Decision for dispute CAC-UDRP-108723

Case number	CAC-UDRP-108723
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Domain names	equinorltd.com

Case administrator

Name	Olga Slanařová (Case admin)

Complainant

Organization	Equinor ASA

Complainant representative

Organization	Valea/Rouse

Respondent

Organization	John Company

OTHER LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

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

IDENTIFICATION OF RIGHTS

The Complainant has adduced evidence showing it is the owner of the following trademarks for the brand and corporate name EQUINOR:

- Norwegian Trademark No. 298811 registered on 12 June 2018 in Nice Classification List classes 4, 40 and 42;

- International Trademark No. 1444675 registered on 4 July 2018 in Nice Classification List classes 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 16, 17, 19, 25, 28, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41 and 42;

- EU Trademark No. 017900772 registered on 18 January 2019 in Nice Classification List classes 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 16, 17, 19, 25, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41 and 42;

- US Trademark No. 6436681 registered on 3 August 2021 in Nice Classification List classes 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 16, 17, 19, 25, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41 and 42.

The Complainant furthermore submitted a list of additional trademark applications that it claimed it had made or registrations it had received in countries around the world, but the list was not accompanied by documentary evidence. The Panel therefore simply takes note of the list as indicating the Complainant’s intention to extend its trademark protection widely. Claims by the Complainant relative to the domain name <equinor.com> and related domain names were not supported by documentary evidence of registration but the Panel did here take note of screenshots indicating the Complainant's use of <equinor.com> (see Factual Background).

The Respondent registered the disputed domain name <equinorltd.com> on 23 May 2026 according to the Registrar Verification obtained by the CAC Case Administrator.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The Complainant is a Norwegian corporation that was founded in 1972 as Statoil and which became prominent internationally in the energy sector with operations in more than 30 countries for developing oil and gas, and wind and solar power. The Complainant in 2018 decided to change its name to Equinor, a move which sought to capture the company's shift to becoming a broad-based energy major and which was publicized and reported upon internationally, as substantiated by contemporary journalistic sources submitted by the Complainant to the Panel. The company's rebranding was furthermore accompanied by taking out fresh trademark protection internationally for the new name (see Identification of Rights).

Evidence provided by the Complainant shows that e-mail servers have been configured for the disputed domain name and that at least one e-mail was sent using this facility. The e-mail purports, falsely, to be from a manager in the Complainant's human resources personnel. The Complainant furthermore supplied screenshot evidence from webpages on <equinor.com> that concerns its recruitment of personnel. Other screenshot evidence shows that the disputed domain name does not resolve to any webpage.

The Panel observes from the Case File in this proceeding that the contact details revealed through the Registrar Verification procedure give "equinoruk" as the sole name for the Respondent with a postal address in the state of Lagos, Nigeria. The e-mail address provided by the Respondent at registration employs the user name "hrcareer".

PARTIES CONTENTIONS

COMPLAINANT:

1. The disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights

The disputed domain name <equinorltd.com> is confusingly similar to the Complainant's trademark EQUINOR, because the disputed domain name incorporates the entire EQUINOR protected brand. The generic abbreviation "ltd" for "limited" merely adds a corporate element to the trademark and does not reduce such confusing similarity; neither does the gTLD technical suffix <.com>.

Bearing in mind the widespread reputation and high degree of recognition of the Complainant's EQUINOR marks in especially the energy sector and the evident lack of distinguishing factors between the disputed domain name and those marks, the disputed domain name's confusing similarity to them would induce an Internet user to assume a connection with the Complainant and its business.

2. The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name

The Respondent has no rights to or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name because of the Complainant's prior use of its trademark EQUINOR and its company name Equinor. The Respondent is not affiliated or related to the Complainant in any way, or licensed or otherwise authorized to use the EQUINOR mark in connection with a website, a domain name or for any other purpose. The Respondent is not using the domain name in connection with any legitimate non-commercial or fair use without intent for commercial gain, is not generally known by the disputed domain name and has not acquired any trademark or service mark rights in such name. Lastly, the Complainant submits that the Respondent is not using the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services.

