GLOBAL LUNG CANCER COALITION

Greece briefing:
Symptom awareness, attitudes to lung cancer and views on screening
Findings from a global survey

Overview

The Global Lung Cancer Coalition (GLCC) is a partnership of 44 patient organisations across 32 nations / territories, working to improve lung cancer awareness, reduce stigma and improve outcomes.

The GLCC Patient Charter asserts that all people with lung cancer have the right to dignity, respect, quality care, informed decision making, privacy and freedom from blame and stigma.

Public perceptions can significantly affect these rights. Stigma and low symptom awareness may delay help-seeking and diagnosis, making it important to understand attitudes towards lung cancer.

In 2026, the GLCC conducted a global study to explore public attitudes to lung cancer, awareness of symptoms and views on screening. The research builds on studies undertaken in 2010, 2013, 2017 and 2023.

The GLCC is calling on governments and health systems across the world to:

- Increase recognition of lung cancer symptoms through targeted public awareness campaigns
- Challenge stigma and misconceptions through evidence-based awareness initiatives
- Implement national lung cancer screening programmes to support earlier detection and treatment
- Ensure equitable access to screening, diagnosis and care for all people affected by lung cancer

This briefing sets out the key findings from Greece in 2026 and how they compare with other countries included in the survey. The results highlight three key themes:

- **Awareness of lung cancer symptoms** remains relatively low, with Greece ranking among the countries with the highest proportions of people unable to identify any symptoms of lung cancer.
- **Levels of stigma** towards people with lung cancer remain concerningly high, with more than four in ten respondents reporting less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for those with other types of cancer.
- **Public support for lung cancer screening** is exceptionally high, with Greece recording one of the highest levels of support in the survey despite not yet having a national screening programme.

Key findings: Greece

Symptom recognition

- Almost **four in ten** people responding to the survey (**38.4%**) said they did not know any symptoms of lung cancer, broadly unchanged from **37.8%** in **2023**.
- Men were more likely than women to report not knowing any symptoms (**43% vs. 34.8%**).
- People **aged 18-24** were most likely to report not knowing any symptoms (**52.1%**), compared with **32.0%** of people **aged 55 and over**.
- People who currently smoke or have smoked were less likely to report not knowing any symptoms than people who have never smoked (**36.6% vs 46.6%**).

Attitudes towards lung cancer

- Almost half of people (**44.1%**) said they had less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for people with other types of cancer, up from **40.5%** in **2023** and above the **2026 global average** of **39.2%.**
- Men were more likely than women to report less sympathy towards people with lung cancer (**51.1% vs. 38.5%**).
- Reported stigma was highest among people **aged 18-24** (**61.3%**) and lowest among those **aged 55 and over** (**35.9%**).
- People who currently smoke or have smoked were more likely than those who have never smoked to report less sympathy towards people with lung cancer (**44.7% vs 40.4%**).

Views on lung cancer screening

- **Nine in ten** people (**90.9%**) agreed there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early.
- Women and men reported similarly high levels of support (**90.9% vs. 91%**).
- Support was high across all age groups, ranging from **83.2%** among people **aged 18-24 year olds** to **94.3%** among those **aged 45-54**.
- People who currently smoke or have smoked were more likely to support a national lung cancer screening programme than those who have never smoked (**92.3% vs 83.2%**).

Methodology

The GLCC commissioned the market research agency Censuswide to undertake an online survey of adults across 32 countries between 17 March 2026 – 24 March 2026. The survey samples included 1,000 adults from Greece and data was weighted using age, gender and region to produce a representative sample in each country. Respondents were asked the following questions:

- Q1. There are many warning signs and symptoms of lung cancer. Please list as many symptoms of lung cancer as you can think of [a tick box was provided for 'Don't know'].
- Q2. Lung cancer is mainly caused by smoking cigarettes and other tobacco products. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for other types of cancer.
- Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: There should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early.

Further analysis

Symptom recognition

Raising awareness of lung cancer symptoms is important, as recognising potential symptoms and seeking medical advice can support earlier diagnosis and better outcomes.

In Greece, 38.4% of people said they did not know any symptoms of lung cancer, broadly unchanged from 37.8% in 2023. This is slightly above the global average and represents the seventh-highest proportion of respondents unable to identify any symptoms among countries included in the survey.

