CHIEVER
BRAND PROTECTION
Trademarks • Designs • Copyright | no. 31 | december 2025

Haaland has trademark cancelled

Photo: Shutterstock

Haaland has trademark cancelled

Photo: Shutterstock

Norwegian footballer Erling Haaland has successfully had the European trademark registration for the name Haaland cancelled. The mark had been registered in 2022 by Polish citizen Michal Was, who claimed to have big plans for it. He registered Haaland for a wide range of goods – from cosmetics and watches to clothing and energy bars. However, the Cancellation Division of the EUIPO sided with the footballer: the Polish applicant acted in bad faith when filing the mark.

Opposition

When Haaland himself tried to register his name as a trademark in Europe in 2023, he discovered that Was had beaten him to it – and even filed an opposition against Haaland's own application. In response, Haaland launched cancellation proceedings against Was's mark: I was already world famous in 2022, and Michal Was is simply trying to benefit from my reputation, argued Haaland.

'I invented it myself'

Was attempted to justify his actions, claiming he had come up with the name himself. According to him, Haaland was a combination of the Polish word hala (meaning "hall") and the English word land. He also insisted he had never heard of Erling Haaland before, adding that foreign football leagues in Poland are only available via pay-TV channels.

Bad faith confirmed

The EUIPO was unconvinced. It found it implausible that Was had never heard of Haaland in 2022, and equally unbelievable that he had "invented" the name himself. The registration was therefore declared invalid for bad faith and removed from the register.

Airbnb trips up

Photo: Unsplash

Airbnb has failed to block the registration of the name Complete BnB in the United States. According to the online rental platform, Complete BnB – used for the same type of services – was too similar to Airbnb, and could lead consumers to believe that Complete BnB was affiliated with or operated by Airbnb.

'BnB' is Descriptive

The Board of Appeal of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office saw it differently. While Airbnb is highly distinctive, the same cannot be said for the term BnB, the Board explained – it is simply an abbreviation for bed & breakfast. The distinctive parts of the marks – Air and Complete – are clearly different, making confusion unlikely. The Board therefore ruled on September 30 that the registration of Complete BnB will remain valid.

PASTAZARA GETS ITS REGISTRATION AFTER ALL

Fashion label Zara has failed to block the registration of the Italian pasta brand pastaZARA. Initially, the EUIPO's Board of Appeal had sided with Zara, but on appeal the General Court of the European Union ruled that pastaZARA may indeed be registered.

No connection

The Court agreed that Zara enjoys a strong reputation with broad protection. However, it disagreed with the Board's earlier conclusion that consumers would associate the two brands.The similarity between the marks is limited, partly because pastaZARA includes distinctive visual elements. Moreover, clothing and pasta are completely different products. Even though Zara is a globally known fashion brand, consumers seeing pastaZARA on supermarket shelves would not think of Zara, the Court held. The trademark registration for pastaZARA therefore stands.

The trademark registration of pastaZARA

Photo: Unsplash

BEBSI LOSES OF COURSE TO PEPSI

Could no one have warned Frax Electronics Trading from Dubai that naming a new soft drink Bebsi was a bad idea? In September, following an opposition by Pepsi, the EUIPO sent Bebsi straight to the bin.

Battle of the Mamas

Since 2021, Mama's Maaltijden ("Mama's Meals") has sold a wide range of ready-made dishes in supermarkets. The company recently opposed a new Benelux trademark application for Mama's Soup, a shop in Haarlem that sells soup and other snacks. Apparently, Mama's Maaltijden thought: You can only have one Mama.

'Mama's' not distinctive

The Benelux Office for Intellectual Property (BOIP) disagreed. According to the Office, the element Mama's is not distinctive – it simply refers to food "made by mum," and must remain free for everyone to use. Because Mama's Soup and Mama's Maaltijden include different visual elements and additional words, there are enough differences between them. The opposition was therefore rejected, and Mama's Soup gets its registration.

Mama's Maaltijden

mama's soup

Monopoly on IN?

LinkedIn has scored a notable victory before the EUIPO. The networking giant managed to block the registration of a logo containing the word IN filed by Polish company Podium Investment. Remarkably, although both marks include the word IN, their overall designs look quite different.

