



# Press Release

## As Pyeongchang 2018 Gets Underway, Two in Three Canadians (64%) Plan to Tune in and Watch the Winter Olympics

### Canada Takes the Gold in Hockey-Watching

**Toronto, Ontario, February 12, 2018** — The Winter Olympics are officially underway in Pyeongchang, South Korea, and Canadians from coast to coast to coast are gearing up to cheer on our athletes. A majority of Canadians — two in three (64%) — plan to watch some part of the 2018 Winter Olympics this year, whether on TV (47%), the internet (19%), a mobile device (5%), or a tablet (4%), and three in ten (31%) willingly describe themselves as fanatics who follow the Olympics as much as they can for the sports they're interested. Yet while Canada loves to think of itself as a winter sports country, a new Ipsos survey of some 20,574 residents of 27 countries around the world suggests other countries might just be even more excited about the Olympics than we are.

### Canadians Love the Games, but interest Strongest in India

Just over half (53%) of Canadians say they're interested in the 2018 Winter Olympic Games (16% very / 37% somewhat), leaving nearly half (47%) who say they're not interested (25% not at all / 22% not very). This puts Canada on par with the United States, where 55% of Americans say they're interested in the Games, but well behind interest in host country South Korea (71%). Interest in the Games is strongest in India (73%) and weakest in Japan (32%).

Canadian men (58%) are more likely than women (49%) to express interest in this year's Winter Olympics. At the regional level, interest is strongest in Quebec (59%), followed by BC (55%) and the Prairies (55%), Alberta (54%) and Atlantic Canada (47%).

The next two weeks will see Pyeongchang play host to more than a hundred sporting events, and with the time difference, Canadians who want to tune in will be faced with some unique challenges when it comes to scheduling. This may be why 13% of Canadians agree (4% strongly / 9% somewhat) that they will miss work to watch the Olympics this year — below the 17% who plan to skip work in the United States and the 19% who plan on doing so in South Korea. Interestingly, countries with the highest proportion of citizens who plan to miss work to watch the Olympics are not typically associated with winter sports: residents of Turkey (54%), India (53%), Saudi Arabia (35%), China (35%) and Brazil (34%) are all significantly more likely than Canadians to plan on taking time off work.

Taking time off work to watch the Olympics might not be feasible for everyone, but Canada still has a healthy level of fanaticism when it comes to Olympic sports. Three in ten (31%) see themselves as 'absolute fanatics' when the Olympics take place (9% strongly / 22% somewhat), following it as much as they can for the sports that interest them. People self-identify with this description strongest in Quebec, home to current Olympic hopefuls Marie-Philip Poulin, Charles Hamelin, Mikael Kingsbury and the Dufour-Lapointe sisters. Nearly four in ten Quebecers (37%) describe themselves as Olympic fanatics, followed by residents of Ontario (34%), the Prairies (30%), Alberta (26%), BC (23%), and Atlantic Canada (22%).

Other countries are just as excited to cheer on their athletes, and in some cases, possibly even more. India tops the list for enthusiasm, with a staggering two in three (66%) who say they're Olympic fanatics, followed by Saudi Arabia (59%) and China (58%). One in three Americans (33%) say they're fanatical about the Olympics, placing them closer to Canada.

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### United by Hockey

When it comes to what sport Canadians plan to watch at the Winter Olympics, there's no real mystery: hockey is the one thing we can all agree on. Among Canadians who are at least somewhat interested in the 2018 Winter Olympics, nearly half (46%) say ice hockey is the sport they will follow most closely during the Games, making it the most watched Olympic sport in this country, and making Canada more likely than any of the 26 other countries surveyed to follow it closely – well ahead of hockey rivals Sweden (32%), Russia (29%), and the United States (16%).

Only figure skating comes anywhere close to hockey, with two in ten Canadians (19%) saying they plan to follow closely as Tessa Virtue, Scott Moir and others compete for Olympic gold. Other sports are less likely to be seen as the main attraction, with far fewer saying they plan to follow any of the following most closely over the next two weeks:

- Snowboarding: 6%
- Curling: 5%
- Ski jumping: 4%
- Speed skating: 4%
- Freestyle skiing: 3%
- Alpine skiing: 2%
- Bobsleigh: 2%
- Luge: 2%
- Short track speed skating: 2%
- Biathlon: 1%
- Cross country skiing: 1%
- Nordic combined: 1%
- Some other sport: 3%

### Terrorism a Real Concern

The Games are unfolding amid a tense security climate, and people around the world are taking notice. In Canada, half (51%) agree (14% strongly / 37% somewhat) they're worried that a terrorist attack will happen during the Olympic Games. Half of Canadians (49%) are also worried that North Korea will do something provocative during the Games.

Worry appears to increase in line with age: when it comes to terrorist attacks, 42% of Canadians aged 18-34 are worried, compared to 54% of those 35-49, and 56% of those 50-64. The same trend is observed with worry about North Korea, which rises from 40% among those 18-34, to 50% of those 35-49, and 56% of those 50-64.

These concerns are on par with those felt around the world, with half of respondents in the 27 countries surveyed indicating that they too are worried about the prospect of a terrorist attack (51%) or of North Korea doing something provocative (50%). In South Korea itself, 48% are worried about terrorism during the Games, and 52% are worried about what North Korea might do.

### Views Differ on Corporate Sponsorship, Nationalism

An unavoidable part of the modern Olympic viewing experience is the heavy-rotation of advertising from corporate sponsors. These advertisements often play up the patriotic fervour of rooting for Canada and Canadian athletes on the world stage. It's proven a

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winning formula in the past, but the survey finds that not everyone is a fan. When it comes to sponsorship, a majority of Canadians (62%) agree (19% strongly / 43% somewhat) that 'corporate sponsorship has made the Olympics too corporatized.' This puts Canada just above the global average of 60% who agree the Olympics are too corporatized. In the United States, 58% agree.

On nationalism, Canadians are more at ease: six in ten (60%) disagree (19% strongly / 41% somewhat) that 'there is too much nationalism on display during the Olympics,' ahead of 53% globally who feel the same way. Conversely, four in ten (40%) Canadians think (10% strongly / 30% somewhat) that there is in fact too much nationalism on display during the Olympics, below the global average of 48% and slightly higher than the 38% of Americans who agree.

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### About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Global Advisor survey conducted between December 22, 2017 and January 5, 2018 among a sample of 20,574 adults, including 999 Canadians. The survey was conducted in 27 countries around the world, via the Ipsos Online Panel system in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and the United States. Where results do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of don't knows or not stated responses. Data are weighted to match the profile of the population. The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval, with a poll of 999 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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