Among respondents who could identify symptoms, the most commonly recognised were persistent cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, coughing up blood, and chest pain. Respondents also identified fatigue, weight loss, and phlegm or mucus production, while hoarseness, wheezing and recurrent respiratory infections were less commonly recognised. Several other recognised symptoms of lung cancer appeared only infrequently in responses, including loss of appetite, shoulder pain, clubbing of the fingers and difficulty swallowing.

The findings suggest that awareness in Greece remains concentrated around a number of commonly recognised warning signs, while awareness of the broader range of potential lung cancer symptoms is more limited. Improving public understanding of these symptoms could help more people recognise when they may need to seek medical advice.

Chart 1. Percentage of respondents who indicated they did not know any symptoms, by country

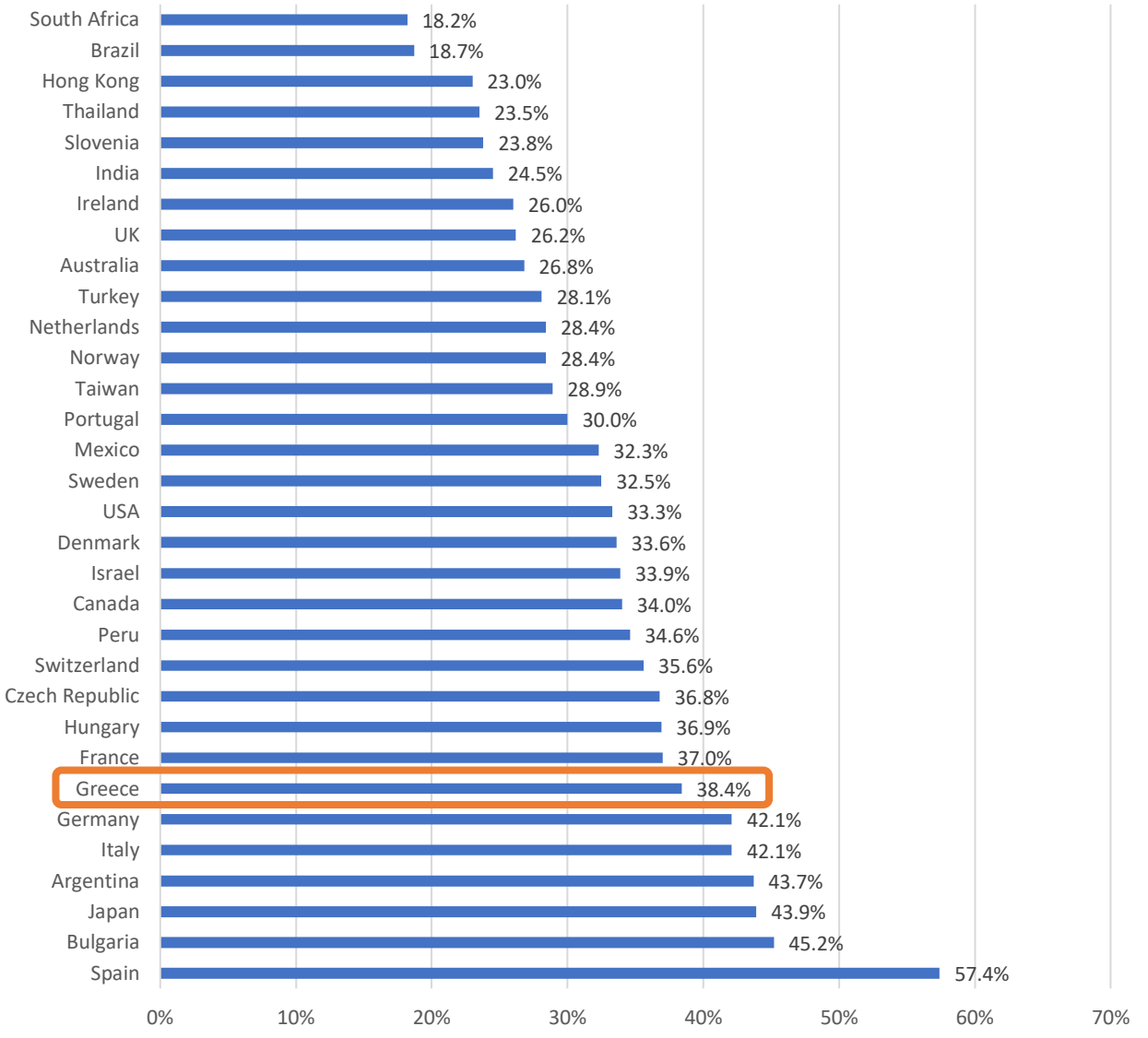


Chart 2. Percentage of respondents in the Greece who indicated they did not know any symptoms, by age

