ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION
Zhejiang Geely Holding Group Co., Ltd v. 24 Brick Lane
Case No. DNL2025-0040

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Zhejiang Geely Holding Group Co., Ltd, China, represented by IP Hills NV, Belgium.

The registrant of the disputed domain name is 24 Brick Lane, Netherlands (Kingdom of), internally represented.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <geely.nl> (the "Domain Name") is registered with SIDN through ZXCS.

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on December 4, 2025. On December 4, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to SIDN a request for registrar verification in connection with the Domain Name.

On December 5, 2025, SIDN transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the Domain Name which differed from the named respondent and contact information in the Complaint.

The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on December 5, 2025, providing the information disclosed by SIDN, and inviting the Complainant to amend the Complaint in this light. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on the same date.

The Center verified that the Complaint as amended satisfies the formal requirements of the Dispute Resolution Regulations for .nl Domain Names (the "Regulations").

In accordance with the Regulations, articles 5.1 and 16.4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on December 8, 2025. In accordance with the Regulations, article 7.1, the due date for Response was December 28, 2025. The Response was filed with the Center on December 26, 2025.

On December 30, 2025, SIDN commenced the mediation process. On February 2, 2026, SIDN extended the mediation process until March 4, 2026. On February 19, 2026, SIDN informed parties that the dispute had not been solved in the mediation process.

The Center appointed Gregor Vos as the panelist in this matter on February 27, 2026. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panelist has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required to ensure compliance with the Regulations, article 9.2.

On March 27, 2026, the Panel issued Procedural Order inviting the Respondent to submit evidence in support of its statement that the Respondent registered the Domain Name in January 2005. The Respondent provided its reply on March 27, and 31, 2026.

On April 16, 2026, the Panel issued a second Procedural Order inviting the Complainant to submit evidence in support of its statement that its trademarks were well-known at the time the Domain Name was registered. The Complainant provided its reply on April 21, 2026. The Respondent failed to reply to the evidence submitted by the Complainant.

4. Factual Background

The Complainant has been active in the automotive industry since 1997 and developed into a globally operating enterprise with a turnover of more than USD 55 billion in 2022. The Complainant owns several car brands that are well-known nowadays, including Geely, Volvo, Polestar, Lynk & Co and Zeco.

The Complainant is the owner of inter alia the following trademark registrations (hereinafter referred to as: the "Trademarks"):

- International Trademark Registration with designation of inter alia the Benelux No. 849775 for registered on February 28, 2005; and

- International Trademark Registration with designation of inter alia the European Union No. 897937 for GEELY, registered on June 22, 2006; and

- European Union Trademark Registration No. 018642443 for GEELY, registered on May 11, 2022.

The Complainant is the owner of the domain name <global.geely.com>.

The Domain Name was registered on January 10, 2005. The information provided by the SIDN in response to the request for registrar verification indicates that there was a change of registrant on March 19, 2024.

At the time of the filing of the Complaint, the Domain Name was parked with the Registrar and did not resolve to an active website. At the time of this Decision, the Domain Name continues to resolve to a parking page.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant seeks that it shall become the registrant of the Domain Name. The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Regulations for a transfer of the Domain Name.

First, according to the Complainant, the Domain Name is identical to the Trademarks. In assessing identity, the country code Top-Level Domain ".nl" is disregarded for the purpose of this comparison.

Second, the Complainant argues that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name. The Respondent does not own any trademark registration for the sign GEELY and does not operate under a trade name or company name incorporating that sign. According to the Complainant, the Respondent has never been known by the Domain Name and has not made any demonstrable preparations to use the Domain Name in a legitimate manner. Furthermore, the Respondent did not receive any license or consent to use the Trademarks in the Domain Name. The Complainant further submits that the term "geely" has no descriptive meaning in Dutch or in any other language.

Finally, the Complainant contends that the Domain Name has been registered and is being used in bad faith. According to the Complainant, the Trademarks are highly distinctive and enjoy a substantial international reputation. The Complainant submits that the Trademarks were well-known before the registration date of the Domain Name. Accordingly, the registration of the Domain Name was solely to benefit from this reputation and the identical incorporation of the sign GEELY reinforces the presumption of bad faith. The inactivity of the Domain Name, without any apparent legitimate reason, supports a finding of bad faith registration and use.

