

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

NET Holding A.Ş., Merit Turizm Yatirim ve İşletme A.Ş. v. Gene M Bleich,

seo, efe ates, Kerim Balci

Case No. D2025-4195

1. The Parties

Complainants are NET Holding A.Ş. (“First Complainant”), and Merit Turizm Yatirim ve İşletme A.Ş. (“Second Complainant”), Türkiye, represented by Sołtysiński Kawecki & Szlezak, Poland.

Respondents are Gene M Bleich, seo, United States of America, efe ates, Türkiye, and Kerim Balci, Türkiye.

2. The Domain Names and Registrar

The disputed domain names <meritbetgirisicom>, <meritbet.net>, <meritbet.org>, <meritbet30.com>, and <meritbet550.com> are registered with NameCheap, Inc. (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on October 13, 2025. On October 14, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain names. On October 15, 2025, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain names 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 Complainant on October 15, 2025, with the registrant and contact information of nominally multiple underlying registrants revealed by the Registrar, requesting Complainant to either file separate complaint(s) 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. Complainant filed an amended Complaint on October 17, 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 Respondents of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on October 21, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was November 10, 2025. Respondent efe ates sent a number of email communications to the Center in October and November 2025. A Response was filed with the Center by this same Respondent on October 21, 2025. Respondent Kerim Balci sent an email communication on November 4, 2025. Complainant submitted a supplemental filing on November 17, 2025.

The Center appointed Marina Perraki, Gökhan Gökçe, and Philip N. Argy as panelists in this matter on December 12, 2025. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. Each member of 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. Procedural Issues:

A. Multiple Complainants

The Panel has considered the possible consolidation of the Complaint for the disputed domain names. According to the WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 4.11.1, paragraph 10(e) of the Rules grants a panel the power to consolidate multiple domain name disputes. At the same time, paragraph 3(c) of the Rules provides 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 assessing whether a complaint filed by multiple complainants may be brought against a respondent, panels look at whether (i) the complainants have a specific common grievance against the respondent, or the respondent has engaged in common conduct that has affected the complainants in a similar fashion, and (ii) it would be equitable and procedurally efficient to permit the consolidation.

The Panel notes the following features of the disputed domain names in favor of the consolidation:

- Complainants are part of the same group of companies, second Complainant being a subsidiary of the first Complainant;
- Complainants have a common grievance against Respondents as the disputed domain names target the trademarks of their group of companies; and
- it would be equitable and procedurally efficient to permit the consolidation.

The Panel finds that this Complaint consists of multiple Complainants that should, for the reasons discussed above, be permitted to have their Complaints consolidated into a single Complaint for the purpose of the present proceeding under the Policy. Respondents have not objected to the consolidation. The Panel therefore finds that it would be equitable and fair to permit the consolidation. Complainants are hereinafter collectively referred to as "Complainant".

B. Multiple Respondents

The amended Complaint was filed in relation to nominally different domain name registrants. Complainant alleges that the disputed domain name registrants are the same entity. Complainant requests the consolidation of the Complaint against the multiple disputed domain name registrants pursuant to paragraph 10(e) of the Rules.

The three disputed domain names <meritbet.net>, <meritbet30.com>, and <meritbet550.com> were registered under the same named Respondent efe ates.

The named Respondent efe ates denied any relation to the remaining two disputed domain names. The other two named Respondents did not comment on 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 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 3.0](#), section 4.11.2.

As regards common control of all five disputed domain names, the Panel notes that;

- all disputed domain names share the same structure incorporating Complainants' trademark MERIT entirely along with the word "bet", and, as the case may be, other non distinctive elements, namely "30", "550", "giris" and the ".com", ".net", ".org" generic Top-Level Domains ("gTLDs");
- all websites under the disputed domain names included content in relation to gambling/betting;
- all websites under the disputed domain names were in Turkish;
- the first, third, fourth, and fifth disputed domain names <meritbet.net>, <meritbet30.com>, <meritbetgiris.com>, and <meritbet550.com> respectively, lead to websites which prominently displayed the same MERITBET logo mimicking Complainants' MERIT trademark and logos;
- all websites at the disputed domain names, apart from the second one, displayed not only the distinctive word element MERIT and the logo mimicking it, but also identical figurative elements, including the cross design, font style, and color scheme;
- the second disputed domain name <meritbet.org> at the time of filing of the Complaint lead to a website which displayed a list of links to third party gambling/betting websites, the layout of which was similar to the list layout under the fourth disputed domain name <meritbetgiris.com>; and
- all disputed domain names were registered with the same Registrar.

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 domain name registrants (referred to below as "Respondent") in a single proceeding.

