>. However, the Complainant has no such person working for it by that name, and these emails using the disputed domain name have not been sent by any employee of Equinor.

The Respondent does not appear to be affiliated or related to the Complainant in any way, or licensed or otherwise authorized to use the Complainant's EQUINOR mark in connection with a website, a domain name or for any other purpose.

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:

(I) the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights, since

(a) by using a side-by-side comparison of the disputed domain name and the textual components of the Complainant's EQUINOR trademark, the Complainant's EQUINOR trademark is clearly recognizable within the disputed domain name;

(b) where a domain name incorporates the entirety of a trademark as in this case, the domain name will normally be considered confusingly similar; and

(c) the gTLD ".com" is not sufficient to prevent the confusing similarity or identity.

(II) the Respondent has no rights to or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name because, based on the Complainant's prior use of its trademark EQUINOR

(a) the Respondent is not affiliated or related to the Complainant in any way, or licensed or otherwise authorized to use the EQUINOR mark in connection with a website, a domain name or for any other purpose;

(b) the Respondent is not using the disputed domain name in connection with any legitimate non-commercial or fair use without intent for commercial gain;

(c) the Respondent is not generally known by the disputed domain name and has not acquired any trademark or service mark rights in that name or mark; and

(d) the Respondent is not using the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of any goods or services.

The Complainant concludes that therefore, the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name.

and

(III) the Respondent has registered and is using the disputed domain name in bad faith because

(a) of the use by the Complainant of its EQUINOR mark across the world and in trademark registrations predating the registration of the Disputed Domain Name;

(b) the disputed domain name is currently displaying an inactive website;

(c) the MX records have been activated for the disputed domain name and a phishing email has been sent, with the Complainant being informed of fake phishing emails being sent to its clients, from someone claiming to work for Equinor called "[Ms.] Walmsley" (email: [...]@equinorsas.com) but there is no such person working for Equinor by that name so that the emails have not been sent by any employee of Equinor, and the Equinor name is being taken advantage of in these phishing emails and in the invoice attached to these emails. The Complainant concludes that the Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract Internet traffic for commercial gain by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's mark EQUINOR, establishing that the Respondent has registered the disputed domain name in bad faith.

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.

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.

Further, Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity, here, claimed phishing and passing off as an employee of the Complainant using the disputed domain name, 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.

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 held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity, here, claimed use of the disputed domain name for phishing and passing off as an employee of the Complainant in an attempt to defraud the Complainant (in this case, of millions of US dollars) 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 <equinorsas.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Frank Schoneveld/

Frank Schoneveld

Sole Panelist

Date: September 22, 2025