Communication timeline

- **January 21, 2020:**
  - Start of the DGS daily press briefing (Jérôme Salomon)
  - Agnès Buzyn reassures by affirming that the French health system is well prepared, “The risk of introduction into France is low but cannot be excluded, especially since there are direct air lines with Wuhan”

- **January 22, 2020:** “The operational center for regulating and receiving emergencies has been placed on heightened vigilance” according to the Director General of Health, Jérôme Salomon, interviewed by the Senate on February 26, 2020.

- **January 26, 2020:** According to Health Minister Agnès Buzyn, “We have tens of millions of masks in stock in the event of an epidemic, these are things that are already planned. If one day we were to suggest that this or that population or person at risk wear masks, the health authorities would distribute these masks to the people who need them.”

- **January 28, 2020:** Prèric Caumes, head of the infectious and tropical diseases department at Pitié-Salpêtrière in Paris (AP-HP), declares “If the coronavirus epidemic were to gain momentum, I don’t know if we could cope with it”

- **January 29, 2020:** Louis Gautier, former Secretary General of Defense and National Security (SGDN) expresses concern to the press about the lack of triggering of the Pandemic plan

- **February 12, 2020:** The National Academy of Pharmacy recalls that 80% of active pharmaceutical ingredients used in Europe are manufactured outside the European economic area: “Proof has once again been made that, due to the multiplicity of links in the production chain, all it takes is a natural or health disaster, a geopolitical event, an industrial accident, to cause supply disruptions that could lead to patients being deprived of their treatments, assure the academicians. We must relocate the production of our pharmaceutical raw materials.”. She had already warned about this strategic point in 2011, 2013 and 2018

- **February 18, 2020:** Olivier Véran affirms on France Inter that “France is ready because we have an extremely solid health system”

- **February 25, 2020:** “we are not going to block all the access roads. We are not closing the borders (...) at this stage because that would not make sense. At this stage there is no
scientific and medical argument today which leads us to stop collective events of this nature [Lyon-Turin match] (...). We toured the intensive care units to check that no patient, for example in the ICU with respiratory problems and an unidentified febrile syndrome, could present the coronavirus. We test them. We track them down. (...) what I can tell you is that we have an obligation of means and that we implement them. Until now, under the remarkable action of Agnès Buzyn, and whom I salute here, because I can guarantee you that if France today is where it is, it is because Agnès Buzyn has a remarkable nature since the first day and she took the matter head on, it’s because France has an excellent health system and it’s not the minister who is excellent, it’s the caregivers. (...) We still know things (...) 80% of forms are non-serious forms, 15% of forms are considered severe, 5% of forms are called resuscitation (...). It is more severe [than seasonal flu] in particular mortality and the risk of serious complications is multiplied according to the studies we have by a factor of 4 to 10. (...) On the other hand, the coronavirus virus is more contagious than other viruses [MERS and SARS]. » It is more severe [than seasonal flu] in particular mortality and the risk of serious complications is multiplied according to the studies we have by a factor of 4 to 10. (...) On the other hand, the coronavirus virus is more contagious than other viruses [MERS and SARS]. » It is more severe [than seasonal flu] in particular mortality and the risk of serious complications is multiplied according to the studies we have by a factor of 4 to 10. (...) On the other hand, the coronavirus virus is more contagious than other viruses [MERS and SARS]. »

- **February 26, 2020:** Hearing of Jérôme Salomon by the Senate Social Affairs Committee:

  - “The tests were available very quickly thanks to the Pasteur Institute. More than 1,000 tests have been carried out [...]. We must slow down the spread by isolating the sick. »

  - “We have released strategic stocks and placed an emergency order for protective masks for healthcare professionals. Public Health France holds significant strategic stocks of surgical masks. We have no concerns in this regard. There is therefore no shortage to fear, this is not a subject. »

- **February 27, 2020:**

  - Press briefing by Olivier Véran: Regarding the shortage of masks, tests and gel: “We have been in anticipation for weeks. We have and we will stay one step ahead. »

  - Visit by Emmanuel Macron to the Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital. The p'Éric Caumes, head of the infectious diseases department, warns him of “an Italian situation” because “the virus is circulating among us” and “probably it is transmitted much better than we thought”

- **March 2, 2020:** The Prime Minister indicates that the government's objective is to "slow down to prevent, or at least delay, the free circulation of the virus in the territory which would mark the arrival in phase 3, that is to say the epidemic itself of coronavirus in France »

- **March 3, 2020:**

  - Sibeth Ndiaye, government spokesperson (France Inter): “We will not close all schools in France. », “If we move into stage 3, namely an epidemic circulating throughout the territory, we are not going to stop the life of France. »

  - The ARS Grand Est indicates through the voice of its general director, Christophe Lannelongue, reported by DNA "We are no longer looking for contact cases, today, our main objective is to treat»
- The press reports on thirty people, declared carriers of the virus, who appear to have participated in a **evangelical gathering of nearly two thousand people** in Mulhouse (Haut-Rhin) organized by the Christian Open Door Church in the Bourtzwiller district, from February 17 to 24

