Decision for dispute CAC-UDRP-108417

Case number	CAC-UDRP-108417
Time of filing	2026-02-17 12:14:43
Domain names	ghirardellisale.com

Case administrator

Name	Olga Slanařová (Case admin)

Complainant

Organization	Chocoladefabriken Lindt & Sprüngli AG

Complainant representative

Organization	SILKA AB

Respondent

Name	lar frank

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

The Complainant has provided evidence of ownership of several trademarks in the term GHIRARDELLI, including the following:

- United States trademark GHIRARDELLI No. 205776, registered on 17 November 1925, duly renewed;
- United States trademark GHIRARDELLI No. 1645206, registered on 21 May 1991, duly renewed;
- European trademark GHIRARDELLI No. 3716456 registered on 27 July 2005, duly renewed.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The Complainant, Chocoladefabriken Lindt & Sprüngli AG, in a Swiss chocolate manufacturer founded in 1845. The Complainant has provided evidence of ownership of trademark registrations for the mark “GHIRARDELLI".

The disputed domain name was registered on 28 January 2026 and resolves to an error page.

PARTIES CONTENTIONS

COMPLAINANT

The disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant's trademark GHIRARDELLI. The Complainant contends that the disputed domain name exactly reproduces the well-known trademark "GHIRARDELLI", with the mere addition of the English term "sale".

Per the Complaint, the Respondent is not known by the disputed domain name. The Respondent does not use the disputed domain name for legitimate or non-commercial fair use or in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services, per the Complainant. Indeed, the Complainant submits that the disputed domain name used to resolve to a website impersonating the Complainant, reproducing the GHIRARDELLI mark and offering GHIRARDELLI-branded items for sale without authorization. The website was removed following a takedown request from the Complainant's Representative.

As regards the bad faith of the Respondent, the disputed domain name includes the distinctive trademark GHIRARDELLI. The Respondent has registered the disputed domain name with full knowledge of the Complainant's trademark, as evidenced by the structure of the domain name and the use of the disputed domain name by the Respondent. The current inactive use of a domain name does not prevent a finding of bad faith registration and use, per the Complainant.

The Complainant adds that the WHOIS details used by the Respondent are inaccurate or misleading, and that the Respondent was named as a respondent in several UDRP proceedings where the respective panels ordered the transfer of the domain names to the Complainant.

RESPONDENT

NO ADMINISTRATIVELY COMPLIANT RESPONSE HAS BEEN FILED

RIGHTS

The Complainant has, to the satisfaction of the Panel, shown the disputed domain name is identical or 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

Notwithstanding the fact that no Response has been filed, the Panel shall consider the issues present in the case based on the statements and documents submitted by the Complainant. Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy directs that the Complainant must prove each of the following elements:

(i) that the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights; and
(ii) that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name; and
(iii) that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith.

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar
The Complainant must establish that it has a trademark or service mark and that the disputed domain name is identical or

confusingly similar to that trademark or service mark for the Complainant to succeed.

The Complainant, Chocoladefabriken Lindt & Sprüngli AG, in a Swiss chocolate manufacturer founded in 1845. The Complainant has provided evidence of ownership of trademark registrations for the mark “GHIRARDELLI".

As regards the question of identity or confusing similarity for the purpose of the Policy, it requires a comparison of the disputed domain name with the trademarks in which the Complainant holds rights. According to section 1.7 of the WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition (“WIPO Overview 3.1”), “this test typically involves a side-by-side comparison of the domain name and the textual components of the relevant trademark to assess whether the mark is recognizable within the disputed domain name”.

Also, according to section 1.7 of the 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 mark for purposes of UDRP standing”.

The “GHIRARDELLI” mark is clearly recognizable within the disputed domain name, with the addition of the generic term “sale” which may be seen as related to the Complainant’s business. This addition is not important enough to distinguish between the earlier trademarks of the Complainant and the disputed domain name, and does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity with the Complainant’s trademarks.

