

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Groupe La Centrale v. Yuuichi Yoshida
Case No. D2026-2671

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Groupe La Centrale, France, represented by MIIP MADE IN IP, France.

The Respondent is Yuuichi Yoshida, Japan.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <laceentrale.online> (the “Domain Name”) is registered with GMO Internet Group, Inc. d/b/a Onamae.com (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed in English with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on June 19, 2026. On June 19, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the Domain Name. On June 22, 2026, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the Domain Name which differed from the named Respondent (Whois Privacy Protection Service by onamae.com) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on June 26, 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 in English on June 30, 2026.

On June 26, 2026, the Center informed the Parties in Japanese and English, that the language of the registration agreement for the Domain Name is Japanese. On June 30, 2026, the Complainant requested English to be the language of the proceeding. The Respondent did not submit any comment on the Complainant’s submission.

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 in Japanese and English of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on July 1, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was July 21, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on July 30, 2026.

The Center appointed Ian Lowe as the sole panelist in this matter on August 6, 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 is a leading French digital marketplace dedicated to buying and selling used vehicles. The Complainant and its predecessors have carried on business using the LA CENTRALE mark since 1969. It is the proprietor of a number of registered trademarks for LA CENTRALE (the "Mark") including France trademark number 3036751 registered as of June 23, 2000; European Union trademark number 001919182 registered on January 23, 2003; and International trademark number 747564 registered on December 1, 2000.

The Complainant operates through a number of websites using domain names incorporating "lacentrale", including <lacentrale.fr> and <lacentrale.com>.

The Domain Name was registered on February 26, 2026. Attempts by the Panel to access the website at the Domain Name produce a warning that the website is a phishing website comprising a fake page designed to steal sensitive information.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that the Domain Name is identical to the Mark, that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name and that the Respondent registered and is using the Domain Name in bad faith.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

6.1. Language of the Proceeding

The language of the Registration Agreement for the Domain Name is Japanese. Pursuant to the Rules, paragraph 11(a), in the absence of an agreement between the parties, or unless specified otherwise in the registration agreement, the language of the administrative proceeding shall be the language of the registration agreement.

The Complaint was filed in English. The Complainant requested that the language of the proceeding be English for several reasons, including the fact that the Complainant and its authorized representative do not speak Japanese and the Japanese language is not widely used internationally, but English is widely spoken and seems to be the most appropriate language to ensure the efficient conduct of the UDRP proceedings.

Furthermore, the Respondent registered a domain name consisting of a root in Latin characters and not in Japanese — specifically, a term found in the French dictionary, namely “centrale” combined with a French definite article “la”. Therefore, to ensure the fairness of the proceedings, the Complainant requests that the Complaint be in English, given that French is certainly not a language spoken, or at least not fluently spoken, by the Respondent.

The Respondent did not comment on the Complainant’s request for the language of the proceeding to be English.

In exercising its discretion to use a language other than that of the registration agreement, the Panel has to exercise such discretion judicially in the spirit of fairness and justice to both parties, taking into account all relevant circumstances of the case, including matters such as the parties’ ability to understand and use the proposed language, time and costs (see WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ([“WIPO Overview 3.1”](#)), section 4.5.1).

Having considered all the matters above, the Panel determines under paragraph 11(a) of the Rules that the language of the proceeding shall be English.

6.2. Substantive Issues

For this Complaint to succeed in relation to the Domain Name the Complainant must prove that:

- (i) the Domain Name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights; and
- (ii) the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name; and
- (iii) the Domain Name has been 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 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.

Ignoring the generic Top-Level Domain (“gTLD”) “.online”, the Domain Name is identical to the Mark. Accordingly, 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. Accordingly, 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.

The Complainant has made out a strong prima facie case that the Respondent could have no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name. The Respondent has not used the Domain Name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services, but for a website which is blocked owing to a perceived security threat and phishing scam.

There is no suggestion that the Respondent has ever been known by the Domain Name. The Respondent has chosen not to respond to the Complaint or to take any steps to counter the prima facie case established by the Complainant. In the circumstances, the Panel finds that the Respondent does not have any rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name.

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.

The Domain Name is identical to the Mark, a French term which, in the Panel's view, in light of the notoriety of the Complainant, would most likely be taken to refer to the Complainant. Accordingly, the Panel is satisfied that the Respondent had the Complainant and its rights in the Mark in mind when it registered the Domain Name.

The Panel considers on balance that the Respondent intended to mislead Internet users into believing that the Domain Name is operated or authorized by the Complainant, attracting Internet users by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Mark. The nature of the Domain Name and its blocking in light of a perceived security threat supports an allegation that the Domain Name was intended to be used for phishing or other inappropriate activity. Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity such as phishing constitutes bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.4. Having reviewed the evidence, the Panel finds the Respondent's registration and use of the Domain Name constitutes bad faith under the Policy. The Respondent's failure to participate in the proceedings and to refute the Complainant's claims further supports this finding.

The Panel finds the third element of the Policy has been established.

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 Domain Name <lacentrale.online> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Ian Lowe/

Ian Lowe

Sole Panelist

Date: August 20, 2026