What is a Union?

- What is a sovereign nation?
- What would a sovereign nation gain by being part of a union?
- What could a sovereign nation risk or lose by joining a union?
Conception of a Union

Stemmed from the belief that by “integrating” but not eliminating the individual nations -- a union between them could make the European nations a more powerful force.

A united Europe could become a force that would have  ---

• Greater land base
• Greater amount of money
• Greater number of people

The nations could collaborate so that they can work together for mutual prosperity. They no longer would compete with each other, but come together as a greater force to compete with other regional powers.
Why Unify?

- What if the “States” that make up the United States were separate?
- Could smaller European nations, like Greece, compete with the United States?

United States
- Land Area- 9,147,593 sq. km
- Population- 323,995,528
- Gross Domestic Product- 17.95 Trillion
- GDP per capita- 55,800

European Union
- Land Area- 4,324,782 sq. km
- Population- 515,052,778
- Gross Domestic Product- 16.7 Trillion
- GDP per capita- 37,800
Political Integration: Breaking Down Borders

The European Union (EU) is similar to a confederation, a political system where the central authority is limited and member states retain a great deal of autonomy.

Member nations retain sovereignty in most cases.

However, there are several supranational bodies which provide a democratic structure to

1. Negotiate trade agreements with non-members.
2. Abolish border checks and increase mobility.
3. Unify environmental and safety regulations.
4. Regulate agriculture to ensure EU self-sufficiency.
How does the EU Function?

**European Commission**: The executive branch, composed of one commissioner from each state.

**European Council**: The primary legislative body, composed of heads of state from each member nation, as well as the President of the European Commission.

**European Parliament**: Secondary legislative body, with direct elections and population proportional representation. Serves to balance the power of the council.

Other EU institutions include the European Court of Justice, European Central Bank, and the European Investment Bank.
Europe before the EU

How many major wars have occurred in Europe?

Over 500, since the 11th Century. England and France alone have fought with and against each other for almost 1000 years!

The creation of the EU is a remarkable feat for a region which had been dominated by wars and empires for centuries.

Hundred Years War
1337-1453

Napoleonic Wars
1803-1815

World War I
1914-1918

World War II
1939-1945
Even before World War II ended, national leaders began signing and negotiating treaties that tied their economies together. Over time, more and European nations began to sign economic treaties so as to:

- Create better social and economic cohesion in rebuilding Europe.
- Manage resources in a way that no nation could gain sole control of specific materials, such as coal and steel.
- Defend Western Europe from Soviet forces.
The Maastricht Treaty, signed in 1992 in Maastricht, Netherlands created the E.U as we know it today. The treaty created greater cooperation in:

- Security
- Foreign Policy
- Legal Justice
- Economics

The Maastricht Treaty also outlined the plan for a unified European currency, called the Euro.
How many nations belong the EU?

28

Austria (1995)
Belgium (1958)
Bulgaria (2007)
Croatia (2013)
Cyprus (2004)
Czech Republic (2004)
Denmark (1973)
Finland (1995)
France (1958)
Germany (1958)
Greece (1981)
Hungary (2004)
Ireland (1973)

Italy (1958)
Latvia (2004)
Lithuania (2004)
Luxembourg (1958)
Malta (2004)
Netherlands (1958)
Poland (2004)
Portugal (1986)
Romania (2007)
Slovakia (2004)
Slovenia (2004)
Spain (1986)
Sweden (1995)
United Kingdom (1973)*

*Expected to leave by Summer 2019
Benefits for EU Members

• Members may use a common currency that simplifies trade

• EU works to improve trade, education, farming, and industry among all of its members

• No tariffs (taxes on trade) among member nations

• EU citizens are allowed to move, work, and live within member state borders without having to obtain a visa
Ways in which members retain sovereignty?

Member nations may:
• Create it’s own laws.
• Elect it’s own leaders.
• Determine its form of government.
• Maintain it’s own military.

The EU members may cooperate on military matters, but the EU has no standing army nor military oversight. NATO has served this purpose since 1949.
21st century obstacles to EU Unity

Can you guess the obstacle based on the picture associated with it?

The Refugee Crisis

Sovereignty (Brexit)

Debtor Nations