

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Sopra Steria Group v. Mykhailo Mahas, Sopra Steria Bulgaria
Case No. D2026-2359

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Sopra Steria Group, France, represented by Fidal, France.

The Respondent is Mykhailo Mahas, Sopra Steria Bulgaria, Bulgaria.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <soprasteriabg.com> (the “Disputed Domain Name”) is registered with Hosting Concepts B.V. d/b/a Registrar.eu. (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on June 1, 2026. On June 2, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the Disputed Domain Name. On June 3, 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 (“No information provided”) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on June 4, 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 June 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 June 9, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was June 29, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on June 30, 2026.

The Center appointed Mariia Koval as the sole panelist in this matter on July 3, 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 1968, is specialized in IT consulting, digital services and software development. The Complainant is headquartered in Paris and has operations in several countries in Western Europe, employing 3,400 consultants across Europe, including 1,900 in the group's native France.

The Complainant is the owner of numerous SOPRA STERIA, SOPRA and STERIA trademark registrations (collectively, the "SOPRA STERIA Trademarks") in different jurisdictions, among which are:

- International Trademark Registration No. 774322 for STERIA, registered on September 18, 2001, in classes 9, 16, 35, 37, 38, 41, 42;
- European Union Trade Mark Registration No. 003233335 for SOPRA, registered on February 3, 2005, in classes 9, 16, 35, 38, 41, 42;
- International Trademark Registration No. 1290669 for SOPRA STERIA, registered on September 24, 2015, in classes 9, 16, 35, 36, 38, 41, 42, 45.

The Complainant operates more than 400 domain names containing SOPRA STERIA Trademarks, among which are:

- <soprasteria.com> registered on April 7, 2014
- <soprasteria.fr> registered on April 15, 2014
- <soprasteria.bg> registered on June 14, 2024
- <soprasteria.be> registered on April 15, 2014
- <soprasteria.ca> registered on August 4, 2022
- <soprasteria.cn> registered on June 4, 2014
- <soprasteria.eu> registered on April 15, 2014
- <soprasteria.it> registered on April 16, 2014
- <soprasteria.sg> registered on September 22, 2014.

The registration date of the Disputed Domain Name is May 14, 2026. As at the date of this Decision, the Disputed Domain Name resolves to an inactive website with notification: "This site has been reported as unsafe". According to the Complainant, prior to the cease-and-desist letter sent by the Complainant on May 22, 2026, and the subsequent takedown notices sent by the Complainant on May 25, 2026, to which the Complainant has never received any response, the Disputed Domain Name redirected to an active website that falsely presented itself as an official website of the Complainant's Bulgarian subsidiary, reproducing the Complainant's corporate identity and describing its purported business operations. In addition, the website at the Disputed Domain Name invited Internet users to apply for purported employment opportunities by submitting resumes to "[...]@gmail.com" and identified

"[...]@soprasteriabg.com" as the contact address for its purported HR department.

The website also offered a purported "corporate VPN" for download through a third-party platform hosted on SourceForge, further reinforcing the false impression that it was operated by or affiliated with 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 the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks since the Disputed Domain Name reproduces the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks in their entirety combined with the descriptive and geographic element "bg" which is an abbreviation for "Bulgaria".

The Complainant further claims that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Disputed Domain Name in view of the following:

- over the years, the Complainant has filed and registered many SOPRA STERIA Trademarks worldwide;
- the Complainant has developed and operated a consistent domain names strategy incorporating the SOPRA STERIA Trademarks together;
- the Complainant does not know the Respondent and has never authorized the Respondent to register the Disputed Domain Name incorporating its SOPRA STERIA Trademarks;
- even if the Respondent mentions that he is working for SOPRA STERIA BULGARIA, the Complainant does not know the Respondent (Mr. Mykhailo Mahas) and confirms that it has never worked with him;
- the postal address, telephone number and email mentioned by the Respondent for the registration of the Disputed Domain Name does not correspond to the real Complainant's company in Bulgaria and contact details;
- the Respondent is not affiliated with the Complainant in any way;
- the Respondent is making a non-legitimate use of the Disputed Domain Name since it resolved to an active website imitating and reproducing the Complainant's official website, including its visual identity, SOPRA STERIA Trademarks, domain names, corporate name, graphic charter, branding and communication elements;
- the Respondent's website did not contain any legal notice or corporate information identifying its publisher or operator. The Complainant identified the relevant email address through the "Submit your resume" and "Contact our HR department via mail" links on the website, which invited users to submit resumes and personal information despite having no legitimate connection with the Complainant;
- the Respondent's website also proposed the free download of a "corporate VPN" software through a third-party platform hosted on SourceForge, falsely suggesting that such software is officially connected with or endorsed by the Complainant (Annex 5 to the Complaint). Such conduct creates a particularly serious risk for Internet users, including risks of phishing, fraudulent collection of personal data and dissemination of potentially harmful software;

- the Respondent's website also linked to a LinkedIn profile of an individual purportedly involved in its HR and recruitment activities, who has no affiliation with the Complainant and whose profile raises doubts as to its authenticity, reinforcing the alleged deceptive nature of the website.

