Sex Drive-In Opens For Business In Zurich

The Swiss city opens nine "sex boxes" where clients and prostitutes can meet safely and discreetly away from the centre.

 A sex drive-in has opened in Zurich in an attempt to keep prostitutes safe and move the sex trade outside the Swiss city.   The nine "sex boxes", which are hidden behind a high fence, will be available for prostitutes and their clients from today onwards.   Just a small sign displaying opening hours and a red umbrella icon to designate a regulated sex work area mark the site in a former industrial zone in the west of the city.   There are clearly defined rules. Clients must be older than 18, one to a car, and condoms must be disposed of immediately after use in the bins provided.   There is an area where clients make a choice and the women negotiate a price before heading for the boxes, which are wooden frames that look like car ports.   Each box has an alarm bell to keep the prostitutes safe.   Michael Herzig, director of social services for sex workers in the city, said: "Prostitution is a business basically. “We cannot prohibit it, so we want to control it in favour of the sex workers and the population because if we do not control it, organised crime is taking over, and the pimps are taking over.”   Ursula Kocher, director of Flora Dora, a support network for prostitutes, said that prostitutes were regularly taken to a nearby forest or outside the city and often found themselves in danger.   She said: "Here, they remain onsite and can deal with customers quickly   The proposed sex drive-in was approved by the people of Zurich in a March 2012 referendum, with 52.6% voting in favour.   And the idea has a broad consensus among political parties, with only the populist Swiss People's Party (SVP) opposing the project.   "It will not work, either because the clients will not come or because the site will not be used by prostitutes," said Sven Oliver Dogwiler, a local SVP politician.   "It puts them in a cleaner space but one that is subsidised by taxes," he added.