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Guy Verhofstadt, ALDE Leader has sharply criticised the failure of the EU foreign ministers to find a common EU position on the Syria arms embargo after high level discussions in Brussels last night but welcomed the fact that the Free Syrian Army may finally get necessary arms to protect themselves if the peace process fails.

"Britain and France should be congratulated on taking the lead again in their efforts to help the civilian population in Syria, as they did in Libya. As the death toll continues to mount with UN figures stating over 94,000 dead, it is shameful the EU still lacks the courage to take common decisive action."

"This is about the threat of providing the Free Syrian Army, under the command of General Idriss, with the means to defend the civilian population against the brutal onslaught by the Assad regime on its own people."

"The longer we leave the Syrian opposition to fend for themselves or depend on support from Qatar and other Arab countries the less influence we can exert over the outcome and the greater the risk they will turn towards extremism. The repercussions for the Middle East will be devastating and our own security compromised."

"Decisions on supplying defensive weaponry to the opposition forces will now be left to the discretion of individual Member States, under strict conditions, from August 1st once it is clear whether the Geneva 2 peace talks make any progress. A more united EU position on the arms embargo would have been better. In the end the EU abdicated responsibility to Member States."