

Decision for dispute CAC-UDRP-105968

Case number	CAC-UDRP-105968
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Time of filing	2023-11-13 10:27:21
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Domain names	saints-gobains.com
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Case administrator

Name	Olga Dvořáková (Case admin)
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Complainant

Organization	COMPAGNIE DE SAINT-GOBAIN
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Complainant representative

Organization	NAMESHIELD S.A.S.
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Respondent

Name	Zen Shine
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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 is the owner of several trademarks SAINT-GOBAIN, registered worldwide, such as:

- International trademark SAINT-GOBAIN n°740184 registered on July 26, 2000;
- International trademark SAINT-GOBAIN n°740183 registered on July 26, 2000;
- International trademark SAINT-GOBAIN n°596735 registered on November 2, 1992 and
- International trademark SAINT-GOBAIN n°551682 registered on July 21, 1989.

The Complainant also owns many domain names including its trademark SAINT-GOBAIN, such as the domain name <saint-gobain.com> registered on December 29, 1995.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

FACTS ASSERTED BY THE COMPLAINANT AND NOT CONTESTED BY THE RESPONDENT:

The Complainant, which operates its website under www.saint-gobain.com, is a French company specialized in the production, processing and distribution of materials for the construction and industrial markets.

Saint-Gobain is a worldwide reference in sustainable habitat and construction markets. It takes a long-term view in order to develop products and services for its customers that facilitate sustainable construction. In this way, it designs innovative, high-performance solutions that improve habitat and everyday life.

For 350 years, the Complainant has consistently demonstrated its ability to invent products that improve the quality of life. It is now one of the top 100 industrial groups in the world and one of the 100 most innovative companies.

The Complainant is the owner of several trademarks SAINT-GOBAIN, registered worldwide, and also owns many domain names including its trademark SAINT-GOBAIN.

SAINT-GOBAIN is also commonly used to designate the company name of the Complainant.

The disputed domain name <saints-gobains.com> was registered on May 9, 2023 and is inactive.

PARTIES CONTENTIONS

The Complainant submits that the requirements of the Policy have been met and that the disputed domain name should be transferred to it. The Complainant makes a number of legal arguments (referenced below) and also supplies a set of annexes providing evidence of its activities and of the Respondent's use of the disputed domain name.

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

According to Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, the Complainant is required to prove each of the following three elements to obtain an order that the disputed domain name should be transferred or cancelled:

- (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 has examined the evidence available to it and has come to the following conclusion concerning the satisfaction of the three elements of paragraph 4(a) of the Policy in these proceedings:

RIGHTS

The Complainant has established rights in the name SAINT-GOBAIN. The disputed domain name <SAINTS-GOBAINS.COM> is found to be confusingly similar to the Complainant's Trademark(s), company name and domain. This finding is based on the settled practice in evaluating the existence of a likelihood of confusion of:

- a) disregarding the top-level suffix in the domain name (i.e. ".com"), and
- b) finding that the addition of a simple letter "s" to both word elements of the protected trademark to potentially create a "plural form" of these word elements (in this case "SAINTS" and GOBAINS") would not be considered sufficient to distinguish a domain name from a trademark. Equally, this may be considered to be a misspelling of the trademark(s) SAINT-GOBAIN, intentionally designed to be confusingly similar with the trademark(s), i.e. a case of typosquatting.

However, the addition of these letters does not alter the recognizable and distinctive elements of the trademark which are taken over in their entirety in the disputed domain name, thus making them confusingly similar.

Previous panels have held that the Complainant has rights in the term "SAINT-GOBAIN" in decisions such as CAC Case CAC-UDRP-104710, *Compagnie de Saint Gobain v. Sourav <saintgobainmirror>*, and WIPO Case No. D2021-3760, *Compagnie de Saint-Gobain v. Domain ID Shield Service, Domain ID Shield Service CO., Limited / zhang yan sheng, GNAME. COM PTE. LTD. <saint-gobain350jahre.com>*.

The disputed domain name is therefore confusingly similar to the earlier right "SAINT-GOBAIN", and the Panel concludes that the Complainant has satisfied the requirement under paragraph 4(a)(i) of the Policy.

NO RIGHTS OR LEGITIMATE INTERESTS

The onus to make out a prima facie case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests is placed on the Complainant. However, once such prima facie case is made, the Respondent carries the burden of demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. If the Respondent fails to do so, the Complainant is deemed to have satisfied paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the UDRP (see e.g. WIPO case no. D2003-0455, *Croatia Airlines d.d. v. Modern Empire Internet Ltd.*).

