

# The 'greenhouse effect'

Sun

Following the United States refusal to set a target for stabilising emissions of carbon dioxide – the main 'greenhouse gas', EC countries are calling for a regional pledge to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000

## 1. Sunlight

The earth's surface absorbs sunlight shining through the atmosphere

## 2. Radiated heat

The earth radiates solar energy as heat

## 3. Trapped radiation

The layer of 'greenhouse gases' – mostly carbon dioxide – acts like the glass in a greenhouse, reflecting much of it back into the atmosphere

Layer of 'greenhouse gases'

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European carbon dioxide emission targets

### Netherlands

Reduce to 1988/89 levels by 1995 with a further 3-5% reduction by 2000

### Denmark

20% reduction on 1988 levels by 2005

### Germany

25% reduction on 1987 levels by 2005

### Italy

Reduce to 1988 levels by 2000

### France

Reduce to 1990 levels by 2000

### United Kingdom

Reduce to 1990 levels by 2000