Decision for dispute CAC-UDRP-108097

Case number	CAC-UDRP-108097
Time of filing	2025-10-29 18:48:25
Domain names	michelinvip.vip

Case administrator

Name	Olga Slanařová (Case admin)

Complainant

Organization	Compagnie Générale des Etablissements Michelin

Complainant representative

Organization	DREYFUS ET ASSOCIES

Respondent

Name	jack her

OTHER LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

The Panel is not aware of any other legal proceedings which are pending or decided and which relate to the disputed domain name.

IDENTIFICATION OF RIGHTS

According to the submitted evidence, the Complainant owns, among many others, the following trademark registrations:

- International trademark for MICHELIN (word mark), Reg. No. 771031, registered on June 11, 2001, in force until June 6, 2031, in International Classes ("ICs") 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 39, and 42; designating among others: China, Russia, Iceland, Spain, Ukraine, Singapore;

- International trademark for MICHELIN (word mark), Reg. No. 1780534, registered on October 20, 2023, in force until October 20, 2033, in ICs 09, 10, 11, 19, 20, 22, 35, 41, 42, and 43; designating, among others United Arab Emirates, India, United Kingdom, and Switzerland;

- UK trademark for MICHELIN (word mark), Reg. No. UK00907333834, registered on October 13, 2008, in force until October 13, 2028, in ICs 1, 8, 9, 11, 12, 16, 20, 21, 28.

The disputed domain name <**michelinvip.vip**> was registered on **August 3, 2025**. According to the Complainant, the disputed domain name resolves to an inactive website, resulting from the registrar's intervention following the Complainant's abusive registration request of August 28, 2025. The Panel, based on section 4.8 of the WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("WIPO Overview 3.0"), also searched the disputed domain name at the website of the Internet Archive and found no active records of it.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The Complainant is Compagnie Générale des Etablissements Michelin, a leading French company with a worldwide, long-established, active presence (including digital) in the fields of tyres, mobility, maps, restaurant guides, and gastronomy. The Complainant is present in 171 countries, has more than 124,000 employees, and operates 117 tyre manufacturing facilities and sales agencies in 26 countries, including in the United States of America ("United States") and the United Kingdom.

Since 1889, the Complainant has been dedicated to continually advancing the mobility of people and goods, thereby contributing to human progress. The Complainant holds the authorship of the worldwide recognised "Michelin Guide", which started in 1920 to help motorists plan their trips. Today, such a guide has an international impact, with rates over 30,000 establishments across 30 territories on three continents, and has sold more than 30 million guides.

"While the MICHELIN brand is well-known for its tyres, it has also become famous for its travel publications and even more so for its annual gastronomic MICHELIN guides with its MICHELIN stars rating system. Obtaining one or more MICHELIN stars has become a hallmark of fine dining." (see Compagnie Générale des Établissements Michelin v. Kumar Santosh, Enterprise, WIPO Case No. D2025-4092).

The Complainant, among others, also owns the domain name: <michelin.com> registered on December 1, 1993.

On August 28, 2025, the Complainant, in an attempt to resolve the matter amicably, sent a cease-and-desist letter to the Respondent through the concerned registrar's platform form. Despite the Complainant's efforts, the Respondent did not provide any response to the Complainant.

PARTIES CONTENTIONS

Response

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

Complainant Contentions (summary):

- The Complainant contends that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to its well-known trademark MICHELIN.
- The Complainant contends that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name since it is not affiliated or has the Complainant authorized it in any way to use and register its trademarks, or to seek registration of any domain name incorporating its trademarks; that the Respondent is not commonly known by the disputed domain name; that as in previous decisions, Panels found that "in the absence of any license or permission from the Complainant to use such widely-known trademarks, no actual or contemplated bona fide or legitimate use of the domain names could reasonably be claimed" citing among others LEGO Juris A/S v. DomainPark Ltd, David Smith, Above.com Domain Privacy, Transure Enterprise Ltd, Host master, WIPO Case No. D2010-0138; that the disputed domain name carries a high risk of implied affiliation, given its similarity; that the Respondent is making a non-legitimate use of the disputed domain name, with intent for commercial gain to misleadingly divert consumers from Complainant's official website; that the Respondent did not answer the Complainant's cease-and-desist letter despite its reminders.
- Regarding the bad faith registration, the Complainant contends that given the worldwide recognition of its MICHELIN trademark, the Respondent "knew or should have known" about it; that the fact that the Respondent has registered a domain name that is confusingly similar to the MICHELIN trademark indicates that the Respondent knew it at the time of registration of the disputed domain name; that if the Respondent had carried even a basic Google search or any other search engine using the keyword "MICHELIN", the same would have yielded obvious references to the Complainant and the well-known trademark MICHELIN.

  Concerning the bad faith use, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name is currently blocked by the registrar and placed in ClientHold status, preventing it from resolving to any active website; that such status resulted from the registrar's intervention following abusive or non-compliant registration activity, which confirms the Respondent's bad faith use and registration of the domain name. Furthermore, the Complainant contends that, as previous Panels have considered that, in the absence of any license or permission from Complainant to use a widely known trademark, no actual or contemplated bona fide or legitimate use of the domain name could reasonably be claimed, citing among other references Alstom, Bouygues v. Webmaster, WIPO Case No. D2008-0281.

