



The EU bans effective medicinal mushrooms — for the benefit of Big Pharma

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A critique of the Novel Food Regulation, which sacrifices ancient healing knowledge to bureaucratic slash-and-burn tactics. It is being used to ban effective remedies against cancer and other diseases.

It sounds like a bad joke: A mushroom used for centuries in Traditional Chinese Medicine, whose immunomodulating and antitumor properties are documented in hundreds of scientific studies—this mushroom is suddenly considered "novel." **Novel food.** As if the EU bureaucrats had never heard of it. As if *Coriolus versicolor*, turkey tail mushroom, had just fallen from the sky.

One of the suppliers of medicinal mushrooms sums it up perfectly on his website. It states simply and bluntly:

"Since July 1st, we are no longer allowed to sell Coriolus medicinal mushrooms for human consumption due to a reclassification under the Novel Food Regulation."

The justification from the Brussels bureaucrats? The mushroom was not consumed "to any significant extent" in the EU before the cut-off date of May 15, 1997. The fact that it has been used as a medicinal remedy in Asia for millennia is of no interest. The fact that the **Joint Expert Commission of the BVL (Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety) and the BfArM (Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices)** already recognized the pharmacological efficacy of these mushrooms in its 2015 [statement No. 01/2014](#)—and therefore wanted to classify them as medicinal products—is ignored. The mushroom is *too potent* to be considered a harmless foodstuff. Therefore, it is banned.

Welcome to the EU of 2026.

What is "novel" about a medicinal mushroom that is thousands of years old?

Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

The **Novel Food Regulation (EU) 2015/2283** defines a novel food in Article 3 as one that was not used to a significant degree for human consumption in the EU before **15 May 1997** – the date of entry into force of the first Novel Food Regulation (EC) No 258/97. The decisive factor is its **consumption as food**, not its medicinal or traditional use.

And here lies the audacity of the regulation:

Medicinal mushrooms were never eaten as food in Europe — because they were considered medicine. So now they are neither one nor the other.

Europeans didn't just fry up Coriolus, Reishi, Cordyceps & Co. like mushrooms, but used them therapeutically. According to the logic of the regulation, this doesn't make them traditional medicines that enjoy grandfathered rights—but rather "novel foods" that must undergo a complex, six-figure approval process.

The **burden of proof** lies with the food business operator. If they cannot find evidence of "significant consumption" before 1997 in any EU country—which is by definition impossible for a mushroom that *was used not* as an edible mushroom but as a medicinal remedy—then the product is **prohibited**.

The Bavarian Administrative Court of Appeal provided legal confirmation in its [decision of February 23, 2026 \(Case No. 20 ZB 25.178\)](#). The court stated unequivocally:

"The fact that the mushroom may have been considered by the authorities of a Member State [...] as not novel and that, on this basis, official authorization for its marketing as a food supplement may have been granted in individual cases, does not change its novel food status as long as the food business operator cannot provide proof of a history of consumption as a food before 15 May 1997."

This is a classic case of circular reasoning: What hasn't been eaten as food can't be approved as food—unless someone pays millions for the approval process. That's **precisely what the pharmaceutical industry wants**. Small suppliers of natural products are being sued out of the

market, and the door is wide open for patentable, isolated active ingredients. These, moreover, usually fall far short of the effectiveness of these natural remedies.

The **Munich Administrative Court** had already set the same precedent in [its judgment of September 11, 2024 \(M 26b K 22.1131\)](#): Coriolus is a novel product, period. Whether the product is safe is irrelevant. Safety must *be proven in the approval process* —for a product that has been taken millions of times for centuries. **This is absurd.**

Big Pharma's mission to the EU: The Novel Food Regulation as a market cleansing machine

One must understand the interests involved:

An **application for authorization under Article 10 of the Novel Food Regulation** costs several hundred thousand euros—toxicological studies, safety dossiers, application fees. A medium-sized mushroom dealer from Germany can't afford that. Roche, Pfizer, and Novartis, on the other hand, can. But they have no interest in natural products that can't be patented.

What Big Pharma *is very* interested in, **however**, are **isolated active ingredients from medicinal mushrooms, which can be patented and brought to market as "innovative medicines" at 100 times the price.**

The **Coriolus active ingredient polysaccharide K (PSK, Krestin)** has been approved as a prescription cancer drug in Japan since the 1970s. In combination with chemotherapy, PSK has been shown to improve survival rates in stomach, colon, and lung cancer. In China, **polysaccharide peptide (PSP)** from Coriolus is a standard treatment.

In the EU? **Forbidden.** Because the fungus from which the stuff is extracted is supposedly "novel".

The irony is breathtaking: The pharmaceutical industry blocks access to the natural product while simultaneously researching isolated active ingredients to market them as patented drugs. The Novel Food Regulation is the perfect **regulatory gatekeeper**, keeping out the unwelcome competition from nature.

The EU Commission refers to its [Novel Food Status Catalogue](#) — and admits itself:

„It is a non-exhaustive list and serves as orientation on whether a product will need an authorisation under the Novel Food Regulation.“

("This is a non-exhaustive list intended as a guide to help determine whether a product requires authorization under the Novel Food Regulation.")

A **non-exhaustive, non-binding list** —which in practice is nevertheless used as a trump card in court. A bureaucratic monster that eludes any democratic control.

Which medicinal mushrooms are still subject to the novel food ban?