The Complainant further contends that the Respondent registered and is using the Disputed Domain Name in bad faith based on the following. Due to the Complainant's long-standing use of the SOPRA STERIA Trademarks in connection with its IT consulting, digital services and software development activities since 1968, well before the registration date of the Disputed Domain Name in 2026, the Respondent was necessarily aware of the Complainant's rights at the time of registration of the Disputed Domain Name. In light of the distinctiveness and reputation of the SOPRA STERIA Trademarks, it is not conceivable that the Respondent registered the Disputed Domain Name without knowledge of the Complainant. On the contrary, the circumstances indicate that the Respondent deliberately targeted the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks, domain names and business name, namely:

- the Disputed Domain Name reproduces the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks in whole, without any authorization;
- the Disputed Domain Name is highly similar to the Complainant's domain names;
- there is no doubt that the registration and use of the Disputed Domain Name are fraudulent, given the complex scheme that has been created around Sopra Steria Bulgaria and the alleged employee "Mykhailo Mahas";
- the Respondent registered the Disputed Domain Name in bad faith with the knowledge of the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks, prior rights and business;
- the registration and use of the Disputed Domain Name constitute a clear case of cybersquatting. The only plausible explanation for the Respondent's conduct is the intent to take unfair advantage of the reputation of the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks by creating confusion among Internet users;
- although the Disputed Domain Name is currently inactive, it was previously used with website and email accounts impersonating the Complainant, creating a false impression of affiliation and potentially inducing Internet users to disclose personal information in connection with purported recruitment activities.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

Under paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, a complainant to succeed must satisfy the panel that:

- (i) the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which complainant has rights;
- (ii) the respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name; and
- (iii) the disputed domain name was registered and is 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 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 or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.2.1.

The Disputed Domain Name completely reproduces the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks in combination with the geographical abbreviation "bg" (refers to "Bulgaria") and the generic Top-Level Domain (gTLD) ".com". According to the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.8, where the relevant trademark is recognizable within the disputed domain name, the addition of other terms (whether descriptive, geographical, pejorative, meaningless, or otherwise) would not prevent a finding of confusing similarity under the first element. In this case the addition of the country code "bg" to the SOPRA STERIA Trademarks does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity in this case.

According to the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.11.1, the applicable gTLD in a domain name (e.g., ".com", ".club", ".nyc") is viewed as a standard registration requirement and as such is disregarded under the first element confusing similarity test.

Accordingly, the Panel finds that the Disputed Domain Name is confusingly similar to the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks pursuant to paragraph 4(a)(i) of the Policy.

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. [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 Panel concludes that there is no relation, disclosed to the Panel or otherwise apparent from the record, between the Respondent and the Complainant. The Respondent is not a licensee of the Complainant, nor has the Respondent otherwise obtained an authorization to use the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks. Moreover, there is no element from which the Panel could infer the Respondent's right to the Disputed Domain Name under the Policy, or that the Respondent might be commonly known by the Disputed Domain Name.

Also, in accordance with the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.5.1, even where a domain name consists of a trademark plus an additional term, UDRP panels have largely held that such composition cannot constitute fair use if it effectively impersonates or suggests sponsorship or endorsement by the trademark owner. The composition of the Disputed Domain Name – reproducing the entirety of the SOPRA STERIA Trademarks, along with the geographical abbreviation “bg” (refers to “Bulgaria”), where the Complainant has an active business – carries a risk of implied affiliation with the Complainant. The fact that the Respondent has incorporated the Complainant’s SOPRA STERIA Trademarks in their entirety in the Disputed Domain Name and has used the Disputed Domain Name for imitation of the Complainant’s website is further evidence, that the Respondent was well aware of the Complainant’s SOPRA STERIA Trademarks and business at the time of registration of the Disputed Domain Name and has done so for the purpose of creating an impression that the Disputed Domain Name is connected with the Complainant.

The Panel finds that the Respondent is not making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the Disputed Domain Name without intent for commercial gain to misleadingly divert consumers or to tarnish the SOPRA STERIA Trademarks of the Complainant. Rather, the evidence shows that the Disputed Domain Name previously resolved to a website deliberately designed to impersonate the Complainant by reproducing its official website, including its SOPRA STERIA Trademarks, corporate name, domain names, visual identity, branding, and other communication elements. The website also invited Internet users to submit resumes through the email address “[...]@gmail.com” in connection with purported recruitment opportunities and provided the email address “[...]@soprasteriabg.com” as the contact for its alleged HR department, thereby creating the false impression that users were dealing with the Complainant. The website also offered a purported “corporate VPN” for download through a third-party platform hosted on SourceForge. The Respondent’s website also contained links to a LinkedIn profile of an individual purportedly involved in the alleged HR and recruitment activities conducted through the website. The Complainant submits that this individual has no affiliation with the Complainant and that the profile contains elements undermining its authenticity. Such use of the Disputed Domain Name goes well beyond any conceivable fair or legitimate use and demonstrates an intentional attempt to mislead Internet users by falsely suggesting an association with the Complainant.