C. Supplemental Filing

Complainant filed on November 17, 2025, a Supplemental Filing, in reply to named Respondent's efe ates emails to the Center of October 2025.

Neither the Rules nor the Supplemental Rules make provision for supplemental filings, except at the request of the UDRP panel (see Rules, paragraph 12). Paragraph 10 of the Rules enjoins the UDRP panel to conduct the proceeding "with due expedition". Therefore, UDRP panels are typically reluctant to countenance delay through additional rounds of pleading and normally accept supplemental filings only to consider material new evidence or provide a fair opportunity to respond to arguments that could not reasonably have been anticipated ([WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 4.6).

The Panel notes that Complainants' supplemental filing replies to named Respondent's efe ates emails to the Center of October 2025 and to facts and claims mentioned therein. In this case, after consideration of Complainants' supplemental submission the Panel has decided to accept it for the sake of completeness,

also noting that it does not address topics that the Complainants could have addressed in their Complaint given that such facts and claims were made by Respondent in reply to the Complaint (*Delikomat Betriebsverpflegung Gesellschaft m.b.H. v. Alexander Lehner*, WIPO Case No. [D2001-1447](#); *AutoNation Holding Corp. v. Rabea Alawneh*, WIPO Case No. [D2002-0058](#); and *Avaya Inc. v. Ali Parsa / Ali Parsa, AVAYeRASA / Ali Parsa Koosha*, WIPO Case No. [D2018-1472](#)).

5. Factual Background

Complainants are joint stock companies under the laws of Turkey, active in the hospitality, casino, gaming, and betting sectors. Both Complainants are listed on the Istanbul Stock Exchange. Second Complainant is a subsidiary of First Complainant. Complainants operate under the MERIT brand and logos. Per Complaint, the Turkish IP Court in Ankara has recognised the MERIT INTERNATIONAL as well known trademark among the relevant target public.

Complainants are each, as the case may be, owners of MERIT trademark registrations including:

First Complainant is the registered owner, *inter alia*, of the following trademark registration:

- the European Union Trademark Registration No. 016172389, MERIT ROYAL HOTEL & CASINO & SPA (figurative), filed on December 15, 2016 and registered on May 24, 2017 for goods and services in international classes 9, 16, 21, 24, 28, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, and 43.

Second Complainant is the registered owner, *inter alia*, of the following trademark registrations:

- the Turkish Trademark Registration No. 171909, MERIT INTERNATIONAL (figurative), filed on February 1, 1996 and registered on June 16, 1997 for services in international classes 39, 41, and 42; and

- the Turkish Trademark Registration No. 2006 10901, MERIT (figurative), filed on March 21, 2006 and registered on April 25, 2007 for goods in international classes 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, and 29.

Per Complaint, First Complainant also controls the domain name registration <meritbet.com>.

This dispute concerns the following domain names:

- <meritbet.net> registered on May 14, 2020.
- <meritbet.org> registered on February 8, 2021.
- <meritbet30.com> registered on October 18, 2023.
- <meritbetgiris.com> registered on April 7, 2024.
- <meritbet550.com>, registered on August 19, 2025.

The first disputed domain name <meritbet.net> at the time of filing of the Complaint lead to a website in Turkish which prominently displayed a MERITBET logo mimicking Complainants' MERIT trademark and logos and contained posts about gambling/betting. Per Complainant, by clicking on the "Click to enter Meritbet" button, users were directed to third party gambling sites displaying the same MERITBET logo. Currently it leads to a blocked website.

The second disputed domain name <meritbet.org> at the time of filing of the Complaint lead to a website in Turkish which displayed a list of links to third party gambling/betting websites along with the third party logos. The list layout was similar to the list layout under the fourth disputed domain name <meritbetgiris.com>. Currently it leads to an error page.

The third disputed domain name <meritbet30.com> at the time of filing of the Complaint lead to an online gambling/betting website in Turkish which prominently displayed the same MERITBET logo as the one in the website under the first disputed domain name, with a layout similar to that of the website under the fifth disputed domain name <meritbet550.com>. Currently it leads to an inactive website.

The fourth disputed domain name <meritbetgiris.com> leads to a website in Turkish which displays a list of links to third party gambling/betting websites along with the third party logos. The list layout is similar to the list under the second disputed domain name. The same website, further down on the landing page, prominently displays the same MERITBET logo as the one in the website under the first disputed domain name and is also used for directing users to third party gambling websites under the name MERITBET via a “Click here to enter Meritbet!” button.