It is well accepted by UDRP panels that a generic Top-Level Domain (“gTLD”), such as “.com”, is typically ignored when assessing whether a domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark.

This Panel concludes that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant’s trademark and therefore finds that the requirement of paragraph 4(a)(i) of the Policy is satisfied.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Under paragraph 4(c) of the Policy, any of the following circumstances, if found by the Panel, may demonstrate the respondent’s rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name:

(i) before any notice to it of the dispute, the respondent’s use of, or demonstrable preparations to use, the disputed domain name or a name corresponding to the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services; or
(ii) the respondent has been commonly known by the disputed domain name, even if it has acquired no trademark or service mark rights; or
(iii) the respondent is making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name, without intent for commercial gain to misleadingly divert consumers or to tarnish the trademark or service mark at issue.

The consensus view of UDRP panels on the burden of proof under paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy is summarized in section 2.1 of the WIPO Overview 3.0, which states: “[…] 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. If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element.”

The evidence on record does not show that the Respondent was commonly known, as an individual or an organization, by the disputed domain name.

The Panel also accepts, in the absence of a rebuttal from the Respondent, that the Respondent uses the Complainant's trademarks in the disputed domain name without authorization from the Complainant.

Equally, the Panel finds that the Respondent has not made a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name.

Therefore, the Panel concludes that the Respondent has no right or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name and therefore finds that the requirement of paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy is satisfied.

C. Registration and Use in Bad faith

For the purpose of Paragraph 4(a) (iii) of the Policy, the following circumstances, in particular but without limitation, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of the domain names in bad faith:

(i) circumstances indicating that the holder has registered or has acquired the domain name primarily for the purpose of selling, renting, or otherwise transferring the domain name registration to the Complainant who is the owner of the trademark or service mark or to a competitor of that Complainant, for valuable consideration in excess of the holders documented out-of-pocket costs directly related to the domain name; or
(ii) the holder has registered the domain name in order to prevent the owner of the trademark or service mark from reflecting the mark in a corresponding domain name, provided that the holder has engaged in a pattern of such conduct; or
(iii) the holder has registered the domain name primarily for the purpose of disrupting the business of a competitor; or
(iv) by using the domain name, the holder has intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to the holder's website or other online location, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of your website or location or of a product or service on the holder's website or location.

The Panel finds the third and fourth elements of Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy applicable in the present case. The evidence on the record shows that the Respondent was certainly aware of the existence of the Complainant and of the rights of the Complainant, and that the Respondent, by registering and using the disputed domain name has intentionally attracted internet users by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's trademark.

Given the long-lasting reputation of the Complainant’s marks, the Respondent cannot have ignored the Complainant’s earlier rights, neither can the Respondent have ignored that, when registering the disputed domain name, they would do so in violation of the Complainant’s earlier rights.

In addition, the current use of the disputed domain name by the Respondent amounts to bad faith, given the past use of the domain name in connection with a website impersonating the Complainant. Whether actual products were sold or not on the website associated with the disputed domain name – which the Panel has serious doubts about - the Panel finds that the Respondent acted in bad faith. The evidence on the record shows that on a balance of probabilities, the Respondent registered the disputed domain name because he knew of the Complainant and the type of goods offered by the Complainant and tried to attract Internet users for commercial gain.

The Respondent's lack of reply to the Complaint also corroborates this finding of bad faith, and so does the fanciful WHOIS date used when registering the disputed domain name.

The Panel concludes that the Respondent has registered and is using the disputed domain name in bad faith, and therefore finds that the requirement of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy is satisfied.

FOR ALL THE REASONS STATED ABOVE, THE COMPLAINT IS

Accepted

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

1. **ghirardellisale.com**: Transferred

PANELLISTS

Name	**Arthur Fouré**

DATE OF PANEL DECISION 2026-03-18

Publish the Decision