RIGHTS

The Complainant has, to the satisfaction of the Panel, shown the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights (within the meaning of paragraph 4(a)(i) of the Policy).

NO RIGHTS OR LEGITIMATE INTERESTS

The Complainant has, to the satisfaction of the Panel, shown the Respondent to have no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name (within the meaning of paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy).

BAD FAITH

The Complainant has, to the satisfaction of the Panel, shown the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith (within the meaning of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy).

PROCEDURAL FACTORS

The Panel is satisfied that all procedural requirements under UDRP were met and there is no other reason why it would be inappropriate to provide a decision.

PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR THE DECISION

In accordance with Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, the onus is on the Complainant to prove:

(i) the disputed 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 disputed domain name; and

(iii) the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

The Panel will consider each of these requirements in turn.

Identical or Confusingly Similar

Concerning the First Element of the Policy, the Complainant has sufficiently proved before the Panel that owns trademark Rights over the term MICHELIN.

The disputed domain name includes the trademark MICHELIN, in addition to the acronym “VIP” (which stands for “Very Important People”), an addition that does not avoid a finding of confusing similarity (see Compagnie Générale des Etablissements Michelin v. brics shao, WIPO Case No. D2025-4082).

Concerning the use of a trademark in the disputed domain name plus other terms, Section 1.8 of the WIPO Overview 3.0 has stated:

“Where the relevant trademark is recognizable within the disputed domain name, the **addition of other terms** (whether descriptive, geographical, pejorative, meaningless, or otherwise) **would not prevent a finding of confusing similarity** under the first element. The nature of such additional term(s) may, however, bear on assessment of the second and third elements.”

Regarding the generic Top-Level Domain “.vip”, it may be disregarded (see Section 1.11.1 of the WIPO Overview 3.0).

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

Rights or Legitimate Interests

Concerning the Second Element of the Policy, to this Panel it is clear that:

(1) The Respondent is not associated with or affiliated with or hasn’t been authorized or licensed by the Complainant to register the disputed domain name.

(2) There is no favourable evidence towards the Respondent concerning the composition of the disputed domain name, by a well-known trademark as MICHELIN, and the addition of the acronym “VIP”, which stands for the “very important people” term associated with the Complainant’s status and privilege, which could mislead the Internet users.

(3) There is no evidence that the Respondent corresponds or has become commonly known by the term “michelinvip.vip”.

(4) Nothing in the record suggests or infers any fair or non-commercial use of the disputed domain name, in particular given its lack of activity.

According to the evidence submitted by the Complainant, the Panel finds that the Complainant has made out its prima facie case, and that the Respondent, who has remained in silence during the entire proceeding, did not rebut the Complainant's arguments.

The Panel finds that the second element of the Policy has been satisfied.

Registered and Used in Bad Faith

Registration in Bad Faith:

In this case, according to the evidence provided, by the time the Respondent registered the disputed domain name, the Complainant had already established its trademark Rights, including in the UK, e.g., MICHELIN, Reg. No. UK00907333834, registered on October 13, 2008.

The composition of the disputed domain name is not coincidental, in particular given the nature, privileged meaning, and strong worldwide reputation associated with the Complainant's business activity and the MICHELIN trademark. Therefore, to this Panel, it is clear that the Respondent registered the disputed domain name, with the Complainant's MICHELIN trademark in mind (see Section 3.2.2 of the WIPO Overview 3.0).

Use in Bad Faith:

In this case, the Panel notes that the Complainant argues that "the disputed domain name is currently blocked by the registrar and placed in ClientHold status, preventing it from resolving to any active website. This status results from the registrar's intervention following abusive or non-compliant registration activity, and it further evidences the Respondent's bad faith use and registration of the domain name."

To this Panel, such inactive use, and in particular given i) the massive presence of the Complainant's business activity and the worldwide reputation of the MICHELIN trademark, including in the gastronomy field; ii) the failure of the Respondent to submit a response or to provide any evidence of actual or contemplated good-faith; iii) the failure of the Respondent to address the Complainant's cease-and-desist letter, iv) the implausibility of any good faith use to which the disputed domain name may be put, is understood as equivalent to a passive holding scenario (see Section 3.3 of the WIPO Overview 3.0 and Compagnie Générale des Etablissements Michelin v. asd sdd, asdfsadfwqe, a a, jack her, WIPO Case No. D2025-2300).

The Panel finds that the third element of the Policy has been satisfied.

[1] The Micheline Awards have inspired the film industry, e.g., Burnt (directed by John Wells, 2015, The Weinstein Company); The Hundred-Foot Journey (directed by Lasse Hallström, 2014, DreamWorks Pictures et al.); Ratatouille (directed by Brad Bird and Jan Pinkava, 2007, Walt Disney Pictures et al.).

FOR ALL THE REASONS STATED ABOVE, THE COMPLAINT IS

Accepted

AND THE DISPUTED DOMAIN NAME(S) IS (ARE) TO BE

1. **michelinvip.vip**: Transferred

PANELLISTS

Name	**María Alejandra López García**

DATE OF PANEL DECISION 2025-12-03

Publish the Decision