Photo: Unsplash

Well-known mark

LinkedIn argued that the Polish logo could cause confusion and that its own IN logo enjoys a strong reputation with broad protection.

Sub brand

According to EUIPO the trademark IN does not have a reputation. Yes, the trademark LinkedIn is a well-known brand, but that does not apply to the standalone mark IN. Nevertheless, the EUIPO concluded that there is still a likelihood of confusion. The word IN is the most distinctive element in both marks, and their designs are relatively simple and non-distinctive. Therefore, the Polish mark could easily be seen by consumers as a sub-brand or variant of LinkedIn.

Hong Kong Telegraph blocked

Naming your new newspaper or website The Hong Kong Telegraph alongside the famous Daily Telegraph might just be acceptable. But copying the typeface almost identically from the British newspaper? That's where it goes wrong. Unsurprisingly, the application for The Hong Kong Telegraph was rejected for EU trademark registration at the end of September.

The 士蔴報
Hongkong Telegraph

Photo: Shutterstock

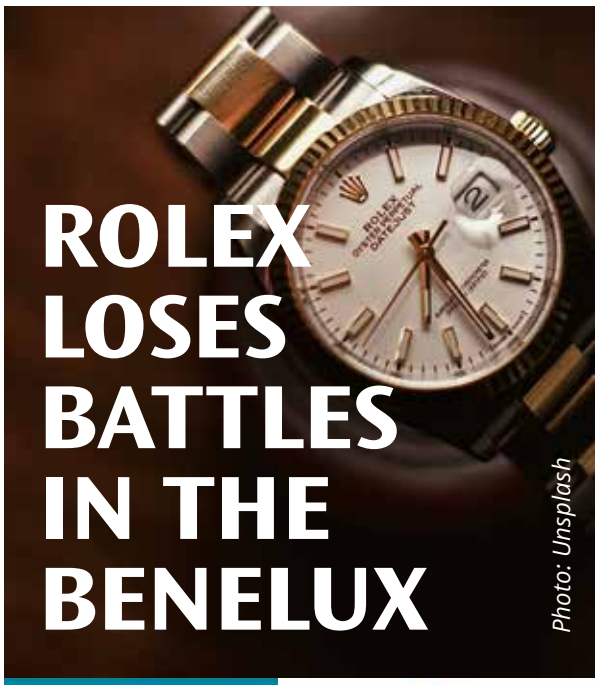

Photo: Unsplash

ROLLER ROLLER

Two notable defeats for Rolex in the Benelux. The world-famous watch brand had opposed two applications for Roller logos, filed for retail services related to watches. In both cases, the Benelux Office for Intellectual Property (BOIP) rejected Rolex's oppositions. According to the Office, the marks Roller and Rolex are barely similar – particularly due to the double L and the X, which make confusion unlikely. Rolex also claimed enhanced protection as a well-known mark, but the BOIP dismissed this argument, stating that the company had failed to provide sufficient evidence of that reputation.

Jägermeister wins

Of course, there are plenty of differences between the labels of Jägermeister and the herbal liqueur Alten Kräuterfrau. Initially, the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) ruled that the Alten Kräuterfrau bottle did not infringe Jägermeister's trademark rights.

Taking advantage

However, the Board of Appeal has now sided with Jägermeister after all. Their reasoning? There are clear similarities in the use of colour, the Gothic-style lettering, and the overall design. In addition, both products are identical – liqueurs – and the Jägermeister trademark enjoys a high degree of recognition, particularly in Germany.

Profiteren

All in all, the Board concluded that consumers are likely to associate the two brands and that Alten Kräuterfrau would take unfair advantage of Jägermeister's reputation. Clever work by the Alten Kräuterfrau designers – but ultimately, not enough distance. No trademark registration this time.

No trademark for Sagrada


Photo: Unsplash

The church foundation established in 1895 to promote the construction of Barcelona's famous Sagrada Familia has been denied a European trademark registration for the name Sagrada Familia covering various souvenirs. According to the EUIPO, Sagrada Familia lacks distinctiveness. The public immediately understands the name as a reference to the well-known basilica. The term is descriptive of the nature and origin of the goods and cannot function as a trademark.