- **March 5, 2020:** President Emmanuel Macron declares: “There is a moment when, we all know, an epidemic is inexorable anyway”

- **March 6, 2020:**
  - Emmanuel Macron and his wife go to the Theater to see the play “By the End of the Nose” which features a psychiatrist and a President of the Republic who suffers from an itchy nose just before his inauguration speech. According to the president, “Life goes on. There is no reason, apart from for vulnerable populations, to change our going out habits.”
  - Eighty-one cases having been detected in 24 hours in Mulhouse, the prefect of Haut-Rhin declares that the means are no longer sufficient to systematically detect all suspected cases. Only patients in the most serious condition are hospitalized. He speaks of “advanced stage 2”

- **March 11, 2020:** According to Minister Olivier Véran, “children are not a vulnerable group, so we should not be afraid to send them to school. »

- **March 12, 2020:**
  - In the morning, according to the Minister of Education Jean-Michel Blanquer: “We have never considered the total closure of schools. »
  - In the evening, in a televised statement, the President of the Republic Emmanuel Macron speaks of “the most serious health crisis in a century”. He decrees the closure of nurseries, schools, middle schools, high schools and universities. All companies will be able to postpone “without justification, without formalities, without penalties” the payment of contributions and taxes due in March.

  - On the other hand, the first round of municipal elections scheduled for March 15 is maintained. According to the President of the Republic, “…scientists…consider that nothing prevents the French, even the most vulnerable, from going to the polls”
  - More precisely, although Scientific Council emphasizes that “this decision, eminently political, cannot be incumbent upon it”, it “does not identify any scientific argument indicating that the exposure of people would be greater than that linked to essential activities (shopping).” The hashtag #JeNiraiPasVoter appears on social networks.

- **March 13, 2020:** The daily Le Monde headlines “Covid-19: view from Italy, the unbearable lightness of France" after the scenes of jubilation which surrounded, outside the stadium, the qualification of Paris-Saint-Germain to the from the match played behind closed doors against Borussia Dortmund

- **March 16, 2020:**
  - Olivier Véran, “As the epidemic progresses, we are able to make decisions that allow us to protect the French. »
  - Scientific Council, “only activities strictly necessary for the life of the Nation must persist”
Announcement of confinement from 12 p.m. the next day

**March 17, 2020:**
- Professor Jérôme Salomon indicates that 602 patients were able to leave the hospital over the weekend, considered cured.
- Regarding the shortage of masks, according to Olivier Véran “We have enough masks today to allow caregivers to be armed. We have enough FFP2 masks to meet hospital needs and to equip nurses or private doctors.”

**March 18, 2020:**
- Professor Jean-François Delfraissy, president of the Scientific Council, says that the strategy of power is clearly a default strategy, due to shortages of masks and tests, the lack of tests is a “real problem”
- Bruno Lemaire (Minister of the Economy) calls on “all employees of companies that are still open, activities that are essential to the functioning of the country, to go to their workplaces”

**March 19, 2020:**
- Christophe Castaner (Minister of the Interior) assures that the police “are not at risk from the coronavirus” and that they do not need to wear masks
- Muriel Pénicaud (Minister of Labor), “Stop going to work, stop doing your projects, that's defeatism.” about the construction sector. “Companies that don't play the game, that say “the State will pay”, that's not good citizenship,” she adds, threatening them with the abolition of partial unemployment. Calls to return to work are launched by other ministers

**March 20, 2020:**
- President Emmanuel Macron “congratulates those who had foreseen all the elements of the crisis once it took place.”
- For Laurent Nunez, Secretary of State to the Minister of the Interior, there is no shortage of masks: “Masks are delivered very regularly. [...] No, I do not recognize that there is a shortage. We spoke about it to the defense council, these masks are being delivered, for most departments they have been sent”
- Sibeth Ndiaye (government spokesperson), "You know what? I don't know how to use a mask. I could say: 'I'm a minister, I put on a mask', but in fact, I don't know how to use it"; “masks are not necessary for everyone”, “Because using a mask involves precise technical actions, otherwise you scratch your nose under the mask, you get the virus on your hands; otherwise we have a use that is not good, and it can even be counterproductive.”

**March 21, 2020:**Olivier Véran, on the general shortage of masks and protective equipment (glasses, visors, disposable paper gowns and helmets), “I tell caregivers that I understand and share their expectations and, sometimes, their anger. I want to present the situation to you as it is: the public authorities decided around ten years ago to equip France with new masks. Whatever the decision-making processes that
led to these stocks not being renewed, they were reduced year after year. In particular, there remained no state stock of FFP2 masks. It was decided to resort to importing masks from all producing countries in January even before the first cases on our territory. We have done everything we can to increase our stock in a tense market. France has thus placed several orders abroad with manufacturers capable of quickly supplying large volumes. We have placed orders for more than 250 million masks, which will be delivered gradually over the coming weeks. »

- **March 22, 2020:**

  - According to Jean-Paul Hamon, president of the Federation of Doctors of France (FMF): “The lack of foresight of the French government and administration was total” and the authorities “will be held accountable”
  