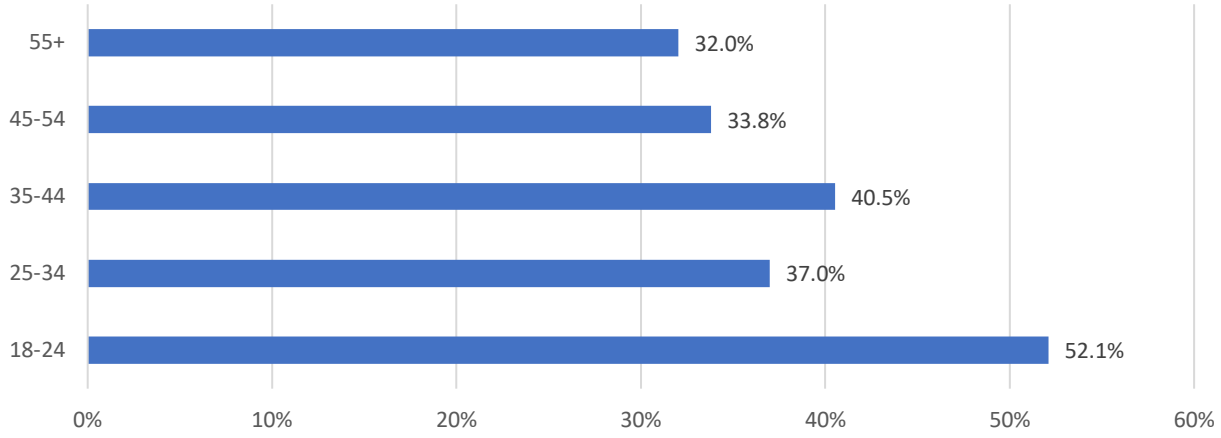
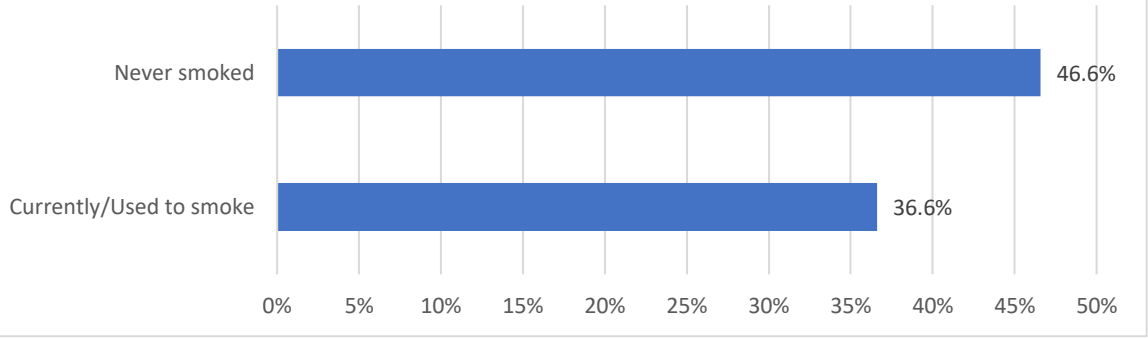


Chart 3. Percentage of respondents in Greece who indicated they did not know any symptoms of smoking, by status



Attitudes towards lung cancer

Around 60-70% of lung cancer cases are linked to smoking, which can contribute to stigma and blame associated with the disease.[1] This is concerning because lung cancer can affect people regardless of smoking history, while stigma and misconceptions may discourage some individuals from seeking medical advice when symptoms first appear. The GLCC believes that everyone living with lung cancer deserves access to high-quality treatment and care, regardless of the cause of their cancer.

In Greece, 44.1% of respondents said they had less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for people with other types of cancer, up from 40.5% in 2023. This is above the 2026 global average of 39.2% and places Greece among the countries with higher levels of reported stigma in the survey, with only eight countries recording a higher proportion of respondents expressing this view. These findings highlight the importance of continued efforts to improve understanding of lung cancer and challenge blame and stigma associated with the disease.

