

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

CIRCUS BELGIUM S.A. v. YURY ZANCHENKO

Case No. D2026-1223

1. The Parties

The Complainant is CIRCUS BELGIUM S.A., Belgium, represented by COGITUS SRL, Belgium.

The Respondent is YURY ZANCHENKO, Ukraine.

2. The Domain Names and Registrar

The disputed domain names <casino-circus-nl.com>, <casinocircus-nl.com>, <circuscasino-nederland.com>, <circus-casino-nl.com> and <circuscasino-nl.com> are registered with Name.com, Inc. (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on March 20, 2026. On March 23, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain names. On March 24, 2026, 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, Domain Protection Services, Inc.) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on March 27, 2026, 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 March 27, 2026.

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 April 1, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was April 21, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on April 24, 2026.

The Center appointed Edoardo Fano as the sole panelist in this matter on May 18, 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.

The Panel has not received any requests from the Complainant or the Respondent regarding further submissions, waivers, or extensions of deadlines, and the Panel has not found it necessary to request any further information from the Parties.

Having reviewed the communication records in the case file provided by the Center, the Panel finds that the Center has discharged its responsibility under the Rules, paragraph 2(a), "to employ reasonably available means calculated to achieve actual notice to [the] Respondent". Therefore, the Panel shall issue its Decision based upon the Complaint, the Policy, the Rules, and the Supplemental Rules and without the benefit of a response from the Respondent.

The language of the proceeding is English, being the language of the Registration Agreements, as per paragraph 11(a) of the Rules.

On May 19, 2026, the Panel issued Procedural Order No. 1. The Complainant replied on the same date and confirmed the disputed domain names subject to this proceeding, and clarified a clerical error in the Complaint filing stage.

4. Further 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 that the administrative proceeding takes place with due expedition.

Although the Respondent's mailing address is stated to be in Ukraine (though such fact is not possible to verify), which is subject to an international conflict at the date of this Decision which 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.

The Panel is of the view that it should. Further to the Rules, the Center transmitted Written Notice of the Complaint to the Respondent. It is noted that the communications to the Respondent's email addresses were delivered, even though the registered courier was not able to deliver the Written Notice to the Respondent. The Respondent has not opposed the continuation of the proceedings.

The Panel moreover notes that it is clear the Complainant has been targeted and that these are not coincidental domain name registrations, as is further described herein.

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.

5. Factual Background

The Complainant is CIRCUS BELGIUM S.A., a Belgian company operating in the field of casino services, games of chance and sports betting services, and owning several trademark registrations worldwide for CIRCUS and CIRCUS CASINO, among which the following:

- European Union Trade Mark No. 011664547 for CIRCUS and design, registered on May 17, 2014;

- European Union Trade Mark No. 018670434 for CIRCUS, registered on November 7, 2022;

- United Kingdom Trade Mark No. UK00906071914 for CIRCUS CASINO, registered on October 23, 2008.

The Complainant operates well-known gambling websites in the Netherlands, among which “www.circus.nl”, “www.casinocircus.nl”, and “www.circuscasino.nl”.

The Complainant provided evidence in support of the above.

According to the Whois records, the disputed domain names were all registered on November 7, 2025, and they resolve to websites that are designed to impersonate the Complainant’s official online casino platform “www.circus.nl”, reproducing the Complainant’s trademark CIRCUS, its visual identity, color scheme, favicons and overall “look and feel”, including prominent use of the trademark CIRCUS logo and marketing slogans such as “Take your jackpot!”, falsely presenting themselves as “Circus Casino online casino Netherlands”, including detailed sections relating to games, bonuses, jackpots, and user registration, thereby creating the appearance of a genuine licensed operator, and redirecting users to third-party online gambling platforms.

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.

Notably, the Complainant states that the disputed domain names are confusingly similar to its trademarks CIRCUS and CIRCUS CASINO.

Moreover, the Complainant asserts that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain names, since it has not been authorized by the Complainant to register the disputed domain names or to use the trademarks within the disputed domain names, it is not commonly known by the disputed domain names, and it is not making either a bona fide offering of goods or services or a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain names. The disputed domain names resolve to websites that are deliberately designed to impersonate the Complainant’s official online casino platform “www.circus.nl”.

The Complainant submits that the Respondent has registered the disputed domain names in bad faith, since the Complainant’s trademarks CIRCUS and CIRCUS CASINO are distinctive and internationally known in the field of casino services, games of chance and sports betting services. Therefore, the Respondent targeted the Complainant’s trademarks at the time of registration of the disputed domain names and the Complainant contends that the use of the disputed domain names to intentionally attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to the Respondent’s websites, creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant’s trademarks as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the Respondent’s websites, qualifies as bad faith registration and use.

