

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

VALEO v. Mr. Pouya Habibi
Case No. DIR2026-0005

1. The Parties

The Complainant is VALEO, France, represented Tmark Conseils, France.

The Respondent is Mr. Pouya Habibi, Iran (Islamic Republic of).

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <phc-valeo.ir> is registered with IRNIC.

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on June 17, 2026. On June 17, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to IRNIC a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On June 21, 2026, IRNIC 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 (Unknown) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on June 22, 2026, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by IRNIC, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on June 26, 2026. Hard copies of the Complaint were received by the Center on July 9, 2026.

The Center verified that the Complaint and the amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the .ir Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Policy” or “irDRP”), the Rules for .ir Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Rules”), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for .ir Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Supplemental Rules”).

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2(a) and 4(a), the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on July 16, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5(a), the due date for Response was August 5, 2026. On August 7, 2026, the Center notified the Respondent’s default.

The Center appointed Clive Duncan Thorne as the sole panelist in this matter on August 21, 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 well-known and premium automotive supplier and trading partner to automakers worldwide. In 2025 it had worldwide sales figures of EUR 20,903 million.

It is well-established in Asia where it trades under the name of Valeo Pyeong Hwa Corporation based upon a trading partnership with the Republic of Korea Group, Pyeong Hwa Corporation. This is evidenced at Annex 11 to the Complaint.

At Annexes 8.1 to 8.3 to the Complaint the Complainant exhibits examples of its trading activity including for vehicle lighting systems, vehicle fascia designs, electric bicycle equipment for which it received Innovation Awards.

The Complainant is the owner of the trade marks VALEO and PHC VALEO which are used worldwide. Its portfolio of trade mark registrations are exhibited at Annex 5.1.1 for France, European Union, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Republic of Korea, Yemen, Panama, Japan, China, Hong Kong, China and an International registration designating Iran (Islamic Republic of), Republic of Korea, China, Japan, Russian Federation, and United States of America.

Copies of certificates of trade mark registration are exhibited including at Annexes 5.1.2 to 5.1.12 of the Complaint.

Examples include:

French trade mark VALEO No. 1338046 registered December 23, 1985 in classes 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 25, 28, 35, 37, 38, 39, and 41;

Iranian trade mark VALEO No. 291855 registered January 22, 2018 in classes 7, 9, 12, and 35;

International trade mark VALEO (stylistic) No. 870058 registered February 28, 2005 in classes 6, 7, 9, 11, and 12;

Panama trade mark PHC VALEO (stylistic) No. 155952 registered October 10, 2006 in class 7.

The Complainant also owns a number of domain names including, by way of example, <valeo.com>, <valeo.info>, <valeo.biz>, <valeo-service.com>, and <valeoservice.ir>.

The Complainant adduces evidence in the Complaint showing the use by the Respondent of the disputed domain name in connection with a webpage offering products and services related to the automotive industry and which also utilises on the website the trade marks VALEO and PHC VALEO.

The disputed domain name redirects to a website presenting and offering products and services similar to those offered by the Complainant under its trade marks VALEO and PHC VALEO including vehicle parts such as rubber belts, windshield wipers, sensors, and clutches for cars. The trade marks VALEO and PHC VALEO are prominently displayed. Clear examples are reproduced at pages 15 and 16 to the Complaint.

The Complainant is also presented, contrary to the fact, as a “business partner” of the operator of the website to which the disputed domain name redirects. In addition, the company operating the website to which the disputed domain name redirects wrongly represents itself as “the exclusive representative of the company in Iran”.

The Complainant also shows that on accessing the website to which the disputed domain name redirects it is possible to read a presentation and history of the Complainant’s activities and to access a link redirecting without consent to the Complainant’s official website accessed at “www.valeo.com” .

In the absence of a Response the Panel finds the evidence adduced by the Complainant to be true.

5. Parties’ Contentions

A. Complainant

- i. On the evidence of the Complainant’s trade mark rights the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the trade marks VALEO and PHC VALEO in which the Complainant has demonstrated rights.
- ii. There is no evidence that the Respondent has rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name.
- iii. The evidence of the Respondent’s online trading activities utilizing the Complainant’s trade mark registrations shows that the registration and use of the disputed domain name are in 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 (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant’s trade mark and the disputed domain name. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions (“[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)”) section 1.7.¹

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of the trade marks VALEO and PHC VALEO for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.2.1.

The entirety of both marks is reproduced within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the marks for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.7.

The country code Top-Level Domain (“ccTLD”) “.ir” of the disputed domain name may be disregarded in determining the first element.

The Panel finds that the first element of the Policy has been established.

¹ The Panel follows prior decisions under the irDRP and, given the similarities between the irDRP and the Uniform Domain Name Resolution Policy (“UDRP”), finds it appropriate to refer to prior cases and doctrine, including [WIPO Overview 3.1](#).

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 .IR 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 complaint 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.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity, here, claimed as applicable to this case, passing off, can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a Respondent.

In this case the Panel takes into account the evidence, contained in the Complaint, of the disputed domain name’s redirection to a website where products and services identical or similar to those offered for sale by the Complainant under its trade marks VALEO and PHC VALEO are offered, the Complainant’s marks are reproduced, and the relationship with the Complainant is misrepresented.

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

C. Registered or 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) sets out a non-exhaustive list of 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.

Paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy provides that evidence of the use of the disputed domain name as an intentional attempt “to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to your web site or other location, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the complainant’s mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of your web site or location or of a product or service on your web site or location” shall be evidence of bad faith.

The Panel finds that the Complainant has, on the evidence, satisfied the requirements of Paragraph 4(b)(iv) and takes into account the following:

- i. The fact that the disputed domain name redirects to an active website reproducing the Complainant’s trade marks and corporate name.
- ii. The misrepresentation on the website to which the disputed domain name redirects that its operator is an official reseller and representative of the Complainant in Iran (Islamic Republic of).

iii. By clicking on a link on the website to which the disputed domain name redirects, visitors are automatically directed to the Complainant's authentic website.

The Panel finds that 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 disputed domain name <phc-valeo.ir> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Clive Duncan Thorne /

Clive Duncan Thorne

Sole Panelist

Date: September 4, 2026