As is seen from the circumstances of this case, the website under the Disputed Domain Name did not disclose any relationship between the Complainant and the Respondent and the whole design of the Respondent’s website created a false impression that this website is one of the Complainant’s official websites or related to the Complainant. Moreover, the address indicated by the Respondent as the allegedly Complainant’s Bulgarian subsidiary address was incorrect. Therefore, the Panel cannot consider such use of the Disputed Domain Name as a bona fide offering of goods or services.

The Respondent did not file any response to the Complaint and did not participate in this proceeding, as such, the Respondent did not present any evidence for supporting any rights or legitimate interests in the Disputed Domain Name.

In view of the foregoing, the Panel finds that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Disputed Domain Name and that the Complainant succeeds under the second element of paragraph 4(a) of the Policy.

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 Complainant had obtained the registration of the SOPRA STERIA Trademarks many years earlier than the Respondent registered the Disputed Domain Name. Considering all circumstances of this case, the Panel finds that the Respondent was well aware of the Complainant’s business and its SOPRA STERIA Trademarks when registering the confusingly similar Disputed Domain Name that completely

incorporates the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks. The addition of the geographical abbreviation "bg" that appears to refer to the Complainant's business in Bulgaria, is further evidence, that the Respondent was aware of the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks and business at the time of registration of the Disputed Domain Name and has done so for the purpose of creating an impression that the Disputed Domain Name is connected with the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks. Moreover, the fact that the Respondent identified the Complainant's company name along with "Bulgaria" in the registration details on the Disputed Domain Name, while providing false or inaccurate contact information, further evidences the Respondent's knowledge of the Complainant, its business, and its rights at the time of registration of the Disputed Domain Name. The Panel considers it is bad faith that the Respondent deliberately chose the Disputed Domain Name to create a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks.

Furthermore, the Respondent's knowledge of the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks is also supported by the previous use of the Disputed Domain Name for a website deliberately designed to impersonate the Complainant by reproducing its official website, including its SOPRA STERIA Trademarks, corporate name, domain names, visual identity, branding, and other communication elements. Also, the Respondent's website solicited resumes from Internet users through the email address "[...]@gmail.com" in connection with purported employment opportunities and provided "[...]@soprasteriabg.com" as a contact for its alleged HR department, thereby creating the misleading impression of an official connection with the Complainant. The website further offered a purported "corporate VPN" for download via a third-party platform hosted on SourceForge and included links to a LinkedIn profile of an individual presented as being involved in the website's recruitment activities. In light of the Respondent's reproduction of the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks and imitation of the Complainant's website design and layout, the Panel considers that Internet users would likely believe that the Disputed Domain Name and the associated website were operated, authorized, or endorsed by the Complainant. Accordingly, the Panel finds that the Respondent intentionally attempted to attract Internet users, for commercial gain or other illegitimate purposes, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the Respondent's website.

Also, in accordance with section 3.1.4 of the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), panels have moreover found the following types of evidence to support a finding that a respondent has registered a domain name to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to its website by creating a likelihood of confusion with the complainant's mark: (i) actual confusion, (ii) seeking to cause confusion (including by technical means beyond the domain name itself) for the respondent's commercial benefit, even if unsuccessful, (iii) the lack of a respondent's own rights to or legitimate interests in a domain name, (iv) redirecting the domain name to a different respondent-owned website, even where such website contains a disclaimer, (v) redirecting the domain name to the complainant's (or a competitor's) website, and (vi) absence of any conceivable good faith use. In this case the Disputed Domain Name, among other supporting evidence, completely reproduces the Complainant's SOPRA STERIA Trademarks and imitates the Complainant's official website.

The Panel considers that the Respondent's deliberate impersonation of the Complainant, including the reproduction of its SOPRA STERIA Trademarks and corporate identity, is clear evidence of cybersquatting. By creating the false impression that the Disputed Domain Name and the associated website were operated by or affiliated with the Complainant, the Respondent engaged in the very type of abusive domain name registration that the UDRP is intended to prevent.

In view of the foregoing, the Panel finds that paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy has been satisfied by the Complainant and accordingly, the Disputed Domain Name was registered and is being used in bad faith.

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 <soprasteriabg.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Mariia Koval/

Mariia Koval

Sole Panelist

Date: July 17, 2026