[1] World Health Organization (2026) *Lung cancer*. Available at: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/lung-cancer (Accessed: 11 August 2026)

Chart 4. Percentage of respondents who agree with the statement they have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for other types of cancer, by country

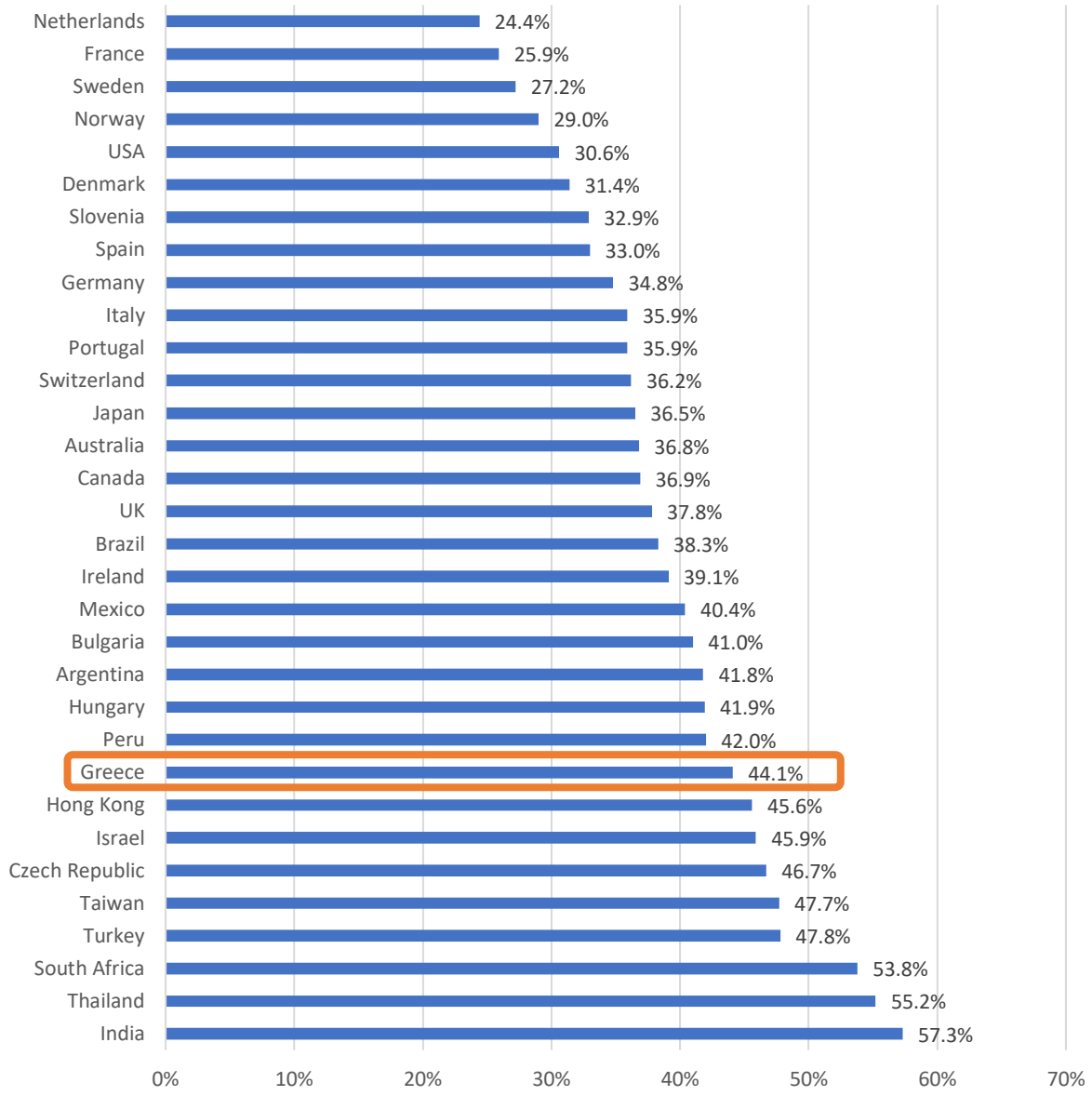


Chart 5. Percentage of respondents in Greece who agree with the statement they have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for other types of cancer, by age