The fifth disputed domain name <meritbet550.com> at the time of filing of the Complaint lead to an online gambling/betting website in Turkish which prominently displayed the same MERITBET logo as the one in the website under the first disputed domain name, with a layout similar to that of the website under the third disputed domain name. Currently it leads to a blocked website.

Furthermore, per Complainant and as not rebutted by Respondent, a) Respondent also refers to the Complainants' hotels and casino as its own e.g., in the website under the third disputed domain name, b) pictures of Complainants' hotels were used on the MERITBET websites, and c) users of the MERITBET websites report serious irregularities concerning their operation describing them as “the company is a complete lie” or “they mislead people”, “they definitely don't pay”.

6. 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.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not formally reply to the Complainant's contentions. On October 17, 2025, named Respondent efe ates sent an informal communication to the Center, stating that the disputed domain names <meritbet.net>, <meritbet30.com>, and <meritbet550.com> were filed in good faith and that Respondent has legitimate interests. Respondent claimed that he operates a “licensed entertainment and gaming business under the MERITBET brand” and that he has invested significant resources in brand development and operation of the MERITBET platform. He therefore concludes that these three disputed domain names are used for a bona fide offering of services, do not target a mark, do not divert or mislead consumers and are associated with legitimately owned trademarks. Respondent has claimed and submitted a trademark application for MERIBET in Brazil and a trademark registration for MERIBET in the United Kingdom. Respondent further submitted evidence that the website under the disputed domain names <meritbet30.com> and <meritbet550.com> are inactive. As regards the disputed domain name <meritbet.net> he alleged that its content is noncommercial and that it is “an informational blog site”. He also produced a list showing that the website under that disputed domain name is geo-blocked and may be accessed solely through the United Kingdom. Subsequently Respondent sent further communications to the Center on procedural matters and with his communication to the Center of October 22, 2025 he clarified that he is only submitting a response for the above three disputed domain names and that the disputed domain names <meritbet.org> and <meritbetgiris.com> are not related to his “brand”, and both domains that “are already reported from our end as a brand infringement”. He repeated his assertion that he is not related to the other two disputed domain names with his email communication to the Center of October 28, 2025.

On November 4, 2025, named Respondent Kerim Balci sent an informal communication to the Center, regarding the disputed domain name <meritbet.org> attaching a signed Standard Settlement Form.

7. Discussion and Findings

Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy lists the three elements which the Complainant must satisfy with respect to the disputed domain names:

- (i) the disputed domain names are identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights;
- (ii) Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain names; and
- (iii) the disputed domain names have been registered and are being used in bad faith.

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 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 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.

Although the addition of other terms here, "bet", "30", "550", and "giris" (which means "entrance" in Turkish) 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 name and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8.

The generic gTLDs, here ".com", ".net", and ".org" are disregarded, as gTLDs typically do not form part of the comparison on the grounds that they are required for technical reasons (*Rexel Developpements SAS v. Zhan Yequn*, WIPO Case No. [D2017-0275](#); *Hay & Robertson International Licensing AG v. C. J. Lovik*, WIPO Case No. [D2002-0122](#)).

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 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.

On the contrary, as Complainants demonstrated, the disputed domain names each lead to websites a) prominently displaying the same MERITBET trademark and logo mimicking the trademark and logos of Complainants, colours and indicia and / or b) offering or containing links to gambling/betting services in direct competition with Complainants. All these websites therefore falsely suggested to Internet users that the websites to which the disputed domain names resolved are owned by the Complainants or were at least affiliated to the Complainants. Accordingly, such use cannot be considered "fair", nor to have conferred upon the Respondent any rights or legitimate interests for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.5.

As regards the allegations of named Respondent *ef e ates*, the Panel notes that the trademarks relied upon in his reply were filed in 2025 (July 28, 2025 for the United Kingdom registration and August 14, 2025 for the Brazil application), namely after the Complainants' trademarks and after all of the disputed domain names' registrations except one. Moreover, as Complainants noted in their supplemental filing, although the websites under the disputed domain names were directed at Turkish-speaking users, the trademark filings were made in Brazil and the United Kingdom. Furthermore, per the Supplemental Filing of Complainants, the Brazilian application has been opposed by Complainants.

Where the overall circumstances demonstrate that trademarks were obtained primarily to circumvent the application of the UDRP or otherwise prevent the complainant's exercise of its rights, panels are typically reluctant to find respondent rights or legitimate interests in a domain name on the basis of a corresponding trademark application or registration. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.12.2. The Panel finds that, in view of the above-mentioned circumstances, this (attempt to circumvent) is the case also here. (The Panel notes further that the entity that filed the applications is not the named Respondent but Arnica Solutions LTD, an entity which is not a party to the present proceedings, and Respondent provided no explanation or evidence of any legal relationship with it.)

