

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION**

Schneider Electric SE v. RowlenEthelbert VonGericke, RowlenEthelbert VonGericke

Case No. D2026-1690

### **1. The Parties**

The Complainant is Schneider Electric SE, France, represented by Nameshield, France.

The Respondent is RowlenEthelbert VonGericke, RowlenEthelbert VonGericke, South Africa.

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

The disputed domain name <schneider.africa> is registered with OpenSRS (the “Registrar”).

### **3. Procedural History**

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on April 21, 2026. On April 22, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On April 22, 2026, 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 and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on April 24, 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 April 24, 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 27, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was May 17, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on May 24, 2026.

The Center appointed Dietrich Beier as the sole panelist in this matter on June 2, 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, founded in 1871, is a French industrial business trading internationally. It manufactures and offers products for power management, automation, and related solutions. The Complainant is featured on the NYSE Euronext and the French CAC 40 stock market index. In 2025, the Complainant revenues amounted to 40 billion Euros.

The Complainant owns several trademarks including the terms "SCHNEIDER" and "SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC", such as

- The international trademark SCHNEIDER n°461453 registered since May 13, 1981;
- The international trademark SCHNEIDER n°843403 registered since July 22, 2004;
- The international trademark SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC n° 715395 registered since March 15, 1999, each of them registered for more than one class and all being in effect.

The disputed domain name <schneider.africa> was registered on July 21, 2025 and resolves to a website reproducing the visuals from Complainant's website, showing inter alia the SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC trademark.

#### **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.

The Complainant states that the disputed domain name is identical to SCHNEIDER as it is reproduced without addition or deletion. Moreover, the Complainant contends that the addition of the suffix ".africa" does not change the overall impression of the designation as being connected to the trademark SCHNEIDER.

Further, the Respondent was not authorized by the Complainant to make use of his mark. The Complainant further contends that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the domain name and he is not related in any way with the Complainant. The Complainant does not carry out any activity for, nor has any business with the Respondent.

In view of Complainant's well known and distinctive trademark SCHNEIDER and the website displaying Complainant's visuals, the Respondent must have registered the disputed domain name with knowledge of Complainant's rights in the trademark, which evidences 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 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 Select UDRP Questions ("[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)"), section 1.7.

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

The entirety of the SCHNEIDER trademark is reproduced within the disputed domain name.

Accordingly, the disputed domain name is identical to the Complainant's trademark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), 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 3.1](#), 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 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. This is in particular the case since the Complainant did not grant any permission or consent to the Respondent to use its trademarks. Furthermore, the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name since there is no indication, as it could be found in the Whois information that the Respondent is commonly known by the name "schneider" nor that the Respondent is using the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of related goods or services which is already not the case since the Respondent is using visuals of the Complainant under the disputed domain name and not indicating that this is not the website of the Complainant.

## **C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith**

Due to the long existence and intensive use of the Complainant's trademark, the Respondent must have been well aware of the Complainant and its trademarks when registering the disputed domain name. The Complainant had not authorised the Respondent to make use of its trademark.

The disputed domain name resolves to a webpage with visuals of the Complainant. The Panel finds that this clearly shows the disputed domain name is used to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to the Respondent's website to create a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's trademarks.

Having reviewed the available record, the Panel notes the distinctiveness and the reputation of the Complainant's trademark, the use of Complainant's trademark in the disputed domain name, the Respondent's failure to file a response, and finds that in the circumstances of this case including the use of Complainant's visuals and trademarks under the disputed domain name establish the finding of 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 <schneider.africa> be transferred to the Complainant.

*/Dietrich Beier/*

**Dietrich Beier**

Sole Panelist

Date: June 13, 2026