  - While the shortage of tests – reserved for seriously ill patients – continues, Secretary of State Emmanuelle Wargon announces on Twitter that she benefited from a test with only “mild symptoms”. Other VIPs or politicians announce their negative or positive tests despite the absence or mildness of their signs

- **March 23, 2020:**

  - Sibeth Ndiaye, “We cannot say that there was a lack of anticipation of this crisis, quite the contrary. »
  
  - The Covid-19 scientific council “consensually considers it necessary to strengthen containment”

- **March 24, 2020:**

  - “See you at the trial,” tweets Jérôme Marty, president of the UFML doctors’ union, in response to Sibeth Ndiaye, government spokesperson
  
  - The Minister of Agriculture Didier Guillaume launches a “great appeal to the shadow army” of those confined: “Join the army of farmers, 200,000 jobs are available. »

- **March 25, 2020:**Sibeth Ndiaye, “There is no need for a mask when you respect the protective distance from others. »

- **March 26, 2020:**An article from Courrier international, resuming articles published in the German press, reports a report by German experts who, on the basis of a visit to Strasbourg hospitals, report a sorting of patients based in particular on age

- **March 27, 2020:**Georges Gao, director of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (SCDC), warns: “The big mistake in the United States and Europe is, in my opinion, that the population does not wear masks. » “You must wear a mask. »

- **March 28, 2020:**

  - Press conference by Édouard Philippe with the Minister of Health and the Director General of Health: “I will not let anyone say that there was a delay in making the decision on confinement. »
  
  - Emmanuel Macron in an interview with three Italian daily newspapers: “I approached this crisis seriously and seriously. »
- **April 2, 2020:** The scientific council publishes an “inventory of confinement”, notes: “35% of workers work outside the home, 60% declare themselves on sick leave and 5% telework, compared to 10% of executives working outside the home, 24% on sick leave, and 66% teleworking”

- **April 3, 2020:**
  - The National Academy of Medicine recommends the compulsory wearing of masks protectors for exits. She recommends that the general public use “alternative” masks so as not to deprive healthcare workers of traditional medical masks, in the midst of a shortage.
  - Jérôme Salomon, “If we have access to masks, we actually encourage the general public, if they wish, to wear them”

- **April 8, 2020:** Olivier Véran, “Since the first day of the epidemic crisis, we have decided to be proactive, that is to say, to have at the appropriate time all possible means to fight against the spread of the virus. »

- **April 9, 2020:** Sibeth Ndiaye, on the wearing of a mask, "there is no scientific consensus on the matter today", stressing that the World Health Organization (WHO) "does not recommend the wearing of masks in the population generally"

- **April 12, 2020:** Jean-François Delfraissy declares that due to lack of sufficient testing capacity, confinement was the only solution for France, in an Italian newspaper

- **April 19:** Prime Minister Édouard Philippe holds a press conference at the Hôtel de Matignon accompanied by the Minister of Solidarity and Health Olivier Véran and the Director General of Health Jérôme Salomon. This conference explains the results of confinement in France as well as the main principles of deconfinement, without however going into details.

- **May 3, 2020:** The journalistic companies and editorial offices of thirty paper and audiovisual media are asking the government to remove from the government.fr site a selection of press articles which are "articles from French media fighting, in the context of the health crisis, against disinformation"

- **May 7, 2020:** More than 50 doctors, scientists and Nobel Prize winners call for the obligation to wear a mask or facial protection

- **October 28, 2020:** during a televised speech, Emmanuel Macron announces a national lockdown from October 30, and which will extend at least until October 1er following December

- **November 5, 2020:** stormy session at the National Assembly where the opposition votes by amendment to limit the duration of the state of emergency finally extended until the end of winter 21. The opposition denounces the very vertical nature of government in France where the Health Defense Council administers the country in an opaque manner

- **November 24, 2020:** televised speech by Emmanuel Macron, who declares that he is considering deconfinement by December 15, 2020, replaced by a curfew from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. if the health situation continues to improve (objective of 5,000 new positive cases daily, less of 3,000 patients in intensive care), with an exception for the evenings of the 24th and 31st, planned reopening of small non-essential businesses from November 28
- **March 18, 2021:** After being withdrawn, the Astra-Zeneca vaccine is reintroduced, and the Prime Minister announces that he will be vaccinated with AstraZeneca the next day, March 19

- **April 2-10, 2021:** Clandestine dinner affair

- **April 29, 2021:** The country’s reopening plan is revealed: end of confinement and return to class on May 3; curfew extended from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. and reopening of shops, terraces and cultural places on May 19; curfew pushed back to 11 p.m. and reopening of the interior of restaurants and cafes on June 9; finally, end of the curfew on June 30 with the possibility of participating in gatherings of more than 1,000 people upon presentation of a health pass, attesting to vaccination or a negative covid-19 test

- **May 3, 2021:** High school students are massively blocking the entrance to faculties and high schools to protest against the continuation of end-of-year exams, despite the health crisis and the poor quality of distance learning. The National Union of High School Students calls for a continued blockade and declares: “The conditions are not met to take the tests in good conditions”

- **May 15, 2021:** Around fifteen elected officials from the coast sign a forum in which they call for the reopening of nightclubs to avoid wild parties