

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION**

Bittech B.V. v. Dmytro Volkov

Case No. D2025-5171

### **1. The Parties**

The Complainant is Bittech B.V., Curaçao, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), internally represented.

The Respondent is Dmytro Volkov, Montenegro, self-represented.

### **2. The Domain Name and Registrar**

The disputed domain name <888starz-uzb.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 December 11, 2025. On the same day, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On December 12, 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 December 17, 2025, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The due date for an amendment to the Complaint was extended to December 26, 2025, at the Complainant’s request. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on December 25, 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 the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on January 19, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the original due date for Response was February 8, 2026. On February 8, 2026, the Respondent requested an extension of the due date for Response, noting that the Complainant had received an extension of time to file the amended Complaint. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5(b), the due

date for Response was extended to February 12, 2026. On February 15, 2026, the Respondent sent an informal Response to the Center. On the same day, the Complainant objected to acceptance of the Respondent's communication as untimely filed. On February 16, 2026, the Respondent sent an email communication. On the following day, the Complainant sent an email communication. On February 25, 2026, the Complainant sent an additional email communication to the Center.

The Center appointed Matthew Kennedy as the sole panelist in this matter on February 19, 2026. 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 an online gambling service provider based in Curaçao, Netherlands (Kingdom of the). It holds gambling licenses granted in Curaçao, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), and Kahnawake. The Complainant operates its betting and gambling platform through a website associated with the domain name <888starz.bet> and the 888Starz mobile application. It registered that domain name on February 20, 2020. According to content performance data in search results submitted by the Complainant, its website received over eight million impressions in 2025. The Complainant holds International trademark registration number 1721031 for a figurative 888STARZ mark, claimed in colors, registered on January 25, 2023, designating multiple jurisdictions, and specifying services in classes 35, 36, and 41. That trademark registration is current. The Complainant uses a different 88STARZ logo on its website.

The Respondent is an individual based in Montenegro. His email username is "Seodreamteam Europe".

The disputed domain name was created on November 18, 2024. According to archived screenshots submitted by the Complainant, the disputed domain name resolved in 2025 to a website in Uzbek prominently displaying the Complainant's figurative 888STARZ mark. The website title meant "888Starz official website: sports betting and live casino" and the website page header meant "888Starz: The best online casino and bookmaker in Uzbekistan". The homepage displayed a large button with a label meaning "Register at the casino". The website presented information regarding the Complainant's 888STARZ platform. At some point in time prior to the filing of the Complaint, the disputed domain name began to redirect to a website offering online gambling services operated by a competitor of the Complainant.

#### **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 is confusingly similar to its figurative 888STARZ mark.

The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name. The Complainant has not granted the Respondent a license to use domain names containing the 888STARZ trademark. The disputed domain name currently redirects to a website for a competitor of the Complainant, that uses the Complainant's figurative 888STARZ mark and purportedly provides access to the Complainant's services. The website contains links that redirect to casinos or bookmakers that directly compete with the Complainant's services. The Respondent did not obtain a license from the Complainant to use the term "888Starz" in any way. The Respondent impersonates the Complainant and attempts to mislead consumers for commercial gain.

The disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith. The Complainant's activities under the 888STARZ brand began almost five years before the registration of the disputed domain name. The Complainant has built up a significant reputation and international recognition for its services under the 888STARZ trademark. The Respondent's use of the disputed domain name constitutes an attempt to take advantage of the Complainant's reputation in order to obtain commercial benefit from confusion regarding the source of the advertised services.

## **B. Respondent**

When the Respondent submitted his position in this case, he expressed his willingness to resolve the dispute amicably.

At present, the disputed domain name does not host any independent website but rather redirects, which does not generate any commercial income for the Respondent and is not used for profit-making purposes.

The disputed domain name was registered with a geographical designation that refers to Uzbekistan as the intended territorial focus of the resource. The Respondent requests that the Complainant be required to provide documents confirming (i) the existence of a valid license to conduct activities within Uzbekistan; (ii) the existence of a registered trademark in the relevant national jurisdiction; and (iii) the legal grounds for conducting commercial activities in that region. Otherwise, the Complainant's evidence, particularly search engine ranking and website traffic data, may mislead the Panel regarding the actual nature and scale of the alleged harm that the disputed domain name purportedly causes to the Complainant's activities.