As regards the claims that the websites under the disputed domain names <meritbet30.com> and <meritbet550.com> are inactive, these do not change the finding of the Panel regarding lack of legitimate interests, taking into account the prior use thereof, evidenced by Complainant, at the time of filing of the Complaint.

As regards the disputed domain name <meritbet.net>, Respondent alleged that its content is noncommercial and that it is an information blog site. He also produced a list showing that the website under the disputed domain name <meritbet.net> is geo-blocked and may be accessed solely through the United Kingdom. Access only through the United Kingdom does not change the findings of lack of legitimate interests, given that for this disputed domain name Respondent did not allege legitimate interests due to prior commercial bona fide use and trademark rights in the United Kingdom. Furthermore, per the screenshot provided also by Respondent the website is in Turkish language, indicating that the geo-blocking, obviously after the filing of the Complaint, is pretextual.

As regards the allegation on noncommercial use for this disputed domain name, the Panel notes that even though UDRP jurisprudence recognizes that the use of a domain name for fair use such as noncommercial free speech, would in principle support a respondent's claim to a legitimate interest under the Policy, to support fair use, the respondent's blog must be genuine and noncommercial; and not a pretext for commercial activity. Here, evidence produced by Complainant, showed the website under this disputed domain name, prominently using a logo that mimicked that of Complainants. Furthermore, the disputed domain name <meritbet.net> incorporates Complainants' MERIT trademark in its entirety along with a descriptive for the business at hand word, "bet". Therefore, the Panel finds that at the time of filing of the Complaint, the website under this disputed domain name created user confusion with Complainants through impersonation and dismisses the claim of fair use as noncommercial free speech.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal 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.

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.

The Complainant's MERIT trademarks are well known in the respective field of business at least in Turkey (as already recognized, see also WIPO Case No. [D2017-1398](#), *Merit Turizm Yatirim Ve Isletme Anonim Sirketi v. Fedlan Kilicaslan, G&F Company Group NV / Redsoft N.V.*). Because the MERIT mark had been widely used and registered by the Complainants at the time of the disputed domain names' registrations and enjoyed reputation, the Panel finds it more likely than not that the Respondent had the Complainants' trademark in mind when registering the disputed domain names (*Parfums Christian Dior v. Javier Garcia Quintas and Christiandior.net*, WIPO Case No. [D2000-0226](#)). Furthermore, the whole of the Complainants' trademark is included in the disputed domain names, while the websites to which the disputed domain names lead incorporated a sign mimicking the MERIT trademark and logos of Complainants and / or provided gambling/betting services, namely services similar to those of Complainants. The above is a clear indication that the Respondent knew of the Complainants and its trademarks and chose the disputed domain names having those in mind.

The Panel finds further that Respondent has intended to attract Internet users accessing the websites corresponding to the disputed domain names who may be confused and believe that the websites are held, controlled by, or somehow affiliated or related to the Complainant, for its commercial gain.

As regards the claims that the websites under the disputed domain names <meritbet30.com> and <meritbet550.com> are inactive, these do not change the finding of the Panel regarding bad faith, taking into account the prior use thereof, at the time of filing of the Complaint, evidenced by Complainant, and the finding of lack of legitimate interests.

As regards the allegation on noncommercial use for the disputed domain name <meritbet.net>, the Panel notes that evidence produced by Complainant, showed the website under this disputed domain name, at the time of filing of the Complaint, prominently using a logo that mimicked that of Complainants. Furthermore, the disputed domain name <meritbet.net> incorporates Complainants' MERIT trademark in its entirety along with a descriptive for the business at hand word, "bet". Therefore, the Panel finds that at the time of filing of the Complaint, the website under this disputed domain name created user confusion with Complainants through impersonation. Last, the Panel notes that in the <meritbet.net> website screenshot produced by Respondent in his response the MERITBET logo mimicking Complainant's trademark has been removed, which is further indication that Respondent knew of Complainant's rights and the targeting of Complainant's website and now seeks to downplay that fact.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for activity such as here, claimed impersonation/passing off, 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 Complainants have established the third element of the Policy.

8. 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 <meritbetgirisicom>, <meritbet.net>, <meritbet.org>, <meritbet30.com>, and <meritbet550.com> be transferred to the First Complainant, NET Holding A.Ş.

/Marina Perraki/
Marina Perraki
Presiding Panelist

/Gökhan Gökçe/
Gökhan Gökçe
Panelist

/Philip N. Argy/
Philip N. Argy
Panelist
Date: December 26, 2025