

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION**

Maytag Properties, LLC v. Aleksei Nikiforov  
Case No. D2022-4620

### **1. The Parties**

The Complainant is Maytag Properties, LLC, United States of America (“United States”), represented by ALG India Law Offices, India.

The Respondent is Aleksei Nikiforov, the Russian Federation.

### **2. The Domain Name and Registrar**

The disputed domain name <maytag.moscow> (the “Domain Name”) is registered with Registrar of Domain Names REG.RU LLC (the “Registrar”).

### **3. Procedural History**

The Complaint in English was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on December 2, 2022. On December 2, 2022, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the Domain Name. On December 5, 2022, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the Domain Name which differed from the named Respondent (Protection of Private Person service provided by the Registrar) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on December 7, 2022, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on December 12, 2022.

On December 7, 2022, the Center sent an email to the Parties in both English and Russian regarding the language of the proceedings. On December 10, 2022, the Complainant submitted its request that English be the language of the proceedings. The Respondent did not provide any comments regarding the language of the proceedings.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended 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 the Respondent in English and Russian of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on December 21, 2022. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was January 10, 2023. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on January 16, 2023.

The Center appointed Piotr Nowaczyk as the sole panelist in this matter on January 19, 2023. 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**

The Complainant is an American home and commercial appliance company owned by Whirlpool Corporation since 2006.

The Complainant is the owner of numerous MAYTAG trademark registrations, including:

- the United States Trademark Registration MAYTAG No. 326065 registered on July 9, 1935;
- the United States Trademark Registration MAYTAG No. 2638631 registered on October 22, 2002;
- the United States Trademark Registration MAYTAG No. 4369287 registered on July 16, 2013;
- the Russian Federation Trademark Registration MAYTAG No. 160595 registered on January 30, 1998;
- the Russian Federation Trademark Registration MAYTAG No. 804371 registered on April 1, 2021;
- and
- the European Union Trade Mark Registration MAYTAG No. 000028969 registered on March 4, 1999.

The Complainant's official domain name incorporating the MAYTAG trademark is <maytag.com>.

The Domain Name was registered on December 19, 2017.

As of the date of this Decision, as well as at the time of submitting the Complaint, the Domain Name has resolved to the website offering repair and maintenance service of the products under the MAYTAG trademark (the "Website").

#### **5. Parties' Contentions**

##### **A. Complainant**

The Complainant requests that the Domain Name be transferred to the Complainant. According to the Complainant, each of the three elements specified in paragraph 4(a) of the Policy are satisfied in the present case.

First, the Complainant submits that the Domain Name is identical to the MAYTAG trademark in which the Complainant has rights.

Second, the Complainant argues that the Respondent has neither rights nor legitimate interests in the Domain Name.

Third, the Complainant contends that the Domain Name was registered and is being used in bad faith.

##### **B. Respondent**

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

## 6. Discussion and Findings

Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy places a burden on the Complainant to prove the presence of three separate elements, which can be summarized as follows:

- (i) the Domain Name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights;
- (ii) the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name; and
- (iii) the Domain Name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

The requested remedy may only be granted if the above criteria are met.

At the outset, the Panel notes that the applicable standard of proof in UDRP cases is the “balance of probabilities” or “preponderance of the evidence”. See section 4.2 of the WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition (“[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)”).

### A. Language of the Proceeding

The language of the Registration Agreement for the Domain Name is Russian. Paragraph 11(a) of the Rules provides that “unless otherwise agreed by the Parties, or specified otherwise in the Registration Agreement, the language of the administrative proceeding shall be the language of the Registration Agreement, subject to the authority of the Panel to determine otherwise, having regard to the circumstances of the administrative proceeding”. The Panel may also order that any documents submitted in a language other than that of the proceeding be translated.

As noted by previous UDRP panels, paragraph 11 of the Rules must be applied in accordance with the overriding requirements of paragraphs 10(b) and 10(c) of the Rules that the parties are treated equally, that each party is given a fair opportunity to present its case, and that the proceeding takes place with due expedition (see, e.g., *General Electric Company v. Edison Electric Corp. a/k/a Edison Electric Corp. General Energy, Edison GE, Edison-GE and EEEGE.COM*, WIPO Case No. [D2006-0334](#)).

The Panel considers that substantial additional expense and delay would likely be incurred if the Complaint had to be translated into Russian. Moreover, the Panel notes that the Respondent did not comment on the language of the proceeding, even though it was notified in English and Russian regarding the language of the proceeding. Lastly, the Domain Name is composed of English terms and Latin letters, rather than Cyrillic.

Thus, taking these circumstances into account, the Panel finds that it is appropriate to exercise its discretion and allow the proceeding to be conducted in English.

### B. Identical or Confusingly Similar

The first element that the Complainant must establish is that the Domain Name is identical or confusingly similar to the trademark in which the Complainant has rights.