Significant financial resources were invested in the development of the disputed domain name, in particular (i) 723 domain names link to the disputed domain name; (ii) the total number of backlinks exceeds 1,000; and (iii) systematic work was carried out to build link equity and search engine optimization. Loss of the disputed domain name would result in substantial financial losses for the Respondent.

Bad faith is absent. The Respondent did not attempt any blackmail, extortion, sale of the disputed domain name at an inflated price; or cause any reputational harm to the Complainant. After receiving notification of the dispute, readiness to resolve the situation was expressed, which demonstrates good faith and absence of intent to cause harm. The Respondent is interested in a constructive resolution of the dispute and is prepared to enter into an agreement that the disputed domain name will be deactivated and not used, to undertake a written obligation not to use the disputed domain name in the future, or to transfer the disputed domain name to the Complainant for symbolic compensation, taking into account the invested resources and the domain's authority in search engines.

## **6. Discussion and Findings**

### **6.1. Preliminary Issue – Late Filing**

The Respondent replied to the Complainant's contentions in an informal Response received on February 15, 2026, after the extended due date for Response, which was February 12, 2026.

The Complainant objected to the Respondent's informal Response as untimely filed. The Complainant's main reasons were that (i) the due date for Response had already been extended once; (ii) there were no exceptional circumstances cited by the Respondent for delay; and (iii) repeated requests for extensions were an abuse of procedural rights. In the alternative, the Complainant requested permission to submit a reply.

The Respondent replied to the Complainant's objection, arguing that (i) there had been no abuse of procedure as the delay was limited; (ii) panels have broad discretion to determine the admissibility of submissions; (iii) the short delay had not caused any actual prejudice to the Complainant; and (iv) issuing a

Decision based only on the Complaint would not be fair or fully informed. The Respondent did not object to granting the Complainant a limited opportunity to submit brief written comments on the informal Response.

The Complainant requested clarification, prior to the appointment of the Panel, as to whether (i) the materials submitted by the Respondent would be considered a formal Response; (ii) whether a determination had been made to accept or reject these materials; and (iii) whether the Complainant would be given an opportunity to reply.

The Panel has a discretion to admit a late Response as part of its general powers under paragraph 10 of the Rules (a) to conduct the administrative proceeding in such a manner as it considers appropriate in accordance with the Policy and Rules; (b) to ensure that each Party is given a fair opportunity to present its case; and (c) to ensure that the administrative proceeding takes place with due expedition.

In the present case, the Panel notes that the Respondent's email communication of February 15, 2026, contains the only substantive response to the Complainant's contentions on the record. While the due date for Response has already been extended once to accommodate the Respondent, admission of this late filing will not prejudice either Party or delay the proceedings. In these circumstances, the Panel exercises its discretion to admit the communication by way of a Response. Nevertheless, the Panel notes that the Response is informal because it fails to include a certification in accordance with paragraph 5(c)(viii) of the Rules, and the Panel will take this into account in weighing the arguments that it sets forth.

As regards the Complainant's request to submit further comments, the Panel notes that the Parties have already made one substantive submission each. The informal Response contains no new evidence or arguments that would, in the interests of fairness, entitle the Complainant to an opportunity to reply. Accordingly, the Complainant's request to submit further comments is denied.

## **6.2. Substantive Issues**

Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy provides that a complainant must demonstrate each of the following elements:

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

The burden of proof of each element is borne by the Complainant.

### **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. See WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ("[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)"), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown registered rights in respect of a figurative 888STARZ trademark for the purposes of the Policy. Bearing in mind the global nature of the Internet and the Domain Name System, the jurisdiction in which that trademark is registered is irrelevant to the first element of the Policy. See [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), sections 1.1.2 and 1.2.1.

The textual elements of the 888STARZ mark are reproduced within the disputed domain name as its initial element. Despite the addition of the letters "uzb" (which may be read as a reference to Uzbekistan), separated from the mark by a hyphen, the textual elements of the 888STARZ mark remain clearly recognizable in the disputed domain name. Given that the figurative elements of the Complainant's mark

cannot be represented in a domain name for technical reasons, they may be disregarded in the assessment of confusing similarity for the purposes of the Policy. The only other additional element in the disputed domain name is a generic Top-Level Domain (“gTLD”) extension (“.com”) which, as a standard requirement of domain name registration, may be disregarded in the assessment of confusing similarity for the purposes of the Policy. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. See [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), sections 1.7, 1.8, 1.10, and 1.11.1.