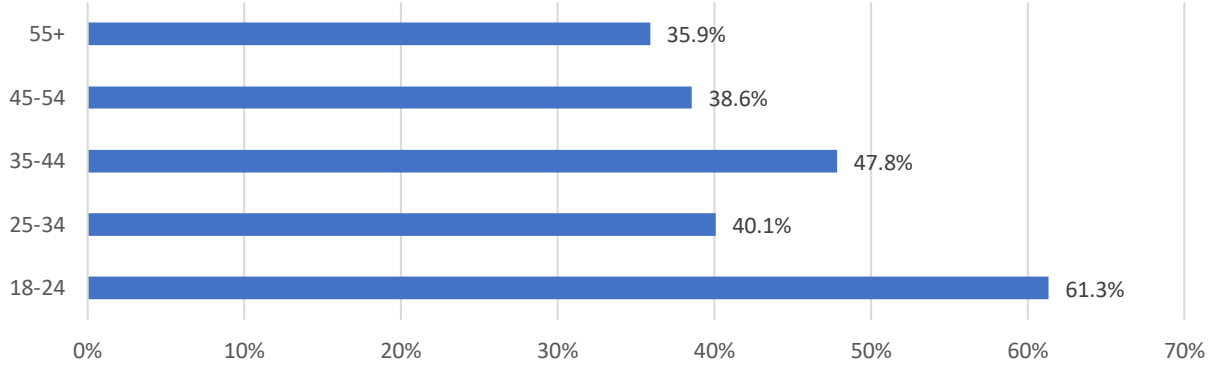
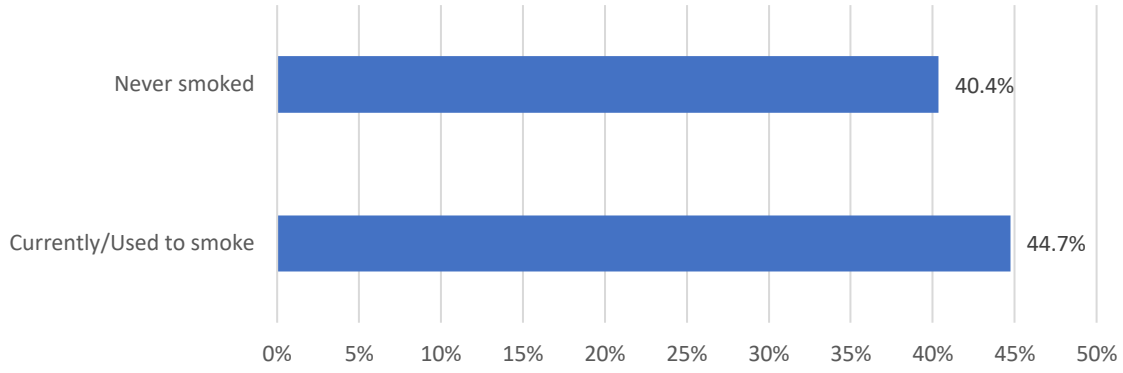


Chart 6. Percentage of respondents in Greece who agree with the statement they have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for other types of cancer, by smoking status



Views on lung cancer screening

A national lung cancer screening programme is a key measure to reduce the substantial burden that lung cancer places on individuals, families and healthcare systems. Lung cancer screening using low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) can save lives by detecting the disease at an earlier, more treatable stage. A large clinical trial found that LDCT screening reduced lung cancer mortality by 24% in men and 33% in women after 10 years of follow-up compared with no screening.[2]

Support for lung cancer screening was very strong in Greece, with 90.9% of respondents agreeing that there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early. This was broadly unchanged from 91.3% in 2023 and represents the fifth-highest level of support among countries included in the survey.

Greece remains among the European countries with the highest smoking prevalence and currently lacks a national lung cancer screening programme.[3] However, efforts are underway to build the evidence base for implementation. Through the FairLife L.C.C. Healthy Lungs initiative, a pilot LDCT lung cancer screening programme has been delivered in four Greek cities, Thessaloniki, Larissa, Alexandroupoli and Patras, in collaboration with university pulmonary clinics.