3. The disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith

The Respondent has intentionally registered and is using the disputed domain name in bad faith. It is apparent from the composition of the disputed domain name that the Respondent chose to register a name that is similar to the Complainant's EQUINOR protected brand, more than 5 years after the Complainant's announced name change from Statoil in March 2018. The Respondent must have been fully aware at registration of the fact that the disputed domain name incorporated a well-recognized and distinctive trademark

in which the Respondent had no prior rights. Further, the disputed domain name does not resolve to an active website while the Respondent's contact information was not made publicly available, factors which previous ADR panels have considered relevant in assessing the presence of bad faith registration and use. Beyond such indicators, it is clear that the Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract internet traffic for commercial gain by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's mark EQUINOR, as shown in particular by activated MX records that facilitated at least one phishing email to be sent in connection with a recruitment scam impersonating the Complainant.

RESPONDENT

No administratively compliant Response has been filed.

RIGHTS

The Complainant has, to the satisfaction of the Panel, shown that the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to trademarks 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 that 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 the UDRP were met and that there is no other reason why it would be inappropriate to provide a decision.

The Panel notes that its résumé of the Parties' contentions includes for the Complainant only its arguments pertinent to reaching a decision in this proceeding; it omits in particular references made to past ADR panels' decisions.

PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR THE DECISION

This proceeding concerns alleged impersonation of the Complainant pursued through the Respondent's registration and use of the disputed domain name <equinorltd.com>, with abusive use alleged in particular on the basis of evidence of phishing. Applying the UDRP three-part cumulative test to the substance of these allegations, the Panel finds that:

(1) the Complainant has established its own rights in the protected brand (and corporate) name EQUINOR and that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to that name by reason of the disputed domain name's incorporation of "EQUINOR" in its entirety as its dominant cognitive element, supplemented only by a generic descriptor of corporate identity "ltd" and the gTLD extension <.com>, neither of which affect the impression conveyed by the dominant element. The first part of the UDRP test is accordingly satisfied;

(2) there is no question in the circumstances of this case of any legitimate, or indeed innocent, purpose being pursued by the Respondent in registering or using the disputed domain name. Not only is there no indication that the Respondent might possess some inherent or attributed right or interest (such as through prior or parallel acquisition of the elements of the disputed domain name, through pursuit of rights recognized by law that might qualify trademark or corporate identity rights, or through authorization in some form by the Complainant), but the Respondent has indirectly supplied damning evidence of illegitimate conduct with respect to the disputed domain name; this is revealed in the recruitment-scam phishing mail adduced by the Complainant that emanated from an e-mail server associated with the disputed domain name. Furthermore, the Respondent at registration provided contact details that, on their face, at best appear suspect, whereas a condition for concluding a <.com> domain name registration agreement is the provision of accurate contact details. It follows from these circumstances that the second part of the UDRP test is also met;

(3) in similar fashion to (2), the way in which the disputed domain name was constructed and then put to use leaves little room to reach another conclusion than that the object of registration of the disputed domain name was to allow impersonation, probably for illegitimate commercial gain, of the Complainant while bad faith use is shown by the actual attempt to conduct such impersonation through use of at least one phishing e-mail to deceive an internet user. The evidence in this regard that was provided by the Complainant (but for security reasons not repeated in the Factual Background above) unambiguously shows that a hoax was being undertaken to create the impression that the recipient of the phishing e-mail was dealing with a human relations manager of the Complainant. For these reasons, the third and last part of the UDRP is amply met in this proceeding.

Therefore, the Panel ORDERS the transfer of the disputed domain name to the Complainant.

FOR ALL THE REASONS STATED ABOVE, THE COMPLAINT IS

Accepted

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

1. **equinorltd.com**: Transferred

PANELLISTS

Name	**Kevin Madders**

DATE OF PANEL DECISION 2026-07-31

Publish the Decision