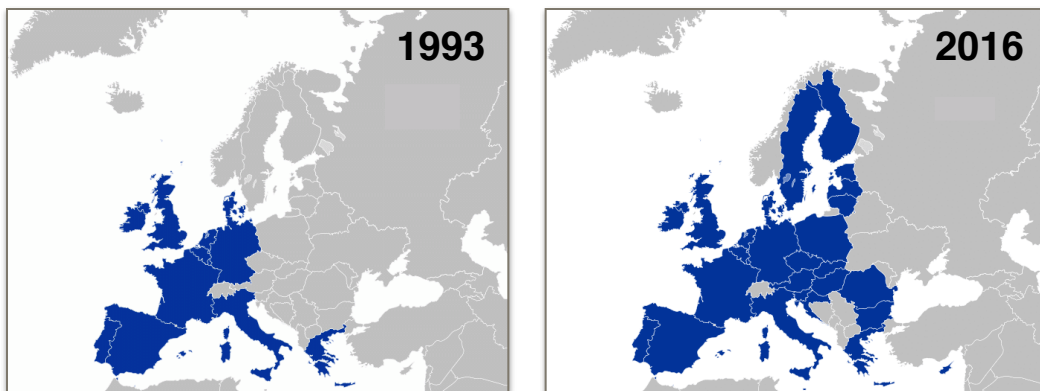## II. Supranationalism

A. The European Union (From 1993 to Today)

1. In 1993, a group of nations in Europe, including the largest and most important countries such as France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom, and various smaller ones, formed into the "European Union" (EU).
2. This was the culmination of a decades-long process of negotiating between them for the creation of a government that would in certain ways replace and cancel out their national governments.
3. Since the formation of the European Union in 1993, its membership has expanded from an original twelve members to 28 today.
4. In 2016, however, voters in Great Britain embraced the message of the "United Kingdom Independence Party" (UKIP) that the European Union had undermined their nation's independence and chose to withdraw from the European Union. If the process of withdrawal, which is long and formal, continues to fruition, it will represent the first *contraction* of the Union—and possibly its undoing altogether.
5. In 2017, French voters will also be challenged by the platform of a political party called the National Front party, led by Marine Le Pen, who similarly insists that France must withdraw from the EU.
6. What is at stake? What is the European Union exactly? And why are Europeans obviously split on whether or not continue with this experiment in government?

The European Union has expanded from 12 to 28 members since 1993.

B. Froms Nations to Supra*nation*alism

1. The key to understanding the European Union and anticipate its role in shaping the world we live in is to carefully unpack the concept "supranationalism" and observe its evolution through history. We'll start with an analysis of the concept. Then, over the course of the year, we will master the progression of events that have given rise to this new form of government.

2. The core concept of "supranationalism" is "nation." Often used as a synonym for "country," the word "nation" has a more technical meaning that is important understand. The Latin root word of "nation" is "*natio*," meaning "birth." Nations are countries whose people were almost all born there and feel a strong attachment to a culture that is uniquely their own (including food & drink, arts & crafts, religious beliefs, traditions and history) all relating to their common ancestry in the same location going back in some cases as far as prehistory.

3. From the concept "nation," one builds the concept "national"—describing things pertaining to nations; and then "national*ism*." An "ism" is an integrated set of ideas. (Examples are: Darwinism—the scientific ideas of Darwin with regard to evolution, Marxism—the ideas of Karl Marx with regard to government and economics; and Buddhism—a set of beliefs and rituals involving the teaching of the Buddha.) Nationalism is thus a set of ideas pertaining to the way of life of people within a nation.

4. European history has brought the people of the separate and distinct nations of Europe to the point of modifying the concept "nationalism" by adding the unusual prefix "*supra-*". Very few words in the English language (or any language) invoke this unique concept. Something "supra-hepatic" is anatomically above the liver. Something "supra-spinal" is above the spine, i.e. the brain. Outside of medicine and science, "supra" is very rarely used.

5. The key to use of "supra" in the word "supranationalism" is that "supra" is similar to "super," but very importantly different. *Supernationalism* would be an enhanced or extra powerful form of nationalism. *Supranationalism,* on the other hand, means nearly the opposite. It involves the cancelation of nationalism by placing something *over and above it*. Why would anyone invent such an idea? Why have Europeans felt it was necessary? And why are many of them now rejecting it? The answers will be part of the shape of the world we live in.

The goal of the European Union is to replace the national flags (and national sentiment that these flags represent with a single identity over and above them, symbolized by the European flag. The goal is to create a "*United States of Europe*" like the United States of America. Only Europe's parts are not states —they are *nations*.