ARBITRATION
AND
MEDIATION CENTER

WIPO
WORLD
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
ORGANIZATION

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION
The Amrop Partnership SC v. Helene Espagno, Amrop
Case No. D2026-4282

1. The Parties

The Complainant is The Amrop Partnership SC, Belgium, represented by Novagraaf Belgium NV/SA, Belgium.

The Respondent is Helene Espagno, Amrop, Nigeria.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <amrop-eu.com> is registered with Squarespace Domains II LLC (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on September 23, 2026. On the same day, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On September 23, 2026, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response confirming that the Respondent is listed as the registrant and providing the contact details. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on September 24, 2026, providing the additional registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar.

The Center verified that the 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 September 28, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was October 18, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on October 19, 2026.

The Center appointed Andrew Brown K.C. as the sole panelist in this matter on October 22, 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 registered in Belgium and was founded in 1977. It is part of the Amrop Group, a global network of executive search, board and leadership advisory services companies. The Amrop Group operates around 72 offices in nearly 59 countries.

The Complainant is the owner of registrations for the trademark AMROP ("the AMROP Trademark") worldwide including the following in class 35:

Jurisdiction	Mark	No	Registration Date	Class
International registration (designating the European Union, United States of America and numerous jurisdictions)	AMROP	441251	December 1, 1978	35
International registration	AMROP logo	1049193	August 2, 2010	35

The Complainant has used the AMROP Trademark continuously for almost 50 years and conducts its business through a principal website <amrop.com> which serves as the official presence of the worldwide partnership. The Complainant also owns numerous country code domain names for "amrop" corresponding to the jurisdictions in which the Complainant operates.

The disputed domain name was registered on September 8, 2026. There is no landing page at the disputed domain name but it has been configured so that emails can be sent from it.

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 it has trademark rights to the AMROP Trademark in respect of services in class 35. The earliest of these is from 1978, almost 50 years before registration of the disputed domain name.

The Complainant also asserts that it has used the AMROP Trademark continuously in commerce for almost 50 years and that it has conducted business through its principal website at <amrop.com>.

The Complainant contends that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to its AMROP Trademark. It further states that the addition of the geographic abbreviation "eu" referring to the European Union, in the disputed domain name, does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity.

The Complainant states that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. In this regard, the Complainant states that:

(a) the Respondent appears to have provided false or misleading contact details to the registrar by identifying itself as “Helene Espagno, Amrop”;

(b) the Complainant has found no evidence that the Respondent owns any valid trademark rights in the trademark AMROP;

(c) the Respondent has no connection or affiliation with the Complainant and has never been granted any license, authorization or consent to use the AMROP Trademark;

(d) the circumstances of use of the disputed domain name indicate that the Respondent is using the AMROP Trademark in order to impersonate the Complainant and that this can never result in rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name;

A fraudulent email has been sent through the disputed domain name and reported to the Complainant. The email was signed “Senior Executive Recruiter/Business Leader @ Amrop” and reproduced the company name, logo, trademark and mission statement. The Complainant asserts that illegal activities cannot confer legitimate rights or interests on a respondent;

(e) the Complainant’s AMROP Trademark is a coined or fanciful term with no dictionary meaning and is exclusively used by the Complainant. There is no plausible reason for the Respondent to have selected the disputed domain name other than to target the Complainant.

The Complainant states that the disputed domain name has been registered in bad faith. In particular, it asserts that circumstances show that the Respondent was aware of the Complainant and its business and trademark rights in the AMROP Trademark at the time of registration. This is demonstrated by subsequent use of the disputed domain name to send fraudulent emails impersonating the Complainant and its personnel.

The Complainant further alleges actual use in bad faith as evidenced by the fraudulent recruitment emails impersonating it.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not file any response.

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 a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.2.1.

The Panel finds that the Complainant’s AMROP Trademark is recognizable within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.7.

Although the addition of other terms, here a hyphen followed by the term “eu”, 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 mark 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 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 mere fact that the Respondent included the term “Amrop” in the registrant details cannot establish that the Respondent is commonly known by the disputed domain name within the meaning of paragraph 4(c)(ii) of the Policy and cannot give rise to rights or legitimate interests in the disputed 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.

In the present case, the Panel finds that the disputed domain name has been registered in bad faith for the following reasons:

(a) the Complainant has clearly established its rights in the AMROP Trademark.

(b) the Panel finds that the Respondent knew of the Complainant’s AMROP Trademark prior to registration of the disputed domain name. This is confirmed by:

- the Respondent’s inclusion of the reference to “Amrop” in its address details; and

- the fraudulent email sent by the Respondent from the disputed domain name post-registration, using the Complainant’s name, logo and corporate mission statement – designed to lead recipients to believe that the communications originated from or were authorized by the Complainant.

The Panel is also satisfied that the Respondent has used the disputed domain name in bad faith for the following reasons:

(a) it is likely that a significant number of Internet users looking for AMROP (the Complainant or its affiliates) and encountering the disputed domain name will be misled or deceived into believing that the website is provided by the Complainant or that it has been licensed, authorized or endorsed by the Complainant. This is even though there is no current landing page on the disputed domain name.

(b) the Complainant has shown that a fraudulent email communication (which impersonates it) has been sent from the disputed domain name.

(c) the Panel is entitled to draw and does draw adverse inferences from the failure of the Respondent to respond to the Complaint and the allegations made by the Complainant.

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 <amrop-eu.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Andrew Brown K.C./
Andrew Brown K.C.
Sole Panelist
Date: November 3, 2026