The Complainant has put forward that the Respondent is not commonly known by the disputed domain name. The Respondent is not identified in the Whois under the disputed domain name. Past panels have held that a Respondent was not commonly known by a disputed domain name if the Whois information was not similar to the disputed domain name. The Respondent is in no way related to the Complainant. Nor has the Respondent been granted an authorization or license to use the disputed domain name by the Complainant. This has not been contested by the Respondent. Instead, the Respondent failed to provide any information and evidence whatsoever that could have shown that it has relevant rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name (within the meaning of paragraph 4(a) (ii) of the Policy). The disputed domain name does not resolve to any active web site so there is no indication of any bona fide offering of goods or services.

In summary, the Panel concludes that the Respondent did not establish any right or legitimate interest to the disputed domain name (within the meaning of paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy). The Complainant has therefore also satisfied the requirement under paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy.

In summary, the Panel concludes that the Respondent did not establish any right or legitimate interest to the disputed domain name (within the meaning of paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy). The Complainant has therefore also satisfied the requirement under paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy.

BAD FAITH

The Panel finds that the Complainant has established that the disputed domain name was registered by the Respondent and is being used by the Respondent in bad faith. For this purpose, the Complainant has successfully put forward prima facie evidence that the Respondent has not made use, or demonstrable preparations to use, of either the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services, or of making a legitimate non-commercial or fair use of the disputed domain name. This prima facie evidence was not challenged by the Respondent.

The disputed domain name was created quite recently, on May 9, 2023. The Complainant was already using its trademark "SAINT-GOBAIN" extensively well before that date. The Complainant has established that its trademark has a well-known character and that it operates a long-standing globally accessible website under the <saint-gobain.com> domain name.

In WIPO Case No. D2020-3549, *Compagnie de Saint-Gobain v. On behalf of saint-gobain-recherche.net owner, Whois Privacy Service / Grigore PODAC*, the Panel was "satisfied that the Complainant is a well-established company which operates since decades worldwide under the trademark SAINT-GOBAIN." The Panel in these proceedings has no reason to question this finding. It is also satisfied of the worldwide operation of a well-established company under the name SAINT-GOBAIN.

The words "SAINTS" and "GOBAINS" appear to have no meaning other than in regard to the Complainant and its trademark(s). The disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant's well-known trademark "SAINT-GOBAIN" and in view of the above there appears to be every reason to find that the Respondent must have had knowledge of the prior rights and the use of "SAINT-GOBAIN" by the Complainant. This appears to be the sole compelling reason for registering the disputed domain name. Should there be another reason, the onus of providing it lies with the Respondent. In the absence of a response, the Respondent has failed to give any explanation.

The disputed domain name points to an inactive page. The Respondent has failed to demonstrate any activity in respect of the disputed domain name, and it is not possible to conceive of any plausible actual or contemplated active use of the domain name by the Respondent that would not be illegitimate, by passing off, infringement of consumer protection legislation, or infringement of the Complainant's rights under trademark law.

As previous UDRP panels have held, the incorporation of a famous mark into a domain name, coupled with an inactive website, can also be seen as evidence of bad faith registration and use. Similarly, the misspelling of a domain name, designed to be confusingly similar with the Complainant's trademark has also been seen as being an action in bad faith by previous UDRP Panels, such as e.g. in NAF Case No. FA 877979, Microsoft Corporation v. Domain Registration Philippines ("In addition, Respondent's misspelling of Complainant's MICROSOFT mark in the <microsoft.com> domain name indicates that Respondent is typosquatting, which is a further indication of bad faith registration and use pursuant to Policy ¶ 4(a)(iii).")

In the absence of a Response and given the reputation of the Complainant and its trademark(s), company name and domain as supported by the Complainant's evidence, the Panel must conclude that the Respondent was fully aware of the Complainant's trademark(s), domain and company name "SAINT-GOBAIN" at the time of registering the disputed domain name <SAINTS-GOBAINS.COM>.

Therefore, it has been established to the satisfaction of the Panel that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used (at least passively) in bad faith, in order to prevent the Complainant from making proper use of the mark in the disputed domain name.

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

FOR ALL THE REASONS STATED ABOVE, THE COMPLAINT IS

Accepted

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

- 1. **saints-gobains.com**: Transferred

PANELLISTS

Name	Udo Pfleggar
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DATE OF PANEL DECISION 2023-12-19

Publish the Decision