B. Respondent

The Respondent has made no reply to the Complainant’s contentions and is in default. In reference to paragraphs 5(f) and 14 of the Rules, no exceptional circumstances explaining the default have been put forward or are apparent from the record.

A respondent is not obliged to participate in a proceeding under the Policy, but if it fails to do so, reasonable facts asserted by a complainant may be taken as true, and appropriate inferences, in accordance with paragraph 14(b) of the Rules, may be drawn. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions (“[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)”), section 4.3.

7. Discussion and Findings

Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy lists three elements, which the Complainant must satisfy in order to succeed:

- (i) the disputed 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 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 trademarks and the disputed domain names. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.7.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds 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 the entirety of the Complainant’s trademark CIRCUS CASINO is reproduced within the disputed domain names. Accordingly, the disputed domain names are confusingly similar to the Complainant’s trademark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.7.

While the addition of other terms, here “nl”, “nederland” and one or two hyphens, 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 Complainant’s trademark CIRCUS CASINO for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.8.

It is also well-accepted that a generic Top-Level-Domain (“gTLD”), in this case “.com”, is typically ignored when assessing the similarity between a trademark and a domain name. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.11.1.

Based on the available record, 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.

While 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 often impossible 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 names. 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 present 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.

The disputed domain names resolve to websites that are deliberately designed to impersonate the Complainant's official online casino platform "www.circus.nl", reproducing the Complainant's trademark CIRCUS, its visual identity, color scheme, favicons and overall "look and feel", including prominent use of the trademark CIRCUS logo and marketing slogans such as "Take your jackpot!", falsely presenting themselves as "Circus Casino online casino Netherlands", including detailed sections relating to games, bonuses, jackpots, and user registration, thereby creating the appearance of a genuine licensed operator, and redirecting users to third-party online gambling platforms. Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal or illegitimate activity, here impersonation/passing off, can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.13.1.

The Panel therefore concludes that the disputed domain names are not being used in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services.

Moreover, the Panel finds that merely registering a domain name comprised of two dictionary words would not by itself automatically confer rights or legitimate interests on the Respondent, especially if the corresponding website is aimed at goods or services that target a third-party trademark, like in the present case, trading off the Complainant's trademarks, an aspect that will be considered in more details under the third element. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.10.1.

Finally, the Panel finds that the composition of the disputed domain names carries a high risk of implied affiliation as it effectively impersonates or suggests sponsorship or endorsement by the Complainant. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.5.1.

Based on the available 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.

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 3.1](#), section 3.2.1.

In the present case, regarding the registration in bad faith of the disputed domain names, the reputation of the Complainant's trademarks CIRCUS and CIRCUS CASINO in the field of casino services, games of chance and sports betting services is clearly established, and the Panel finds that the Respondent must have known of the Complainant, and deliberately registered the disputed domain names in bad faith, especially because in the websites at the disputed domain names the Respondent is reproducing the Complainant's trademark CIRCUS, its visual identity, logo, color scheme, favicons and overall "look and feel", including prominent use of the trademark CIRCUS logo and marketing slogans such as "Take your jackpot!", falsely presenting itself as "Circus Casino online casino Netherlands" and including detailed sections relating to games, bonuses, jackpots, and user registration, thereby creating the appearance of a genuine licensed operator.

The Panel further notes that the disputed domain names are also being used in bad faith since on the websites at the disputed domain names the Respondent is trying to impersonate the Complainant's official online casino platform "www.circus.nl", reproducing the Complainant's trademark CIRCUS, logo, favicons and colors, and redirecting users to third-party online gambling platforms in order to attract Internet users to its websites by creating likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's trademarks as to the disputed domain names' source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement, an activity clearly detrimental to the Complainant's business.

The above suggests to the Panel that the Respondent more likely than not intentionally registered and is using the disputed domain names in order both to disrupt the Complainant's business, and to attract Internet users to its websites in accordance with paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

Furthermore, panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal or illegitimate activity, here impersonation/passing off, constitutes bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.4.

Finally, the Panel considers that the nature of the inherently misleading disputed domain names, which incorporate the Complainant's trademark CIRCUS CASINO in its entirety with the addition of one or two hyphens and the terms "nl", "nederland", both referring to the Netherlands, that is a country in which the Complainant is operating an online casino, further supports a finding of bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.2.1. Moreover, the Panel finds it relevant that the Respondent registered all the disputed domain names, all of them resolving to similar if not identical websites, thus suggesting a pattern of activity seeking to take advantage of the Complainant and its trademarks.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds the third element of the Policy has been established.

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 <casino-circus-nl.com>, <casinocircus-nl.com>, <circuscasino-nederland.com>, <circus-casino-nl.com> and <circuscasino-nl.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Edoardo Fano/

Edoardo Fano

Sole Panelist

Date: May 26, 2026