B. Respondent

The Respondent filed a Response on December 26, 2025, requesting that the Complaint be denied.

The Respondent contends that the registration of the Domain Name predates any rights of the Complainant in the European Union. According to the Respondent, the Complainant's Trademarks were not registered in at the time of the registration of the Domain Name, and the Complainant did not enjoy any reputation in the European Union and/or the Netherlands in early 2005. Accordingly, the Respondent argues that it was factually impossible that Domain Name was registered in bad faith and contends that it registered the Domain Name in good faith before the Complainant had any trademark rights or brand recognition in the European Union.

Furthermore, according to the Respondent, the Complainant has failed to provide any credible evidence that the registration or use of the Domain Name was in bad faith. The Respondent has not used the Domain Name to mislead, impersonate or profit from the Complainant's trademarks in any way. The passive holding of a Domain Name that was registered in good faith should not be construed as bad faith use in these circumstances. The Respondent notes that a placeholder page briefly appeared many years after the registration of the Domain Name, but argues that this page contained no commercial links, did not impersonate the Complainant, and was subsequently removed.

The Respondent also notes that the Complainant approached the Respondent with an offer of USD 2,000 to acquire the Domain Name. The Respondent declined this offer, referring to long-term holding costs, "clean" use and the strategic nature of the Domain Name. No further communication followed before the Complaint was filed.

Finally, the Respondent submits that the term "geely" is a linguistically neutral or generic word in Chinese meaning "auspicious" or "lucky". At the time of the registration of the Domain Name, the word carried no trademark significance or market presence in Europe, and there was no reason to assume any exclusive association with the Complainant. The Respondent maintains that the registration was in good faith involving a neutral non-distinctive term and that the Respondent could not have anticipated the Complainant expansion into European markets.

6. Discussion and Findings

For the Complainant to succeed, it must prove, within the meaning of paragraph 2.1 of the Regulations and on the balance of probability that:

(i) the Complainant has rights in a trademark, or trade name, or geographical indication protected under Dutch law, a personal name registered in the General Municipal Register ('gemeentelijke basisadministratie') of a municipality in the Netherlands, or the name of a Dutch public legal entity or the name of an association or foundation registered in the Netherlands, under which the Complainant undertakes public activities on a permanent basis, and the domain name is identical or confusingly similar to the trademark or name in question; and

(ii) the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the domain name; and

(iii) the Domain Name has been registered or is being used in bad faith.[1]

Only if all three elements have been fulfilled, is the Panel able to grant the remedies requested by the Complainant. The Panel will deal with each of the requirements in turn.

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

Pursuant to article 2.1(a)(i) of the Regulations, it is sufficient for the Complainant to show that the Domain Name is (i) identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark, (ii) in which the Complainant has rights protected under Dutch law.

With respect to having rights pursuant to paragraph 2.1(a)(i) of the Regulations, it is noted that the Complainant is registered as the owner of the Trademarks that are valid in the European Union and protected under Dutch law. Consequently, the Panel finds that the Complainant has proven that it has rights in the Trademarks that contain the word element GEELY.

With regard to the assessment of identity or confusing similarity between the Domain Name and the Trademarks, it is generally accepted that this test involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant's Trademarks and the Domain Name (see section 1.7 of the WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("WIPO Overview 3.1")). In cases where a domain name incorporates the entirety of a trademark, or where at least a dominant feature of the relevant mark is recognizable in the domain name, the domain name will normally be considered confusingly similar to that trademark (see section 1.7 of the WIPO Overview 3.1).

The Panel's assessment of identity or confusing similarity involves a comparison between the disputed domain name and the word elements of the relevant mark. To the extent that design, figurative or stylized elements would be incapable of representation in domain names, these elements are generally disregarded for purposes of assessing identity or confusing similarity under the first element (WIPO Overview 3.1, Section 1.10).

In the present case, although the Trademarks are figurative marks, the Panel notes that word element GEELY in the Trademarks is reproduced in its entirety in the Domain Name. Accordingly, the Panel finds that the Domain Name is identical to the Trademarks for purposes of paragraph 2.1(a)(i) of the Regulations. The requirement under paragraph 2.1(a)(i) of the Regulations has therefore been satisfied.