[2] de Koning, H.J., van der Aalst, C.M., de Jong, P.A. *et al.* (2020) 'Reduced Lung-Cancer Mortality with Volume CT Screening in a Randomized Trial', *New England Journal of Medicine*, 382(6), pp. 503-513. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa1911793

[3] Lampaki S, Gourgoulianis K, Tzouvelekis A, et al. 356P Implementing low-dose CT lung cancer screening in Greece: Results from a nationwide multicentre pilot programme. ESMO Open, 11. Available at: https://www.esmoopen.com/article/S2059-7029(26)00611-3/fulltext

Given the evidence supporting lung cancer screening and the strong public support identified in this survey, the GLCC calls on policymakers to build towards the implementation of a national lung cancer screening programme to support earlier diagnosis and improve outcomes for people at risk of lung cancer.

Chart 7. Percentage of respondents who agree there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early, by country

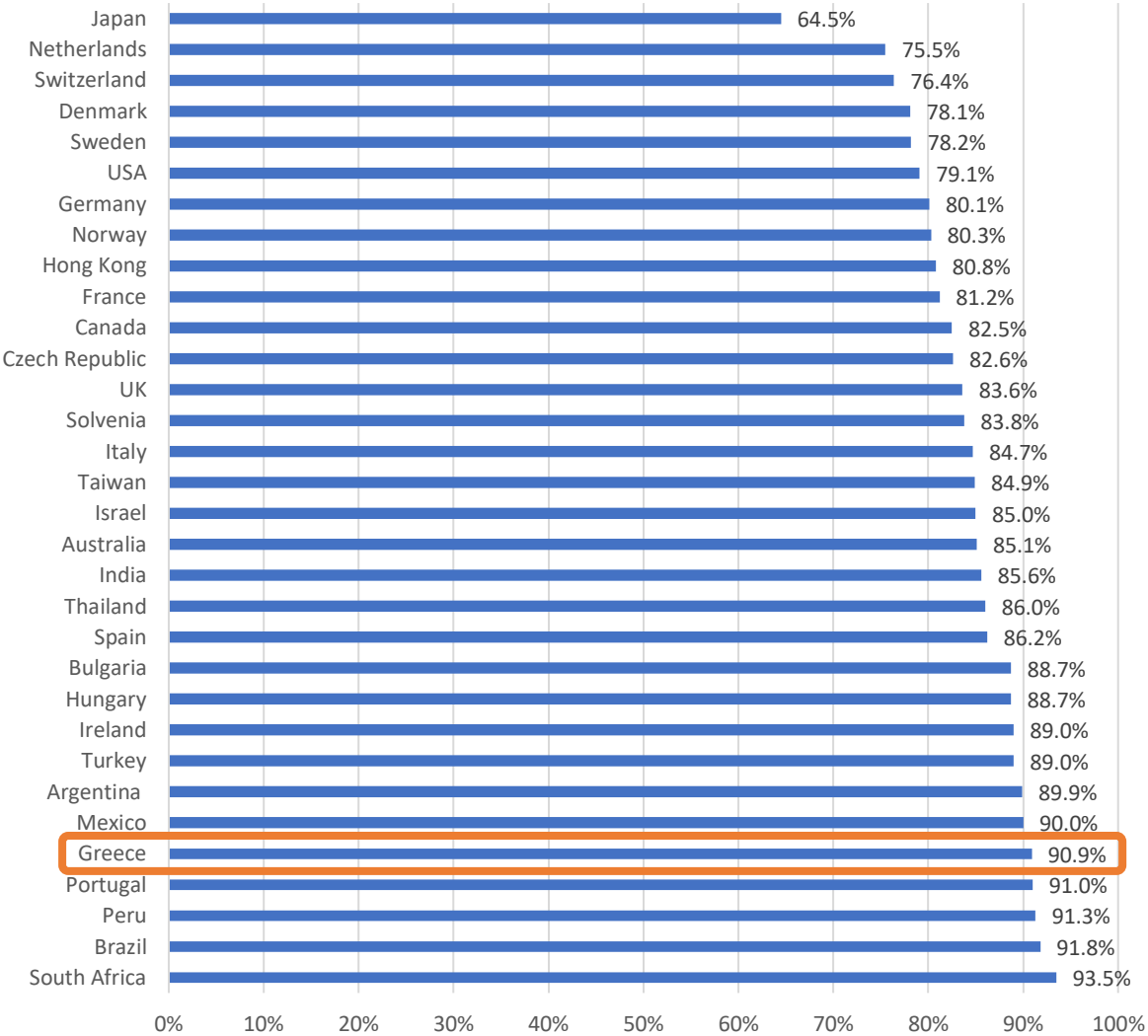


Chart 8. Percentage of respondents in Greece who agree there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early, by age