The list of affected fungi reads like a **who's who of mycotherapy** . According to the [consumer advice center](#) and the EU Novel Food Catalogue, the following fungi are classified as novel or have their marketability severely restricted:

Classified directly as a novel food (prohibited without authorization):

- **Coriolus versicolor** (Turkey Tail) — completely prohibited, in any form.
- **Hericium erinaceus** (Lion's Mane) — the dried powder of the fruiting body is considered novel
- **Cordyceps militaris** (Pupil's Club) — classified as novel

Grey area / partially restricted:

- **Cordyceps sinensis** (Chinese caterpillar fungus) — is considered non-novel in food supplements, but any use in other foods (e.g., functional foods, teas) requires authorization.
- **Ganoderma lucidum** (Reishi, Ganoderma lucidum) — is officially considered not novel, but is subject to national restrictions and is under constant observation.

What's allowed today may be banned tomorrow. The Novel Food Catalogue is **constantly updated** —without parliamentary oversight, without public debate. A panel of bureaucrats decides what you can and can't ingest.

The **Joint Expert Commission of the German Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) and the Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices (BfArM)** explicitly stated in its opinion 01/2014 that these mushrooms *"are unsuitable for consumption due to their taste, consistency, or other properties and have never been considered food in Germany."* Precisely for this reason, they were classified as medicinal products. The novel food classification reverses this logic: because they were never food, they are now prohibited food. **Kafkaesque in the EU Official Journal.**

The scientific evidence

The fact that the EU is banning these mushrooms, despite the overwhelming evidence, makes the scandal complete. A TKP article outlines just how extensive the research on *Coriolus versicolor* actually is—and how systematically this knowledge is ignored by regulatory authorities. It cites the relevant clinical studies and meta-analyses that confirm what has long been standard medical practice in Asia: ***Coriolus versicolor* helps fight cancer.**

In detail:

- **Coriolus versicolor (PSK/PSP):** Approved in Japan for over 40 years as a prescription cancer immunotherapy. Meta-analyses show a significant improvement in 5-year survival rates for various cancers when combined with standard therapy. Mayer's tkp.at article details these studies and makes it clear that this is not some exotic niche knowledge, but **mainstream oncology—just not in the West.**

- **Hericium erinaceus (Lion's Mane):** Contains erinacines and hericenones, which have been shown to stimulate nerve growth factor (NGF) production in the brain. Promising studies on cognitive decline, dementia, and peripheral neuropathy.
- **Cordyceps militaris:** Cordycepin, the main active ingredient, shows antitumor, anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory effects in preclinical studies.

Incidentally, Coriolus has proven effective as a complement to Huaier or Trametes in eliminating vaccine spikes from the body. One more reason to ban it.

The EU argues that it's about **consumer protection**. They want to ensure that no dangerous products enter the market. In reality, it's paternalistic towards consumers, who know more than the bureaucrats who make the decisions.

A safe, regulated market with transparent quality standards would be possible. But that's not what they want. They want a **total ban approach** that leaves the field to the large corporations.

Incidentally, corporatism refers precisely to this fusion of state power and corporate power. Benito Mussolini suggested it could just as easily be called fascism.

The Legal Situation: Intent or Incompetence?

Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 has a fundamental design flaw—or a fundamental design intent, depending on how cynical one wishes to be:

Article 3(2)(a)(iv) contains an exception for plants with a "history of use as safe food". This exception does not apply to mushrooms.

Mushrooms are explicitly listed as a separate category in Article 3(2)(a)(ii) — without the protection afforded to traditional uses. This means that even if a medicinal mushroom has been used safely in Asia for 2,000 years, this counts for absolutely nothing in the EU. While the simplified notification process under Article 14 for third-country traditions theoretically applies, the hurdles are so high that hardly any small business can overcome them.

The **Bavarian Administrative Court of Appeal (VGH München)** confirmed precisely this legal interpretation in February 2026: *“Furthermore, the safety for human consumption of products made from and containing Coriolus versicolor cannot be assumed simply because they have been used by consumers in the European Union (as medicinal products [...]) for many years.”*

Decades of actual drug use, or corresponding studies, are therefore not recognized as proof of safety. Instead, a multi-million-euro approval process is supposed to prove what practical experience has already demonstrated. This is not consumer protection—it's **market segmentation**.

Cui bono? Who benefits from the ban?

The answer is as simple as it is unappetizing:

1. **For the pharmaceutical industry:** It eliminates troublesome natural competition and secures the exclusive marketing of isolated, patentable active ingredients.
2. **To the regulatory authorities and testing institutes:** Novel food approval is a billion-dollar business for consulting firms, laboratories, and law firms. A single application for approval feeds an entire industry.
3. **To the EU authorities themselves:** Every regulation that shifts powers to Brussels strengthens the bureaucracy and justifies budgets.

The losers are clear: **patients who rely on effective natural remedies; small and medium-sized businesses; freedom of therapy; and common sense.**

Outlook: What's next

The novel food machine is running at full speed. The catalog is constantly being expanded. What is still a gray area today will be explicitly banned tomorrow. The strategy is a **creeping expropriation of natural remedies**.

- First, the fungi are classified as "novel".
- Then the retailers will be inundated with orders.
- Then the products disappear from the legal market.
- Then come the pharmaceutical companies with their patented extracts.

It's never about consumer protection. It's about **control over the healthcare market**. And you don't give that up voluntarily.

Paracelsus knew: “*All things are poison, and nothing is without poison; the dose alone makes a thing not a poison.*” The EU bureaucrats have apparently rewritten this sentence: “*All things are forbidden, and nothing is without prohibition; lobbying alone makes a thing not a prohibition.*”