

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Compagnie Générale des Etablissements Michelin v. Paulo Silva
Case No. D2026-1932

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Compagnie Générale des Etablissements Michelin, France, represented by Dreyfus & associés, France.

The Respondent is Paulo Silva, United Arab Emirates.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <michelinhub.com> is registered with IONOS SE (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on May 5, 2026. On May 5, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On May 7, 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 (private) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on May 7, 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 May 8, 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 May 15, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was June 4, 2026. The Respondent sent informal email communications to the Center on May 7 and 15, 2026, without submitting a formal Response. The Center notified the Parties of the commencement of the Panel appointment process on June 6, 2026.

The Center appointed Assen Alexiev as the sole panelist in this matter on June 10, 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 was established in 1889. It is one of the worldwide leaders in the tire industry, having 117 tire manufacturing facilities and more than 124,000 employees, and is present in 170 countries. The Complainant operates its official website at the domain name <michelin.com>, registered since December 1, 1993.

The Complainant is the owner of a number of trademark registrations for MICHELIN (the “MICHELIN Trademark”), including the following representative registrations in the United Arab Emirates, where the Respondent is based according to the information that it has provided to the Registrar:

- the International Trademark MICHELIN with registration No. 1713161, registered on June 13, 2022 for goods and services in International Classes 6, 7, 9, 12, 16, 20, 35, 37, 39, 41, and 42; and
- the International Trademark MICHELIN with registration No. 1780534, registered on October 20, 2023 for goods and services in International Classes 9, 10, 11, 19, 20, 22, 35, 41, 42 and 43.

The disputed domain name was registered on March 14, 2026. It resolves to a blank webpage. The Complainant has submitted evidence that the disputed domain name has mail exchange (“MX”) records configured.

5. Parties’ Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant states that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to its MICHELIN Trademark, because it reproduces the trademark in its entirety in combination with the dictionary word “hub”, which does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity with the Complainant’s trademark. In the Complainant’s view, the public would reasonably assume that the disputed domain name is owned by or is related to the Complainant.

According to the Complainant, the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name, because it is not commonly known under it, is not affiliated with the Complainant, and has not been authorised by the Complainant to use the MICHELIN Trademark or to register a domain name incorporating it.

The Complainant submits that before initiating the present proceedings, it sent a cease-and-desist letter to the Respondent, requesting the transfer of the disputed domain name free of charge, and the Respondent rejected this request, asking for a compensation of its expenses. The Complainant notes that the Respondent also attempted to justify the registration of the disputed domain name by claiming that “Michelin” is a personal name, but failed to provide any evidence of having any business or personal connection to such name. The Complainant notes that the disputed domain name resolves to an inactive page and points out that email servers have been configured for it, so there is a risk that it might be used in phishing schemes.

The Complainant contends that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. It submits that the MICHELIN trademark predates the registration of the disputed domain name by years, and that the Respondent was well aware of it when he registered the disputed domain name, which is confirmed by the Respondent’s own statements in his pre-Complaint correspondence with the Complainant. According

to the Complainant, the composition of the disputed domain name indicates a deliberate choice to capitalise on the reputation of the MICHELIN trademark and to create an impression of association with the Complainant. The Complainant also submits that the Respondent registered the disputed domain name to prevent the Complainant from reflecting its trademark in the disputed domain name. The Complainant notes that the Respondent refused to transfer the disputed domain name unless compensated. According to the Complainant, this shows an intent to retain control of the disputed domain name as a leverage vis-a-vis the Complainant. The Complainant states that the disputed domain name is currently inactive, but this does not mean that it is being used in good faith.

The Complainant points out that email servers have been configured on the disputed domain name so that there might be a risk that the Respondent is engaged in a phishing scheme.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not formally reply to the Complainant's contentions.

In his informal email communications to the Center, the Respondent made a number of statements, summarised below (in the relevant part). The Respondent stated:

- that he intends to keep the disputed domain name but agrees not to use it;
- that the Complainant has to pay the cost of the disputed domain name if it wanted to acquire it. The Respondent adds that he does not demand a large amount, but only recovering the registration cost;
- that the Respondent does not intend to pay any fees; and
- that he has moved to Portugal and is not located in the United Arab Emirates anymore, so "good luck finding [him]".

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

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

The Panel finds that the MICHELIN Trademark is recognisable within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the MICHELIN Trademark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.7.

Although the addition of other terms (here, "hub") may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such term does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the MICHELIN Trademark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.8.

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 recognised 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. [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.

The disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant’s MICHELIN Trademark, which has been extensively used for many years on a global scale, and may appear to Internet users as representing an official online location of the Complainant. Since the disputed domain name also has MX records enabled, there is a risk that Internet users receiving email communications from email addresses set up at the disputed domain name may believe that such communications originate from the Complainant. The Respondent admitted his knowledge of the MICHELIN Trademark in the pre-Complaint correspondence exchanged between the Parties, and in these proceedings, he did not provide any plausible explanation why he has registered the disputed domain name except stating that it was available.

Considering the above, in the absence of any evidence pointing to a different conclusion, and noting notoriety of the trademark, the Panel accepts that it is more likely than not that the Respondent has registered the disputed domain name targeting the Complainant’s MICHELIN Trademark in an attempt to exploit the goodwill of this trademark. Such conduct does not support a finding that the Respondent has rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name.

The Panel therefore 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.

Panels have found that the non-use of a domain name (including a blank or “coming soon” page) would not by itself prevent a finding of bad faith under the doctrine of passive holding. To the contrary, in looking at the totality of circumstances in each case, panels have found that the registration and non-use of a domain name can still constitute bad faith for purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.3.

Factors that have been considered relevant in applying the passive holding doctrine include: (i) the degree of distinctiveness or reputation of the complainant's mark, (ii) the failure of the respondent to submit a response or to provide any evidence of actual or contemplated good-faith use, (iii) the respondent's taking active steps to conceal its identity or (iv) the use of false or inaccurate contact details (noted to be in breach of the respondent's registration agreement).

Taking the above factors into consideration, panels assess the overall plausibility of any (claimed) good faith use to which the domain name may be put in light of the composition of the domain name in relation to the relevant mark, such that, the more arbitrary or distinctive a mark, the less plausible a claimed non-infringing good faith use is likely to be, and vice versa.

Having reviewed the available record, the Panel notes the distinctiveness, long-term use, and global reputation of the Complainant's MICHELIN Trademark, the composition of the disputed domain name, which identically reproduces this trademark in combination with a term that can suggest an official online location of the Complainant, and the Respondent's own statement that he is actually located in Portugal, but "good luck finding" him there, which appears to mean that his contact details are not accurate. In light of the combination of these factors, the Panel finds that the registration and non-use of the disputed domain name constitute bad faith for the purposes of 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 <michelinhub.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Assen Alexiev/

Assen Alexiev

Sole Panelist

Date: June 18, 2026