

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION**

LPL Financial LLC v. Afina Cial, Host Master, Njalla Okta LLC  
Case No. D2025-5329

### **1. The Parties**

The Complainant is LPL Financial LLC, United States of America (“United States”), represented by Hogan Lovells (Paris) LLP, France.

The Respondents are Afina Cial, Ukraine, and Host Master, Njalla Okta LLC, Saint Kitts and Nevis.

### **2. The Domain Names and Registrars**

The disputed domain names <aff-finances-lpl.com>, <api-finance-lpl.com>, <crm-finances-lpl.com>, <finance-lpl.com>, and <finances-lpl.com> are registered with Tucows Domains Inc.

The disputed domain names <aff-finlpl.com>, <api-finlpl.com>, and <financelpl.com> are registered with Hostinger Operations, UAB.

Tucows Domains Inc, and Hostinger Operations, UAB are collectively hereinafter referred to as the “Registrar”.

### **3. Procedural History**

The Complaint was initially filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on December 19, 2025 in relation to three disputed domain names: <aff-finlpl.com>, <api-finlpl.com>, and <financelpl.com>. On December 19, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain names. On December 23, 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) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on December 26, 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 amended Complaint on January 7, 2026, in which it requested the addition of five additional disputed domain names: <aff-finances-lpl.com>, <api-finance-lpl.com>, <crm-finances-lpl.com>, <finance-lpl.com>, and <finances-lpl.com> (“Additional Domain Names”). On January 9, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the Additional Domain Names. On January 9, 2026, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification

response disclosing registrant and contact information for the Additional Domain Names which differed from the named Respondent (REDACTED FOR PRIVACY / Afina Cial) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on January 9, 2026, with the registrant and contact information of nominally multiple underlying registrants revealed by the Registrars, requesting the Complainant to either file separate complaints 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. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on January 16, 2026.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended Complaints 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 Respondents of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on January 21, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was February 10, 2026. The Respondents did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondents' default on February 11, 2026.

The Center appointed Zoltán Takács as the sole panelist in this matter on February 17, 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 which was founded in 1989 through the merger of two brokerage firms (Linsco and Private Leader, LPL) is one of the leaders in the retail financial advice market and is widely considered one of the largest independent broker-dealers in the United States. Since 2010, the Complainant has been publicly traded on the NASDAQ under "LPLA".

The Complainant is among others owner of the:

- European Union Trademark Registration ("EUTM") No. 018653022 for the word mark LPL registered since May 26, 2022, for variety of financial, monetary and banking services; and
- EUTM No. 018653024 for the figurative mark LPL FINANCIAL (design mark), registered since November 11, 2022, for variety of financial, monetary and banking services.

The Complainant also owns many domain names consisting of or containing its LPL and LPL FINANCIAL marks, e.g. <lpl.com>, which was registered in 1994 and from which the Complainant operates its main corporate website and <lplfinancial.com>, which was registered on January 23, 1998.

The disputed domain names were registered between November 10 and December 23, 2025. The disputed domain names <aff-finlpl.com>, <api-finlpl.com>, and <financelpl.com> are registered by Afina Cial; and the disputed domain names <aff-finances-lpl.com>, <api-finance-lpl.com>, <crm-finances-lpl.com>, <finance-lpl.com>, and <finances-lpl.com> are registered by Host Master, Njalla Okta LLC.

The disputed domain names <aff-finlpl.com>, <api-finlpl.com>, <financelpl.com>, <api-finance-lpl.com>, and <finance-lpl.com> have resolved to identical or highly similar websites that featured the same LPL Financial Services logo and promoted a financial trading platform prompting Internet users to "Get Account" and "Login" to deposit money and to trade on the platform. The websites also featured the address of the Complainant's South Carolina office and the Complainant's SEC number, the unique identifier assigned to the Complainant by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to entities involved in securities transactions.

The disputed domain names <aff-finances-lpl.com>, <crm-finances-lpl.com>, and <finance-lpl.com> appear to have been inactive since registration and currently none of the disputed domain names resolve to active websites.

## **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 that:

- the disputed domain names all comprise the Complainant's LPL mark, and in the majority the dominant elements of its LPL FINANCIAL mark with the two words inverted with addition of various terms are confusingly similar to the Complainant's marks;
- the Respondents have no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain names since they are unable to rely on any of the circumstances set out in paragraphs 4(c)(i), (ii), or (iii) of the Policy;
- due to the considerable reputation and goodwill worldwide of the Complainant and its marks it is not conceivable that the Respondents would not have had actual notice of them at the time of registration of the disputed domain names and adopt them for any other reason than to target them through creating a false impression of an association with the Complainant as well as to use them to promote a fraudulent trading scheme which is evidence of bad faith registration and use; and
- the Respondents' registration of eight disputed domain names targeting the Complainant and its trademarks, as well as the Respondents' use of a proxy service as an attempt to conceal their identity is further evidence of the Respondents' bad faith.

The Complainant requests that the disputed domain names be transferred from the Respondents to the Complainant.

### **B. Respondents**

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

## **6. Discussion and Findings**

### **6.1. Preliminary Issues**

#### **A. Procedural Considerations**

Under paragraph 10 of the Rules, the Panel is required to ensure that the Parties are treated with equality and that each Party is given a fair opportunity to present its case, and also that the administrative proceeding takes place with due expedition.

Since the Respondent Afina Cial's mailing address is stated to be in Ukraine, which is subject to an international conflict at the date of this Decision that may impact case notification, it is appropriate for the Panel to consider, in accordance with its discretion under paragraph 10 of the Rules, whether the proceeding should continue.