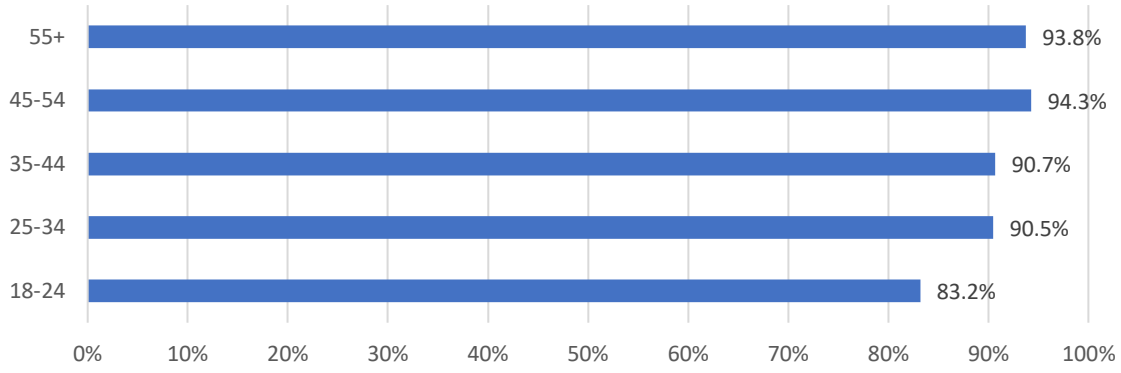
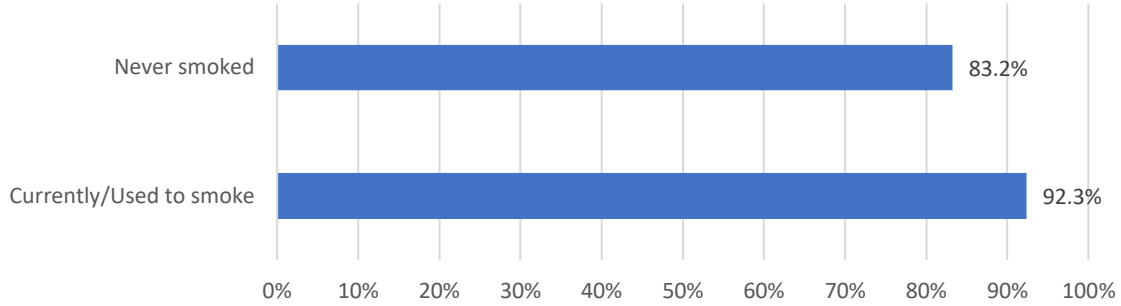


Chart 9. Percentage of respondents in Greece who agree there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early, by smoking status



Conclusion

The 2026 findings highlight several important challenges for Greece. Almost four in ten respondents (38.4%) were unable to identify a single symptom of lung cancer, placing Greece among the countries with lower levels of symptom awareness in the survey. While respondents were generally familiar with the most common warning signs, awareness of a broader range of symptoms remained limited.

The findings also point to persistent stigma surrounding lung cancer. More than four in ten people (44.1%) reported having less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for those with other types of cancer, a figure that is higher than the global average and has increased since 2023. This highlights the need for continued efforts to challenge misconceptions and reduce blame associated with the disease.

At the same time, public support for lung cancer screening is very strong, with 90.9% of respondents backing the introduction of a national screening programme. As Greece does not currently have a national programme, these findings demonstrate strong public backing for efforts to build on existing pilot initiatives and work towards wider implementation.

Together, the findings highlight the importance of improving symptom awareness, challenging stigma and advancing earlier diagnosis to improve outcomes for people affected by lung cancer in Greece.

More information

Established in 2001, the GLCC comprises 44 non-government patient organisations from 32 nations / territories: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France,

Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, UK and USA.

The GLCC promotes global understanding of lung cancer and the right of patients to effective early detection, better treatment and supportive care. By serving as the international voice of lung cancer patients, the GLCC is committed to improving disease outcomes for all.

For more information about this study and the work of the GLCC please visit: www.lungcancercoalition.org or email our secretariat at: glcc@roycastle.org.