B Rights or Legitimate Interests

Under the second requirement, the Complainant must prove that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name. The onus of proving this requirement, like each element, falls on the Complainant. Given the difficulty in proving a negative, however, it is usually sufficient for a complainant to make out a prima facie case that a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests. If a complainant does

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[1] Given that the Regulations is based largely on the UDRP ("Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy"), the Panel considers UDRP precedent, and thus WIPO Overview 3.1, to be relevant to the present proceeding and will refer to it where appropriate (see, e.g., *Action Bolaget Electrolux v. Beuk Horeca B.V.*, WIPO Case No. DNL2008-0050).

establish a prima facie case, the burden of production shifts to the respondent (see, e.g. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 2.1; *Sanofi v. Cimpress Schweiz GmbH*, WIPO Case No. D2017-0522).

Paragraph 3.1 of the Regulations lists three non-limitative examples of instances in which a respondent may establish rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name.

The Complainant has made a prima facie case that none of the circumstances of paragraph 3.1 of the Regulations apply and that the Respondent has no legitimate rights or interests in the Domain Name. In its Response, the Respondent has not demonstrated that any of the circumstances of paragraph 3.1 of the Regulations apply. To the extent that the Respondent intended to argue that "geely" is a generic term, the Panel notes that such an assertion, in the absence of evidence of a corresponding legitimate use of the Domain Name, does not in itself establish rights or legitimate interests (WIPO Overview 3.1, Section 2.10).

The Panel further agrees with the Complainant that there is no evidence in the record indicating that the Respondent has made demonstrable preparations to use the Domain Name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services or for a legitimate noncommercial or fair use. The mere registration and passive holding of the Domain Name does not in itself give rise to rights or legitimate interests.

All in all, based on the record before it, the Panel does not see any indication that any of the circumstances of article 3.1 of the Regulations are present. Accordingly, the Panel finds that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name. Article 2.1(b) of the Regulations is thereby fulfilled.

C. Registered or Used in Bad Faith

Under paragraph 2.1(c) of the Regulations, the Complainant must show that the Domain Name has been registered or is being used in bad faith. Paragraph 3.2. of the Regulations lists four non-limitative circumstances which may be considered as evidence of registration and use in bad faith of a domain name.

The Panel notes that the initial date of registration of the Domain Name predates the registration of the Trademarks. Generally, where the registration of a domain name predates the registration of a trademark, panels normally do not find bad faith registration (WIPO Overview 3.1, Section 3.8.1). In such cases, only in exceptional cases would a complainant be able to prove a respondent's bad faith (WIPO Overview 3.1, Section 1.1.3).

In this case, the Respondent sufficiently evidenced that there is an unbroken chain of possession from the date of initial registration of the Domain Name until today, and that he acquired the Domain Name prior to registration of the Trademarks.

In the present case, the Trademarks are registered by the Complainant and have been used for many years. The Complainant's rights to the Trademarks do not predate the registration date of the Domain Name. However, the additional evidence submitted by the Complainant shows that the GEELY mark was well known prior to the initial registration date of the Domain Name. This is for example evidenced by the substantial sales figures of the Complainant at the time and its presence at the well reputed Frankfurt Motor Show then. In light of the well-known character of the GEELY mark, the Panel agrees with the Complainant that it is not conceivable that the Respondent chose the Domain Name without knowledge of the Complainant's activities and its mark under which the Complainant was and is doing business.

Further, even if the current inactive page is taken into account, it is generally accepted by UDRP panels that the non-use of a domain name does not prevent a finding of bad faith (section 3.3 of the WIPO Overview 3.1). In light of the well-known character of the GEELY mark, the fact that the only word element is included identically and as the only element in the Domain Name, and the lack of any rights or legitimate interest in the Domain Name by the Respondent, the Panel finds from the present circumstances that the Respondent has intentionally sought to take unfair advantage of or otherwise abuse the GEELY mark.

The fact that the Respondent implies that he would have used the Domain Name in good faith does not affect this finding. From the case file, the Panel does not find that the Respondent has substantiated such alleged good faith use, especially now that the Domain Name has not resolved to an active webpage for several years.

Based on all the above, the Panel finds that the Domain Name has been registered or is being used in bad faith and that the third element of article 2.1(c) of the Regulations is fulfilled.

7. Decision

For all the foregoing reasons, the Panel orders that the Domain Name <geely.nl> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Gregor Vos/
Gregor Vos
Panelist
Date: May 8, 2026