

Alexandre Benalla, bodyguard of the school of Benoît Battistelli

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Between two questions about his rôle at the Elysée, this Wednesday the senators brought up the issue with Alexandre Benalla about his time as a bodyguard to Benoît Battistelli, former President of the European Patent Office, a boss who came in for particular criticism for his heavy-handed treatment of the staff.

On Wednesday 19th, the senators quizzed Alexandre Benalla in particular about his professional background and his position as bodyguard to Benoît Battistelli, President of the European Patent Office from 2010 to 2018.

Alexandre Benalla said that he had "*never spoken to Emmanuel Macron*" or to his cabinet supremo Alexis Kohler, whom he considers as a "*great servant of the State*" who "*had excellent results*". Benoît Battistelli, on the other hand, had an odious reputation, about which a number of senators needed no reminding.

The man in question, who can be proud of the figures which were achieved during his Presidency, has nevertheless been accused of seriously going off-course, seeking to bring down the staff unions by radical means: Preventing the staff organisations from using the premises or the communications resources of the Patent Office, instituting disciplinary procedures against staff representatives, and even creating a rival union.

Added to these criticisms was the accusation of an authoritarian personality: "*All he ever sees are people who he regards as incompetents and incapables, but you can't be right all of the time and everybody else be wrong*", a union representative told [Libération](#) in 2016. A number of suicides which occurred after Benoît Battistelli was appointed have also been attributed to the hellish performance pressures and targets which the new management enforced in a highly competitive sector.

Reading between the lines, the senators seem to want to find out which "school" Alexandre Benalla went to, so as to come across as a strong-arm Rambo type, a "heavy". Whatever the need for the President of the European Patent Office to have a bodyguard, he felt it strongly enough to engage six of them in the spring of 2016. Why? Someone cut the brakes of his bicycle in the Office car park.