Therefore, 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 that 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. See [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.1.

In the present case, the disputed domain name combines the textual element of the Complainant’s figurative 888STARZ mark and a reference to Uzbekistan, implying that it will resolve to an Uzbek website affiliated with the Complainant. Indeed, the disputed domain name formerly resolved to a website displaying the Complainant’s figurative 888STARZ mark. The website was explicitly presented as an 888Starz official website and online casino in Uzbekistan, presented detailed information in Uzbek regarding the Complainant’s 888Starz platform, and invited Internet users to register at the casino. However, the Complainant submits that it has not granted the Respondent a license to use domain names containing the figurative 888STARZ trademark and that the Respondent did not obtain a license from the Complainant to use the term “888Starz” in any way. Subsequently, the disputed domain name has redirected to a website offering online gambling services operated by a competitor of the Complainant. Neither of these uses is a use of the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services. Nor is either a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name. Prior UDRP panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity, such as impersonation or passing off, as on the Respondent’s website in this case, can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. See [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.13.1.

Moreover, the Registrar has verified that the Respondent’s name is “Dmytro Volkov”, which does not resemble the disputed domain name. Nothing on the record indicates that the Respondent has ever been commonly known by the disputed domain name.

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 argues that the disputed domain name is not used for profit-making purposes as it currently redirects to a third party website. However, the Panel notes that, even if the Respondent is not paid to redirect traffic to that third party website, the disputed domain name is nonetheless operating for the commercial gain of the third party operator of that website, which is a gambling website. Accordingly, the Respondent is not making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name. The Respondent has not alleged any other basis on which he has rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. Therefore, the Panel finds that the Respondent has not rebutted the Complainant’s prima facie showing.

Based on the record, 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. The fourth of these circumstances is as follows:

“(iv) by using the [disputed] domain name, [the respondent has] intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to [the respondent’s] 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] web site or location.”

In the present case, the disputed domain name was registered in 2024, after the registration of the Complainant’s figurative 888STARZ mark. The disputed domain name incorporates the textual elements of that mark as its initial element. The disputed domain name formerly resolved to a website that prominently displayed that figurative mark and provided detailed information about the Complainant, including its license in Curaçao, Netherlands (Kingdom of the). The Respondent does not deny awareness of the Complainant. In view of these circumstances, the Panel finds that the Respondent knew of the Complainant and its figurative 888STARZ mark at the time when he registered the disputed domain name.

As regards use, the disputed domain name formerly resolved to a website falsely presented as an official website and online casino of the Complainant for Uzbekistan, which invited Internet users to register at the casino. The disputed domain name currently redirects to a third party gambling website operated by a competitor of the Complainant. In view of these circumstances, the Panel finds that by using the disputed domain name, the Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to the Respondent’s website, and later to a third party website, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant’s mark as to the source or affiliation of the Respondent’s website and that third party website or of the gambling services offered on the Respondent’s website or that third party website, within the terms of paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy. Further, prior UDRP panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity such as impersonation or passing off, as on the Respondent’s website in this case, constitutes bad faith. See [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), 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 Respondent notes that the disputed domain name is aimed at the Uzbek market and questions whether the Complainant has any operations in Uzbekistan. The Respondent seeks to place in issue the nature and scale of any alleged harm that his registration and use of the disputed domain name cause to the Complainant. However, it is not necessary for the Complainant to demonstrate harm under paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy; rather, that provision addresses whether the Respondent has intended to trade on the value of the Complainant’s mark, as he has in the present case.

The Respondent also claims that he has invested significant financial resources in the development of the disputed domain name (and the associated website) and that he would incur substantial financial losses if he lost the disputed domain name. However, the Respondent assumed the risk of those losses when he registered and used the disputed domain name in connection with illegitimate activities, such as impersonation or passing off. The Policy does not provide for compensation and the Complainant is not obliged to negotiate any with the Respondent.

Therefore, 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 <888starz-uzb.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

*/Matthew Kennedy/*

**Matthew Kennedy**

Sole Panelist

Date: February 27, 2026