The Complainant holds valid MAYTAG trademark registrations. The Domain Name incorporates this trademark in its entirety. As numerous UDRP panels have held, incorporating a trademark in its entirety is sufficient to establish that a domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a registered trademark (see *PepsiCo, Inc. v. PEPSI, SRL (a/k/a P.E.P.S.I.) and EMS COMPUTER INDUSTRY (a/k/a EMS)*, WIPO Case No. [D2003-0696](#)).

The geographic Top-Level Domain (“geoTLD”) “.moscow” in the Domain Name is viewed as a standard registration requirement and as such is disregarded under the first element confusing similarity test. See section 1.11.1, [WIPO Overview 3.0](#).

Given the above, the Panel finds that the Domain Name is identical to the Complainant’s trademark. Thus, the Complainant has proved the requirements under paragraph 4(a)(i) of the Policy.

### **C. Rights or Legitimate Interests**

The second requirement the Complainant must prove is that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name.

The respondent may establish a right or legitimate interest in the disputed domain name by demonstrating in accordance with paragraph 4(c) of the Policy any of the following:

- (i) that it has used or made preparations to use the domain name or a name corresponding to the domain name in connection with a *bona fide* offering of goods or services prior to the dispute; or
- (ii) that it is commonly known by the domain name, even if it has not acquired any trademark rights; or
- (iii) that it is making a legitimate, noncommercial or fair use of the domain name without intent for commercial gain to misleadingly divert consumers or to tarnish the trademark.

Although given the opportunity, the Respondent has not submitted any evidence indicating that any of the circumstances foreseen in paragraph 4(c) of the Policy are present in this case.

On the contrary, it results from the evidence in the record that the Complainant’s MAYTAG trademark registrations predate the Respondent’s registration of the Domain Name. There is no evidence in the case record that the Complainant has licensed or otherwise permitted the Respondent to use the MAYTAG trademark or to register the Domain Name incorporating this trademark. There is also no evidence to suggest that the Respondent has been commonly known by the Domain Name.

Moreover, it results from the evidence in the record that the Respondent does not make use of the Domain Name in connection with a *bona fide* offering of goods or services, as well as it does not make a legitimate, noncommercial or fair use of the Domain Name without intent for commercial gain. On the contrary, the Domain Name resolves to the Website offering repair and maintenance service of the products under the MAYTAG trademark, while using the “look and feel” of the Complainant’s official website. Given the identical nature of the Domain Name to the Complainant’s trademark, the Domain Name carries a high risk of implied affiliation, rendering any fair use implausible, particularly in this instance given the impersonating nature of the content that copies the Complainant’s official website and falsely claims to provide services under contract. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), sections 2.5.1 and 2.8. Such use of the Domain Name does not confer rights or legitimate interests on the Respondent.

Given the above, the Respondent has failed to invoke any circumstances, which could demonstrate, pursuant to paragraph 4(c) of the Policy, any rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name. Thus, there is no evidence provided that refutes the Complainant’s *prima facie* case. The Panel concludes that the Complainant has also proved the requirement under paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy.

### **D. Registered and Used in Bad Faith**

The third requirement the Complainant must prove is that the Domain Name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

Bad faith under the UDRP is broadly understood to occur where a respondent takes unfair advantage of or otherwise abuses a complainant’s mark. See section 3.1, [WIPO Overview 3.0](#).

Under paragraph 4(b) of the Policy, evidence of bad faith registration and use includes without limitation:

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

As indicated above, the Complainant's rights in the MAYTAG trademark predate the registration of the Domain Name. This Panel finds that the Respondent was or should have been aware of the Complainant's trademark at the time of registration of the Domain Name. This finding is supported by the content of the Website offering repair and maintenance service of the MAYTAG branded products and copying the content of the Complainant's official website. Moreover, it has been proven to the Panel's satisfaction that the Complainant's MAYTAG trademark is well known and unique to the Complainant. Thus, the Respondent could not likely reasonably ignore the reputation of products under this trademark. In sum, the Respondent in all likelihood registered the Domain Name with the expectation of taking advantage of the reputation of the Complainant's MAYTAG trademark.

Moreover, the Domain Name is used in bad faith by the Respondent to attract Internet users to the Website offering repair and maintenance service of the products under the MAYTAG trademark. By reproducing the Complainant's MAYTAG trademark in the Domain Name, as well as displaying the Complainant's official marketing materials such as videos, images, texts, the Respondent intends to profit from the confusion created with Internet users, as it suggests association with the Complainant. The Website does not accurately and prominently disclose the Respondent's relationship (or the lack thereof) with the Complainant's as the MAYTAG trademark holder. In consequence, the Panel finds that the evidence in the record demonstrates that the Respondent uses the Domain Name deliberately in order to take advantage of the Complainant's reputation and to give credibility to its services.

For the reasons discussed above, the Panel finds that the Complainant has proved the requirements under paragraph 4(a)(iii) 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 Domain Name <maytag.moscow> be transferred to the Complainant.

*/Piotr Nowaczyk/*

**Piotr Nowaczyk**

Sole Panelist

Date: February 9, 2023