Post-Debate Summary:
English-Language Leaders' Debate

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Toronto, ON -- The results of an near instantaneous Ipsos Reid/CanWest News Service poll, conducting during Thursday night's English-language leaders' debate among English-speaking voters who were watching the debate, has revealed:

The Winner...

Conservative Leader Stephen Harper emerges as the winner heading into the conclusion of Thursday's English-language debate, with 31% of Canadian voters who responded to the survey while viewing the English-language debate saying the Prime Minister was poised to win (down 9 points from the 40% who thought he would win). This is compared 25% who feel that NDP Leader Jack Layton was set to win (up 5 points), placing him in a close second-place finish. Interestingly, more English-speaking Canadians who viewed the debate thought that Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (17%, up 13 points) was winning the debate than thought Liberal Leader Stephane Dion was winning (15%, up 4 points). Just 2% of Anglophones thought that Gilles Duceppe would come out on top (up 1 point). One in ten (10%) viewers didn't know who was winning the debate.

Being Prime Ministerial…

In stark contrast to the French-language debate, nearly one half (47%) of English-debate viewers thought that Stephen Harper sounded and acted most Prime Ministerial, down 6 points from the 53% who thought, prior to the debate, that he most sounded and acted in this manner. Nearly one quarter (24%, down 2 points) thought that Jack Layton was most Prime Ministerial, while 16% thought Dion best fit this role (up 6 points). Just 7% thought May was most Prime Ministerial (up 5 points), and 3% believe Duceppe sounded and acted in this manner (up 1 point).

The Best Ideas and Policies…

According to 31% (down 6 points since pre-debate poll) of voters, Prime Minister Stephen Harper offered the best policies and ideas during the debate. Jack Layton (22%, down 3 points), Stephane Dion (21%, up 3 points), and Elizabeth May (20%, up 12 points) were closely clustered in second, third, and fourth place, respectively. Just 2% thought that Gilles Duceppe had the best ideas (up 1 point).

Likeability of the Leaders…

Jack Layton scored the best in terms of likeability with 31% of viewers (down 9 points) saying that he was the most likeable and the person they'd most like to go out for a beer or coffee with. In second-place was a tie between Stephen Harper (25%, up 2 points) and Elizabeth May (25%, up 5 points), while Stephane Dion (10%, up 2 points) and Gilles Duceppe (7%, up 3 points) trailed.

Impressions of the Leaders…

Subtracting worsened impressions from improved impressions, opinions of Elizabeth May improved (net +49) the most as a result of the debate, while Jack Layton (net +28) also fared

well. Stephane Dion (net +11) also had a solid debate, while Gilles Duceppe (+6) also came out ahead. The only party leader to have overall impressions worsen was Stephen Harper (net -10), despite the fact that more viewers thought he won the debate than another leader.

	Improved	Worsened
Stephen Harper	30%	40%
Stephane Dion	42%	31%
Jack Layton	49%	21%
Gilles Duceppe	30%	24%
Elizabeth May	65%	16%

Most Visually Attractive…

One in three (33%) who viewed the debate found Jack Layton to be the most visually attractive (down 2 points), followed by Stephen Harper (28%, down 1 point). Stephane Dion (13%, up 7 points), Gilles Duceppe (9%, up 2 points) and Elizabeth May (5%, down 2 points) didn't fare as well in this category.

Effect of Debate on Vote…

Overall, the effect of this debate on voters' intentions is mild. Nearly two in ten (15%) English-speaking Canadians who watched the debate say that they have changed their mind about who to vote for on October 14th as a result of viewing the debate.

Among those who changed their vote, 37% say they would now vote NDP, 26% say they would now Liberal, 25% say they would now vote Green, and 9% say they would now vote Conservative.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of CanWest News Service and Global Television prior to and during the English language leaders' debate on October 2, 2008. This survey of 2,512 English-speaking Canadian adults who watched the debate, was conducted via the Ipsos I-Say Online Panel, Ipsos Reid's national online panel. The sample was drawn from a pre-recruited panel of over 12,000 voters. Weighting then was employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian adult population according to the latest Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls because they are based on samples drawn from opt-in online panels, not on random samples that mirror the population within a statistical probability ratio. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error. However, an unweighted probability sample of this size, with a 100% response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 2.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire English-speaking adult population in Canada been polled.

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