MONOPOLY ON A W

Can you own the exclusive right to a single letter W? Yes – at least when it comes to hospitality services. On October 10, EUIPO decided that a new mark belonging to a Polish hospitality entrepreneur – featuring a stylised W – infringes the letter W trademark owned by Starwood Hotels, the company behind the well-known W Hotels brand. So: stay away from the W, at least if you're in the hospitality business.

Photo: Shutterstock

Katy Perry vs Katie Perry

The dispute between singer Katy Perry and her Australian (almost) namesake Katie Perry has been dragging on for years. The fight centres on who has the right to sell clothing under the name Katie/Katy Perry in Australia.

Earlier Rights

The lesser-known Perry has held the earliest trademark rights for clothing in Australia since 2008. Because the famous Perry also sells clothing there, the lesser-known Perry filed a lawsuit. Although she initially won the case, the appeal court in 2024 ruled in favour of the celebrity Katy Perry.
The judge decided that Katy Perry already enjoyed significant reputation in Australia before the 2008 trademark registration. As a result, the Katie Perry registration was cancelled.

Further Appeal

But the lesser-known Katie isn't giving up yet – she has taken the case to Australia's highest court. A final verdict could come in 2026, which might finally decide which Perry has the stronger claim.

Pose or movement protected as a trademark

EU Trademark No. 019120480 – short video (1 second) of Cole Palmer's movement

When British footballer Cole Palmer scores for Chelsea, he celebrates with a distinctive pose: puffed-out cheeks, arms crossed, rubbing as if he's cold. His management decided that gesture should be exclusive – and registered it as a motion trademark in the European register.

Not the first time

Motion marks, celebration marks, gesture marks – whatever you call them – this isn't new. Here are two other famous examples of athletes who have registered their signature poses as trademarks. Unfortunately for the Dutch, Memphis Depay's two-finger "ear" pose didn't make it into the register.

EU Trademark No. 018025774 – pose of Kylian Mbappé

US Trademark No. 97552042 – pose of Usain Bolt

THAT'S WHY CHIEVER

The Chiever Newsletter obviously doesn't tell you much about what Chiever does and how we work. We prefer to talk about our profession rather than about ourselves. But we do like to offer a few words below.

Chiever is an international trademark firm that offers companies advice on the legal protection of trademarks and designs. And we don't just do this in the Netherlands or Europe but worldwide. We conduct availability searches, we advise on risks and we register and protect our clients' trademarks. You might, of course, say that we are not the only agency doing that. So why choose Chiever?

PRACTICAL, CONCISE ADVICE

We are creative and offer unambiguous, compact, and practical advice that always includes a clear proposal for the next step.

ALWAYS A FAIR PRICE

Our rate: often as a fixed fee but sometimes on an hourly basis and always clearly quoted. We don't charge for simple phone calls to ask a short question.

PERSONAL AND SERVICE-ORIENTED

'Big enough to cope, small enough to care': we believe in a personal approach, short lines of communication, and a focus on speed and service.

SPECIALIST IN CONFLICT SOLUTION

We are resourceful and creative when solving trademark conflicts. If possible, we first opt for the road of mediation but, if necessary, we will start opposition proceedings. We invest heavily in this and with good results.

PASSION FOR WHAT WE DO

And last but not least: our team is a group of committed people who all share a passion for what they do and offer a very pleasant collaboration.

CHIEVER
BRAND PROTECTION

Partners
Volkert Teding van Berkhout
Bas Kist
Maria-Gemma Huijnen
Klaas Beks
Eline Heijboer

Advisors
Denys Bertels
Olivia Colbeth
Nynke Ettes
Valentino Meulman
Kayin Pang
Floor Stijns

Trademark Assistants
Marion de Bruijn
Kyra Buckley
Maria Gómez van Gerder
Maxime van Goozen
Fay Ierschot
Judith Irion
Iris Kamkes
Mark Logtenberg
Marijntje Sitters
Mirjam Steeman

Intern organisation
Emilie Bijloos
Clementine Doodeman
Jan Jonckheer
Chiel Jongkoen
Milan Littooy
Simone Timmer

Chiever B.V. 2Amsterdam (3rd floor) | Eduard van Beinumstraat 10
1077 CZ Amsterdam | The Netherlands | **T** +31 20 - 820 40 00 |
E info@chiever.com | **www.chiever.com**