Having considered all the circumstances of the case, the Panel is of the view that it should. The Panel notes that disputed domain names were registered by the Respondent Afina Cial after the outbreak of the

international conflict, and as such the Panel considers that the Respondent Afina Cial has control over those disputed domain names. The Panel further notes that the Center did, however, successfully send all the procedural communications to the Respondent Afina Cial's email as registered with the Registrar and there is no evidence that these were not successfully delivered. It is moreover noted that, for the reasons which are set out later in this Decision, the Panel has no serious doubt that the Respondent Afina Cial registered and has used the disputed domain name in bad faith and with the intention to disrupt business of the Complainant. The Panel concludes that the Parties have been given a fair opportunity to present their case, and so that the administrative proceeding takes place with due expedition the Panel will proceed to a Decision accordingly.

## **B. Consolidation: Multiple Respondents**

The amended Complaint was filed in relation to eight disputed domain names registered by two different domain name registrants.

The Complainant alleges that the domain name registrants are either the same person, or somehow connected to each other and are under common control. The Complainant requests the consolidation of the Complaint against the multiple disputed domain name registrants pursuant to paragraph 10(e) of the Rules.

The disputed domain name registrants did not comment on the 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 the 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. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ("[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)"), section 4.11.2.

As regards to common control, the Panel notes that the disputed domain names all target the Complainant's marks; the naming pattern in the disputed domain names (the Complainant's LPL mark, and in the majority the dominant elements of its LPL FINANCIAL mark with the two words inverted with addition of various terms) is highly similar, and the disputed domain names <aff-finlpl.com>, <api-finlpl.com>, <financepl.com>, <api-finance-lpl.com>, and <finance-lpl.com> registered by nominally different registrants resolved to identical or highly similar websites.

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

### **6.2. Substantive Issues**

A complainant must evidence each of the three elements required by paragraph 4(a) of the Policy in order to succeed on the complaint, namely that:

- (i) the domain names are identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the complainant has rights;
- (ii) the respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the domain names; and
- (iii) the 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 3.1](#), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.2.1.

The Panel finds that the disputed domain names are confusingly similar to the Complainant's LPL and LPL FINANCIAL marks for the purposes of the Policy.

The Complainant's LPL mark is fully reproduced and recognizable within the disputed domain names.

The design elements of the Complainant's LPL FINANCIAL mark do not convey any relevant information under the first element of the Policy; it's the textual elements LPL FINANCIAL that are the dominant feature of the mark. The variation of the LPL FINANCIAL mark with the two words inverted is incorporated and recognizable in the disputed domain names <aff-finances-lpl.com>, <api-finance-lpl.com>, <crm-finances-lpl.com>, <finance-lpl.com>, <finances-lpl.com> and <financelpl.com>.

Although the addition of other terms, here "aff", "api", "crm", and "fin", 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 names and the marks for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), sections 1.7, 1.8, and 1.10.

The Panel finds that 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 3.1](#), 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.

As mentioned above, the disputed domain names <aff-finlpl.com>, <api-finlpl.com>, <financelpl.com>, <api-finance-lpl.com>, and <finance-lpl.com> have resolved to identical or highly similar websites that featured the same LPL Financial Services logo and promoted a financial trading platform prompting Internet users to "Get Account" and "Login" to deposit money and to trade on the platform. The websites featured the address of the Complainant's South Carolina office and the Complainant's unique SEC number. Use of domain names for illegal activity, here claimed passing off, or other types of fraud, can never confer any rights of legitimate interests on a respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.13.1.

Furthermore, the passive holding of the disputed domain names <aff-finances-lpl.com>, <crm-finances-lpl.com>, and <finance-lpl.com> does not amount to use or preparations to use them in connection with a bona fide offering of goods and services under the circumstances of the case.

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.

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 present case, the Panel notes that previous UDRP panels have established that the Complainant's marks are well-known. *LPL Financial LLC v. Alfred Andolini*, WIPO Case No. [D2023-5124](#). Registration of a domain name that is identical or confusingly similar to a famous or widely known trademark by an unaffiliated entity can by itself create a presumption of bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.1.4.

The above, coupled with the facts that the disputed domain names <aff-finlpl.com>, <api-finlpl.com>, <financelpl.com>, <api-finance-lpl.com>, and <finance-lpl.com> resolved to websites effectively passing off as the Complainant show that the Respondent knew of the Complainant at registration of the disputed domain names. As mentioned above, the Respondent used these disputed domain names for illegal activity, here claimed passing off, or other types of fraud, which constitutes bad faith registration and use. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.4.

Furthermore, it appears that in case of registration of the disputed domain names <aff-finances-lpl.com>, <api-finance-lpl.com>, <crm-finances-lpl.com>, <finance-lpl.com>, and <finances-lpl.com> the Respondent intentionally employed a proxy service merely to hide its identity. This supports an inference of the Respondent's bad faith, which the Respondent did not refute. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.6.

The fact that the disputed domain names <aff-finances-lpl.com>, <crm-finances-lpl.com>, and <finance-lpl.com> did not resolve to any websites does not prevent a finding of bad faith registration. In this context the Panel notes the reputation of the Complainant's marks; the composition of the disputed domain names as mentioned above and finds that in the circumstances of this case the passive holding of the disputed domain names does not prevent a finding of bad faith under the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.3.

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 <aff-finances-lpl.com>, <aff-finlpl.com>, <api-finance-lpl.com>, <api-finlpl.com>, <crm-finances-lpl.com>, <finance-lpl.com>, <financelpl.com>, and <finances-lpl.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

*/Zoltán Takács/*

**Zoltán Takács**

Sole Panelist

Date: March 3, 2026