

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

VALENTINO S.p.A. v. Iris M Waddell

Case No. DRO2026-0004

1. The Parties

Complainant is VALENTINO S.p.A., Italy, represented by Studio Barbero S.p.A., Italy.

Respondent is Iris M Waddell, Germany.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <valentino-romania.ro> (“Disputed Domain Name”) is registered with ROTLD (the “Registry”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on February 6, 2026. On February 9, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registry a request for registrar verification in connection with the Disputed Domain Name. On February 10, 2026, the Registry 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 (Not Disclosed) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on February 10, 2026, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registry, and inviting Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amendment to Complaint on February 11, 2026.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amendment to 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 Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on February 19, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was March 11, 2026. Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified Respondent’s default on March 13, 2026.

The Center appointed Beatrice O. Jarka as the sole panelist in this matter on March 27, 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

Complainant, Valentino S.p.A., is a company incorporated in Italy.

Founded in 1960, Complainant is a world leading company on the fashion scene and offers a wide range of luxury products from Haute Couture and Prêt-à-Porter to an extensive accessories collection that includes bags, shoes, small leather goods, belts, eyewear, silks, and perfumes.

Complainant currently operates more than 160 stores in over 90 countries,

Complainant is the owner of a broad array of trademark registrations worldwide for VALENTINO.

The trademark has been regularly used by Complainant for more than 60 years in connection with products in the high-fashion and leather industry, including ready-to-wear clothes, handbags, small leather goods, luggage, shoes, jewelry, eyewear and fragrances.

Complainant confirms to have registered trademark rights for VALENTINO in Romania, including:

- the European Union Trademark Registration No. 001990407, filed on December 7, 2000, registered on September 18, 2008, and duly renewed, in classes 3, 9, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 27, 34 and 35;
- International Trademark Registration No. 570593, registered on April 24, 1991, and duly renewed, in classes 3, 14, 18 and 25;
- International Trademark Registration No. 764790, registered on November 20, 2000, and duly renewed, in classes 3, 9, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 27, 34 and 35.

Complainant enjoys a worldwide reputation and goodwill as one of the leading manufacturers of luxury products, including articles published on online news and business magazines referring to VALENTINO as one of the top luxury brands.

Complainant has also a strong presence online through the most popular social media and dedicated websites, such as the main site “www.valentino.com” and it is the owner of over 1,000 domain names identical to or comprising the trademark VALENTINO, registered as early on July 21, 1998.

The Disputed Domain Name was registered on October 13, 2025 and has been redirected by Respondent to the website “www.valentino-romania.ro”, written partly in Romanian and partly in English and currently accessible only using a VPN service, where purported VALENTINO products are being offered for sale.

The website features Complainant’s figurative marks and an image of a Valentino boutique.

Respondent in this administrative proceeding is an individual Iris M Waddell, apparently located in Germany.

5. Parties’ Contentions

A. Complainant

Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the Disputed Domain Name.

Notably, Complainant contends that:

- VALENTINO is indisputably a well-known trademark worldwide.
- The Disputed Domain Name registered by Respondent is confusingly similar to the registered trademark VALENTINO in which Complainant has rights, as it incorporates the whole of Complainant's VALENTINO trademark, with the mere addition of a hyphen and of the geographical "Romania".
- Respondent is not a licensee, authorized agent of Complainant or in any other way authorized to use Complainant's trademarks.
- Respondent has not provided Complainant with any evidence of the use of, or demonstrable preparations to use, the Disputed Domain Name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services before any notice of the dispute.
- There is no evidence that Respondent might have used the Disputed Domain Name in connection with a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the Disputed Domain Name, without intent for commercial gain to misleadingly divert consumers or to tarnish Complainant's trademark.
- The Disputed Domain Name was and still is redirected to a website reproducing Complainant's marks and offering for sale purported VALENTINO products at discounted prices, without displaying any disclaimer as to the lack of affiliation between Respondent's website and Complainant.
- Respondent's use of the Disputed Domain Name is, therefore, certainly apt to confuse and mislead Internet users into believing that the website is operated by Complainant or by one of its affiliated entities or authorized resellers with Complainant's consent.
- Respondent could not have possibly ignored the existence of Complainant's trademark when it registered the Disputed Domain Name, given the notoriety of Complainant;
- The use of the Disputed Domain Name in connection with the commercial website described above, displaying Complainant's trademarks and offering for sale prima facie counterfeit VALENTINO branded products, clearly indicates that Respondent's purpose in registering the Disputed Domain Name was to capitalize on the reputation of Complainant's trademark, by attracting Internet users seeking Complainant's branded products to its own websites for commercial gain and intentionally creating a likelihood of confusion with Complainant's trademarks as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of its website and the goods offered and promoted through said website.
- As a further circumstance evidencing Respondent's bad faith, Respondent did not reply to Complainant's Cease and Desist letter.

B. Respondent

Although procedurally summoned, Respondent did not reply to 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 trademark and the disputed domain name. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ("[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)"), section 1.7.

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 entirety of the mark is reproduced within the Disputed Domain Name as it incorporates the whole of Complainant's VALENTINO trademark, with the mere addition of a hyphen and of the geographical term "Romania". Although the addition of other terms here, the term "Romania" 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 when the mark is recognizable within the Disputed Domain Name. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.8.

Accordingly, the Disputed Domain Name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.7.

Consequently, 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 Complainant has established a prima facie case that Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the Disputed Domain Name.

Although properly summoned Respondent has not rebutted 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.

VALENTINO is indisputably a well-known trademark worldwide.

The Panel notes that Respondent is not a licensee, authorized agent of Complainant or in any other way authorized to use Complainant’s trademarks.

The Panel notes further that Respondent has not provided Complainant with any evidence of the use of, or demonstrable preparations to use, the Disputed Domain Name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services before any notice of the dispute.

The Disputed Domain Name resolves to a website reproducing Complainant’s marks and offering for sale purported VALENTINO products at discounted prices, without displaying any disclaimer as to the lack of affiliation between Respondent’s website and Complainant. The website under the Disputed Domain Name is offering for sale prima facie counterfeit VALENTINO branded products.

Respondent’s use of the Disputed Domain Name is, therefore, certainly apt to confuse and mislead Internet users into believing that the website is operated by Complainant or by one of its affiliated entities or authorized resellers with Complainant’s consent.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity here, claimed offering counterfeit branded products or passing off as Complainant, or other types of fraud can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.13.1.

Consequently, 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.

Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy sets out a list of non-exhaustive 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.

In this respect, the Panel notes that Respondent:

- could not have possibly ignored the existence of Complainant's trademark when it registered the Disputed Domain Name, given the notoriety of Complainant;
- uses the Disputed Domain Name in connection with the commercial website, displaying Complainant's trademarks and offering for sale prima facie counterfeit VALENTINO branded products.

The Panel considers that Respondent's purpose in registering the Disputed Domain Name appears to be to capitalize on the reputation of Complainant's trademark, by attracting Internet users seeking Complainant's branded products to its own websites for commercial gain and intentionally creating a likelihood of confusion with Complainant's trademarks as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of its website and the goods offered and promoted through said website.

The Panel further considers that the circumstance of Respondent not replying to Complainant's Cease and Desist letter supports the Panel's finding on bad faith.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity/illegal activity here, claimed: purported sale of counterfeit goods, passing off or other types of fraud constitutes bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.4. Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds Respondent's registration and use of the Disputed Domain Name constitutes bad faith under the Policy.

Consequently, the Panel finds that 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 <valentino-romania.ro> be transferred to Complainant.

/Dr. Beatrice Onica Jarka/

Dr. Beatrice Onica Jarka

Sole Panelist

Date: April 9, 2026